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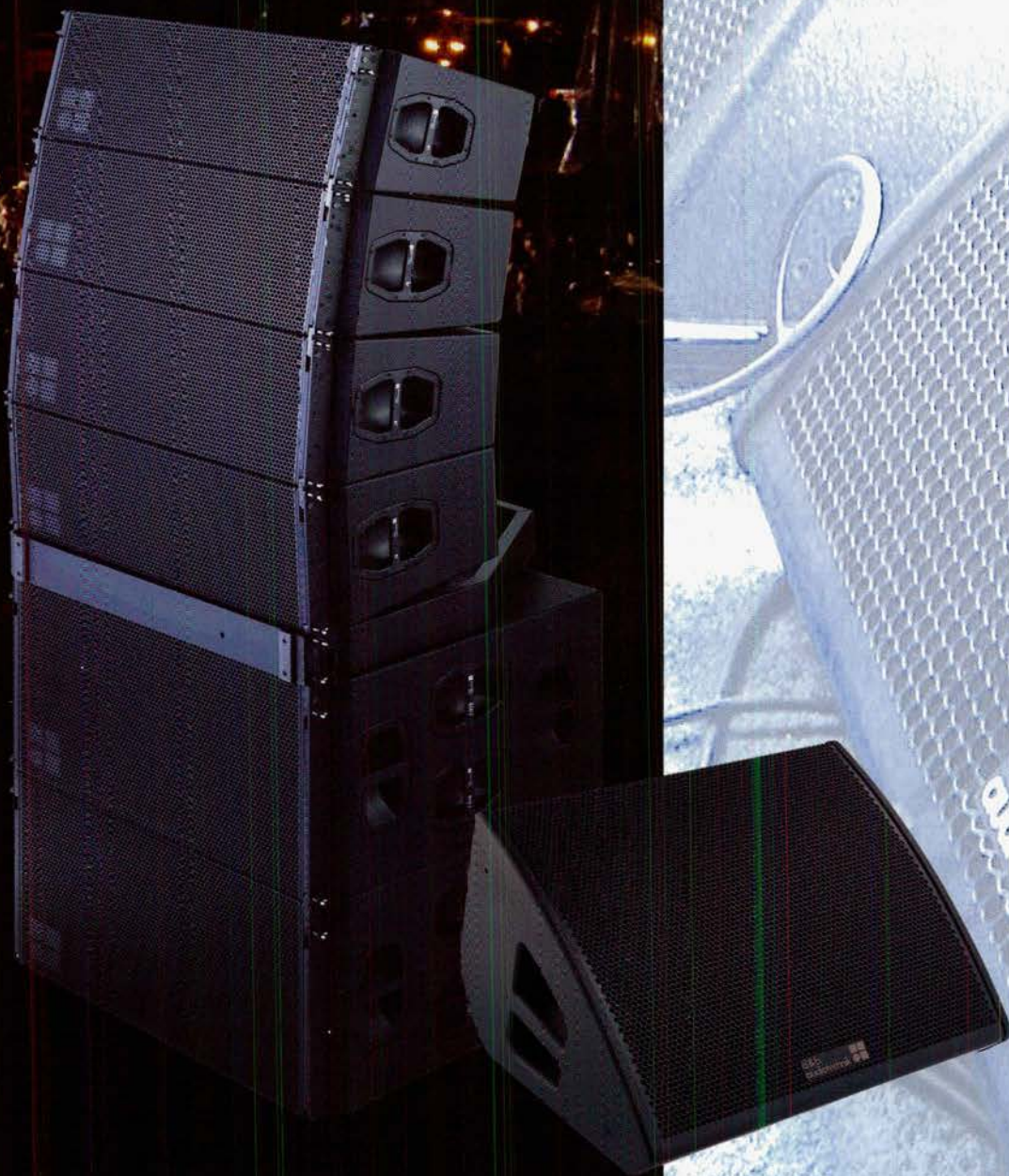
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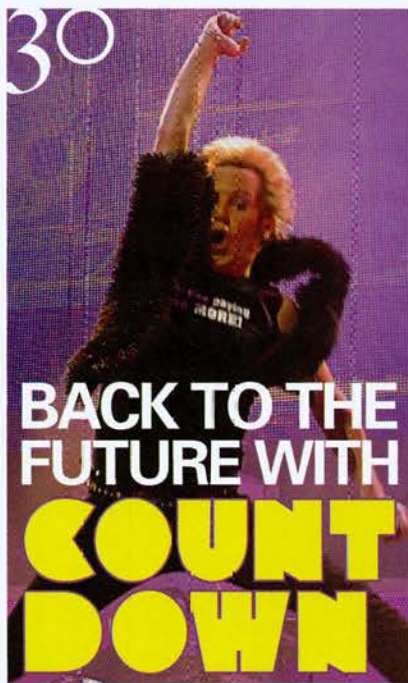


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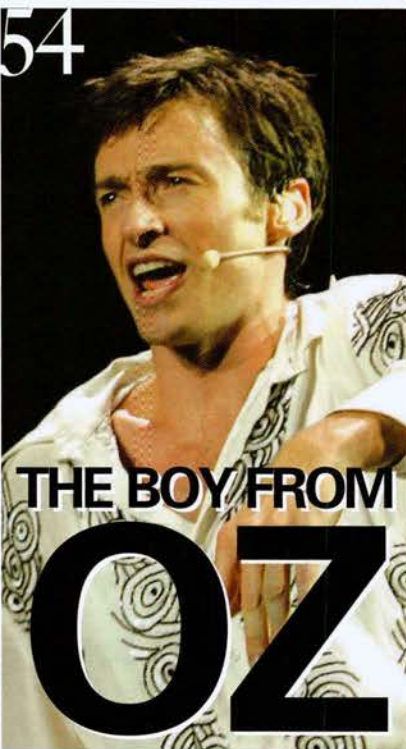
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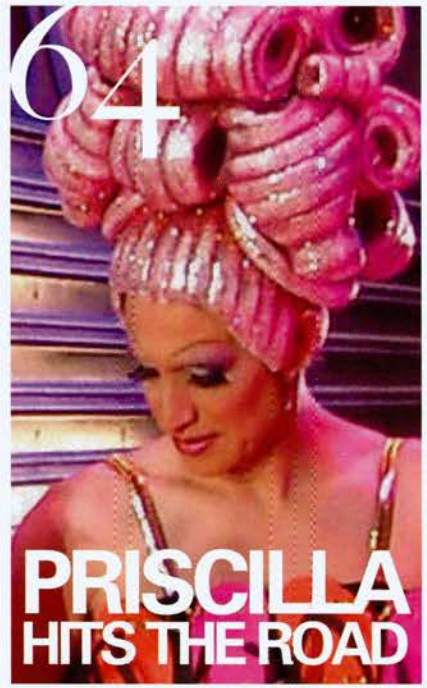


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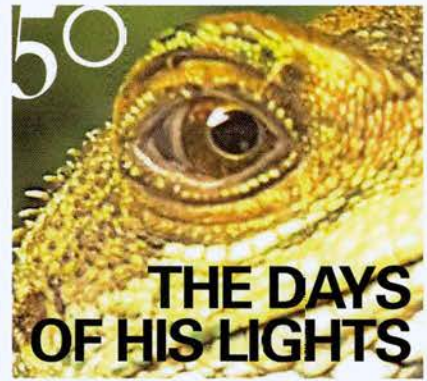


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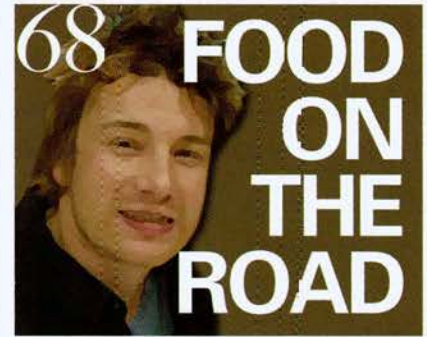
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LITES



ON TOUR



Audio-Technica 3000A Wireless



There's nothing funny about wireless systems with drop outs, distortion or limited bandwidth. That's seriously 'Not Happy!'

Do yourself a favour and go straight to the 'It's All Good' end of the wireless spectrum with Audio-Technica's new 3000A.

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EDITORIAL

DATA HORROR

At this media conglomerate we thought we had it all covered. We have dual 500 gig backup drives that are alternated each day and kept off the premises. The crucial database and accounting files are also backed up onto CD and stashed in the manager's kitchen drawer, so those files exist in four places.

We were worried about having one server, albeit with a RAID array of four hard drives that protected the data if one drive went down. So we ordered a new server, which would run in tandem with the old one, in the adjoining building with an actual fire wall (made of bricks) between the two.

As our consultant copied the files from the existing server to the new one, the old RAID array stopped. A component in the controller fried, under continuous load via the copy process.

We were without certain files, and the array controller was obsolete so a new controller was not an option. A time consuming and very expensive data recovery was needed to get the files.

So why not restore from the backup? The files were not there – some of us here at the college leave our email on all night, so those Outlook .pst files were skipped on the backup. Transpires many files crucial to this issue of CX were locked away on a dead array.

Hence the Production Directory is not here; and we are one week late on sale.

The data recovery specialist charged \$1200 and deemed the job non urgent. For \$200 an hour, it would be done straight away. One week later he advised no go, the

drives were damaged, but for another \$3,200 (paid only if it all worked) he would get the data back from one of the four drives. We declined as we don't know what data is on which drive.

JUDITH JOHNSON

At presstime Sydney theatre publicist Judith Johnson died suddenly, days from the opening of Pricilla, Queen of the Desert. She facilitated the cover story in this issue, and was very highly regarded in a very tough industry. We pass on our condolences.

AUDIO LEADERSHIP

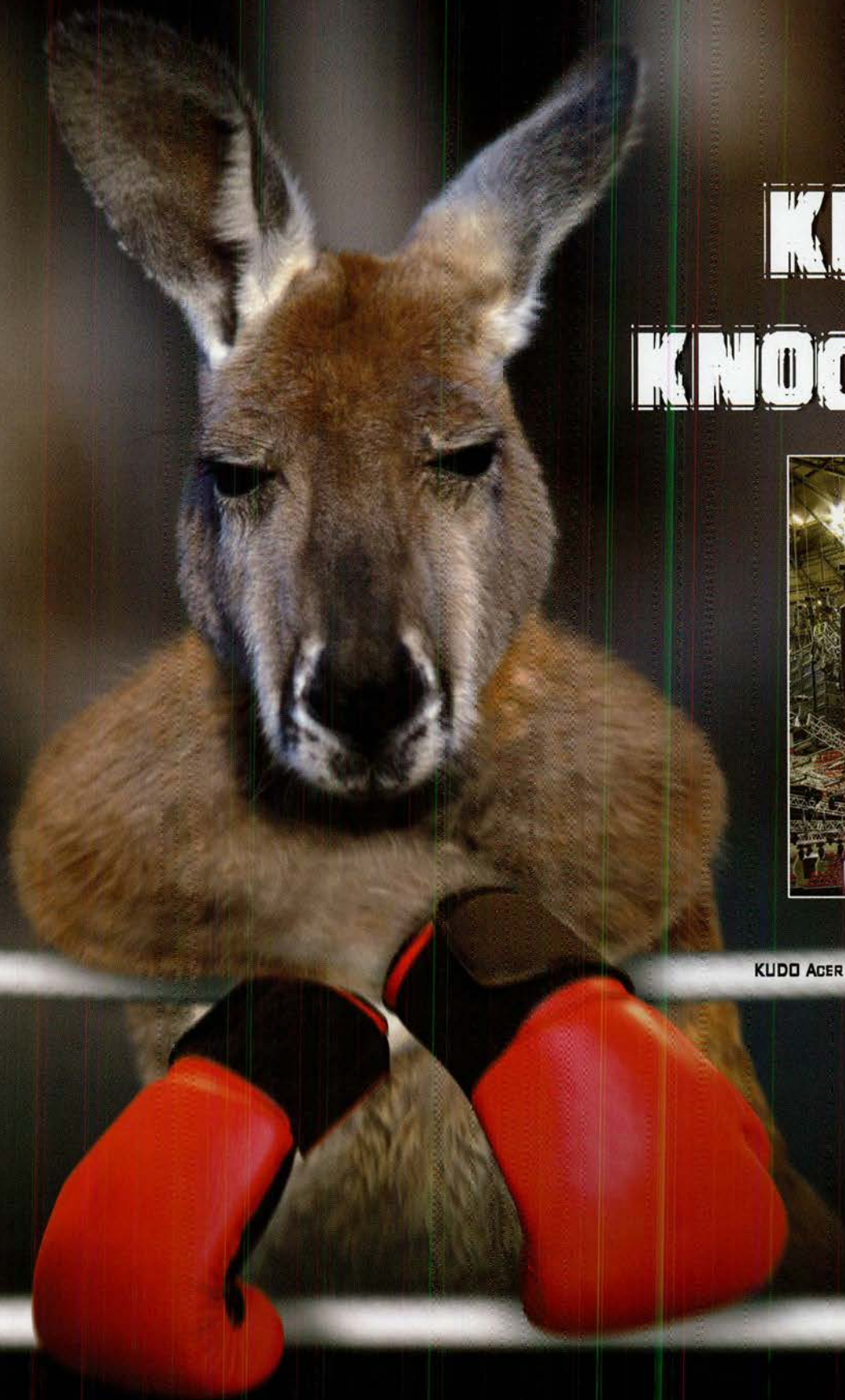
Had an interesting meal with Jim Stemble from Crown International recently. They lead the world amplifier markets, and pioneered viable remote control of amplifiers with their IQ protocol. I said I loved being able to switch amps on and off remotely, and to see the operation status, but why isn't the system 'open' so it can be done from the screen on a digital console? Why must I use a laptop? Indeed, why isn't the audio community yelling about connectivity? His answer: lack of leadership, lack of customer pressure and 'there are wrecks on the shoals of connectivity'. In a group of professionals at the table no one remembered the name of the long serving head of the Audio Engineering Society. Crown's parent company Harman are apparently working on getting all their brands – Soundcraft, AKG, dbx, Crown, LBL, Lexicon, BSS taking on an open network. Bring it on!

Julius

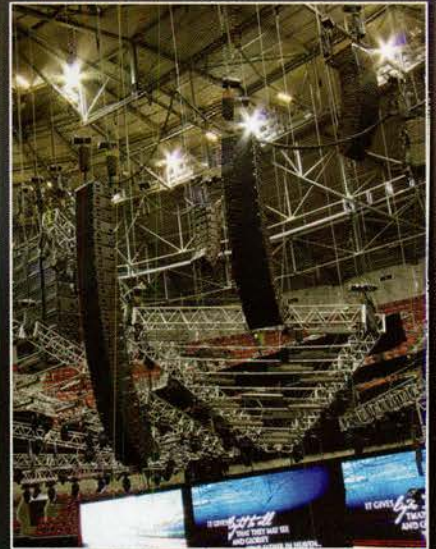
CUE03

Entertainment
Training
Resource

This magazine contains much information which is a direct resource for anyone studying from the new Entertainment Training Package, named CUE03. From 2006 we will start to map certain articles direct against the relevant Unit of Competency within the package. This makes CX magazine a very cost effective resource for schools, colleges, and universities. Note that we offer a copyright release where articles in CX Magazine may be photocopied and distributed to students within an accredited course.



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NEWS

PRODUCTS AND GADGETS

YAMAHA DEBUT ANOTHER DIGITAL LIVE CONSOLE

Since 1994 Yamaha has launched a series of bewilderingly named small format digital audio mixing consoles that were flavored towards studio and audio post tasks.



The naming thing has always been a challenge – 02R, 01V, Pro Mix 01 ... then the PM 1D was launched around 5 years ago and it sits at or near the top of riders for the most serious shows and tours. Soon the PM 5D came along, occupying new live console turf and winning a lot of sales for upper mid range shows and venues.

At the same time the DM2000 has been on sale, with 24 XLR inputs and

powerful options. Many live users have purchased the DM2000, despite it being optimized for studio, broadcast and audio post. And yes, there is also a DM 1000.....

Earlier this year the confusingly named M7CL arrived, again filling a space where there had been no digital live console on offer by anyone. At between 20 and 30k in cost, it has been a barnstorming success.

Now please welcome the LS9 – available in 16 or 32 channel formats, and cementing a very formidable range of consoles from the world leader in all things (audio) digital. Priced at about 10k for the 16 channel; and maybe around 15k for the 32 channel, this is a solution that'll win a lot of business that up to now has gone to analogue consoles.

LS9 has a very simple façade, with either 16 or 32 faders plus a master fader. But the consoles are not limited to 16 or 32 inputs, adding optional cards can double the input count, so the rack width 16 channel versions can drive 32 inputs.

For the first time you can record a pair of busses, like the stereo output busses, or two auxiliary busses, direct to your USB memory stick in MP3 format. This is fairly radical stuff, considering stacks of tracks are on my 500 meg stick already. Being able to record a mix is invaluable. You can also tell the LS9 to replay tracks, even using one of the 12 user defined keys.

The USB stick slot is also the access point for users, you can define levels of access for 'less trained' operators.

Like the more senior Yamaha consoles that have preceded it, LS9 has stacks of racks, with dynamic processors on each channel and eight graphic equalizers available for use on outputs.

At the rear, there are 16 or 32 XLR inputs, and 8 or 16 'omni' outputs. Both

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A 6 x 2 Matrix mixer can be used to create additional mixes—ideal for IEM (in-ear-monitor) systems or zoned outputs.



100mm FADERS

Panasonic® 100mm faders provide smooth, long fades versus typical 60mm faders found on other mid-format consoles.

INTRODUCING THE NEW ONYX 4-BUS LIVE SOUND MIXERS.

In the seven years since we introduced the wildly popular SR24.4 and 32.4 VLZ-Pro mixers, a lot has changed. So we knew our new mid-format live sound mixers could not merely offer incremental improvements. They needed something monumental. And by "monumental," we mean "Onyx."

The new Onyx 24.4 and 32.4 Premium 4-Bus Live Sound Mixers offer boutique-quality mic preamps on every channel, completely redesigned analog circuitry with massive headroom and the industry's lowest noise specs, plus a built-in high-quality analog compressor, a 6 x 2 Matrix mixer, and more routing than any analog mixer this size.

Better still, the Onyx 24.4 and 32.4 are robustly over-built and rigorously tested for the unspeakable tragedies which await in the world of live sound. Check out these next-next-next generation consoles online at www.mackie.com/4bus. Or simply visit your authorized Mackie dealer for an Onyx 4-Bus mixer demo today.

ONYX 24•4

ONYX 32•4






consoles have 16 buses, so you can user-choose whether you will run stereo out plus 4 auxiliaries, or a mixture of matrix, auxiliary, and even a left – centre – right combo.

Naturally there is a lot more than meets the eye, to the degree Yamaha are rolling out a series of free training clinics for the LS9 and its larger sibling M7CL. Check the dates below.

Finally, there is a market space below the LS9 and it is currently occupied by the O1V95 V2. This has just been repriced at \$4,499, and comes with 12 balanced analogue XLR inputs, six additional analogue ins and a built-in, 8-channel ADAT digital interface.

We expect Yamaha to release a further model live console to sit somewhere around where the O1V95 V2 is at now, in the meantime the price reduction gives Yamaha something for anyone at any place where more than just a few channels is needed. 



LS9 comes loaded with 16 or 32 XLR inputs, and 3 or 16 XLR cuts. The baby console has one card slot, the larger one has two.

FREE TRAINING FOR LS9 AND M7CL DIGITAL MIXING CONSOLES

Yamaha Commercial Audio announces their nationwide LS9 and M7CL Workshop Tour throughout November 2006

Conducted by Yamaha's Trainers in seven major Australian cities, the workshops will be free of charge and will enable participants to learn the features and operation of Yamaha's newest digital mixers for live sound - the LS9 and M7CL digital mixing consoles.

"These workshops demonstrate Yamaha's commitment to supporting their products and servicing Commercial Audio clients around Australia," says Mark Amory, General Manager of Yamaha Commercial Audio. "Participants will experience first hand the unparalleled ease of use, versatility and reliability of Yamaha's revolutionary new live digital mixers."

WORKSHOP TOUR DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Mon 13 Nov: Melbourne | Wed 15 Nov: Canberra |
| Thurs 16 Nov: Sydney | Fri 17 Nov: Sydney |
| Mon 20 Nov: Newcastle | Wed 22 Nov: Gold Coast |
| Thurs 23 Nov: Brisbane | Thurs 30 Nov: Perth |

For specific venues, times, and free registration, contact Yamaha Commercial Audio on +61 3 9693 5102, via the **web:** www.yamaha-music.com.au/products/commaudio, or via **email:** shaun_herberg@gmx.yamaha.com.

JANDS IN MELBOURNE

After many years of sales representation in Melbourne, Jands Pty Ltd have now committed to a permanent new home for their growing Victorian contingent. Situated in Port Melbourne, the new premises will house several resident Jands staff, together with new warehouse and engineering facilities.

"The new building which is very central to our customer network will enable us to provide more comprehensive sales and engineering support to our dealers and clients" commented Robert Young, Executive Director at Jands. "The size of the facility really shows the growth we expect in the

Victorian state. All the free space we currently have increases the opportunity for future expansion".

Another part of the Jands commitment to the Melbourne region is the appointment of a new Audio Applications Engineer. "We are pleased to welcome on board Glenn Helmut", said David Bell, Sales & Marketing Director at Jands. "Glenn brings with him many years of experience in the production audio and engineered sound environment. He has a well earned reputation Australia wide for the design and commissioning of professional audio systems."

Unit 11/21 Sabre Drive, Port Melbourne. Phone: +61 3 8698 0909 www.jands.com.au 



Glenn Helmut

Why pay less?



I'm amazed at the recent price drop of entry level condenser microphones.

Is the \$1.99 microphone coming?

Are they any good? Well the short answer is yes! Today, there are many cheap guitars, drums and keys for sale. These novice instruments serve a purpose by allowing kids and those who want to begin to experience music, to do so at a relatively low cost. If they don't continue playing, they haven't lost a lot of money. The cheap microphone does the same thing for recording.

The NT1-A was not designed for this purpose!

The NT1-A is studio quality microphone designed for people who are serious about their music. This is a creative tool that can be relied upon to capture your art. Thousands of serious musicians and engineers have invested in this microphone, thus making it an industry standard.

While the NT1-A isn't the lowest cost microphone available, its worth every penny and continues to win prestigious awards for quality and performance.

Please listen to the NT1-A before you buy any microphone, and you too will hear why you should invest just a little more for the real thing.



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MICROPHONES

2 GRAEME'S CUT 3 YRS

Sydney based equipment supplier GBG Technology has recently celebrated their 3rd anniversary in style with a cocktail party held for clients and suppliers.

Based in Crow's Nest and established in 2003 by principles Graeme Rothwell and Graeme Winneray, GBG's range includes products from many world class manufacturers including Avid, V-Cube, DPA Microphones, sE Microphones, Ghost Acoustic Solutions, Smart AV Consoles, Pyramix, Buzz Audio, TC Electronic and Quested to name a few.

"Our focus has been to provide a broad range of cost effective product solutions to the broadcast, post production and music markets", commented Graeme Rothwell.

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KEYSTROKE

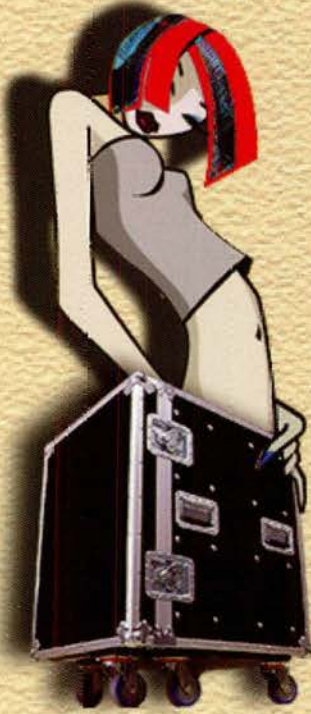
Rosco's Keystroke is a hardware/software solution enabling any DMX lighting console to fire keyboard commands to a PC or Mac. These commands can be used to control any application – slide shows, audio replay, laser controllers, video playback, etc.

It is a small box with DMX in and thru XLRs, connected to the PC with a USB cable (supplied), and software. The interface runs on USB power, and the in and thru connectors make it connectible anywhere in the DMX chain. The software is easy and allows the user to select the DMX address and specify the DMX values for each selected command. The system uses only one DMX channel and can be set up to perform pretty much every conceivable selection of keystrokes.

Anyone doing solo-operated productions or running shows where split-second timing is critical will immediately see the benefits of the system, and with a retail price of \$630.00 it's not going to break the bank. For a demo, check out

www.rosco.com





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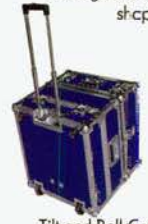


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WIRELESS SPECTRUM CRUNCH IS NEAR

Sennheiser RF guru predicts tough times as digital TV eats bandwidth

There are more than 80 manufacturers of wireless microphones competing in the semi professional audio market today, but getting more than a few channels to work together usually is a tall order. So says Klaus Willemssen, Senior Project Manager for Professional Systems at Sennheiser, the world's leading maker of wireless audio.

"The future is that there is a smaller bandwidth. Digital TV will squeeze it, and they will cancel more of the bandwidth for us", Klaus told CX. The UHF spectrum from 470 to 860 megahertz is progressively being claimed for its primary commercial usage which is TV. Professional audio is a secondary use. The affect of this on audio users will be acute, in a world where we are using more in-ear monitors and wireless microphones than ever before.

Presently there is a theoretical 'best possible scenario' where 116 channels of Sennheiser branded wireless could be used all at once, but in reality the greatest number of discrete systems used together, anywhere in the world, is 88.

Klaus knows his business, he joined Sennheiser in 1972 and the company

was already cranking out wireless microphone systems. Their first was the SK1001 in 1957. It was a tube device and needed a 90 volt plate battery.

Presently Sennheiser are working hard at tightening the tuning range and micromanaging the spectrum. "Our systems are directly designed for critical applications", says Klaus. "We are working to filter out unwanted frequencies and to optimize our systems".

Digital doesn't mean salvation in wireless either; many audio people are fantasizing about squeezing multiple channels onto one frequency using digital compression. Well, the problem right now is latency, according to Klaus. "You do data reduction, you create processing delay. If you have more than 5 milliseconds of delay, a singer cannot sing. You will need more time than that to get MPEG 4 level compression. Add that on to what you (might) already have in a digital desk, and it won't work".

While multiple channels of wireless on digital is ruled out just now, battery improvements are arriving now with a new option for top end Sennheiser systems in the form of a rechargeable

AA battery. New transmitter body packs like the SK 5212 only require one AA battery, and now Sennheiser have a rechargeable battery that is cunningly engineered to give as much as twelve hours life.

Rechargeable batteries generally produce less output voltage than conventional batteries, so how can one AA sized rechargeable battery run almost twice as long? Sennheiser have that sorted by using a 3.6 volt lithium rechargeable battery, with a frame around it which will only fit into one of their belt pack transmitters. A conventional AA battery supplies 1.5 volts, and as any battery runs down, the voltage drops so the current goes up, accelerating the end.

The custom frame around the rechargeable battery has a little circuit (EPROM) which monitors the charge process, and the current, to report battery time through the transmitter back to the receiver.

Sennheiser are focused on wireless sitting in smaller bandwidth windows, and of course maintaining and improving audio integrity. "Strong and clean", Klaus says, and as he shakes my hand in farewell he clicks his heels. CX

MADZIN BACKS M7CL CONSOLES

Madzin Productions, the Australian audio, lighting and communications company with offices in Sydney and Melbourne, have invested in two Yamaha M7CL-48 consoles to handle their multitude of live sound reinforcement and broadcast applications. Madzin recently employed their two M7CL desks at "ROCKINC", the year's major fundraising event for Olivia Newton-John's Cancer Centre Appeal.

During the event, Olivia Newton-John was accompanied by former Noiseworks frontman, Jon Stevens, and legendary singer-songwriter Brian Cadd to comprise the formidable judging panel at the Rod Laver Arena spectacular.

Hosted by Tottie Goldsmith, the event engaged fourteen of the country's best corporate cover acts in a no-holds-barred, Battle of the Bands-style contest.

Craig Borg, production manager



FOH Engineer Dean Lovell with M7CL-48 at ROCKINC.

for Madzin Productions and the show's monitor engineer, says that the M7CL eliminated any concerns involved in satisfying each performer's foldback requirements.

Borg notes that both the monitor and FOH boards were generally simple set-ups. "There were eight sends of monitors plus a stereo sidefill," he recalls, describing his

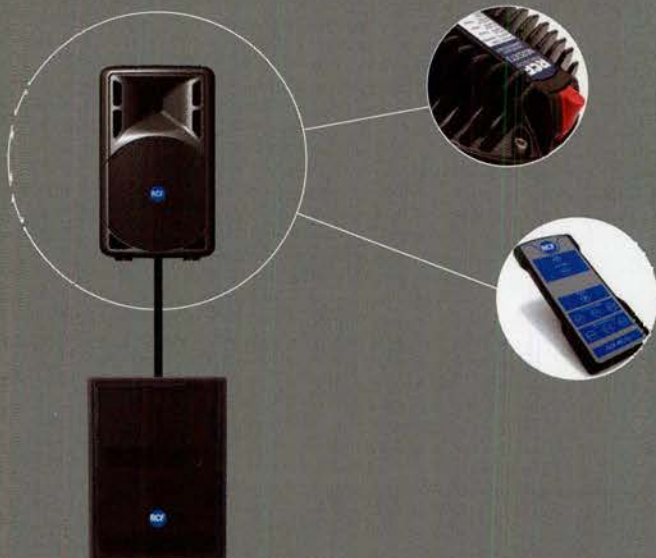
M7CL foldback rig.

"At front-of-house, all the system delay, effects, EQ, and compression were done from the console," he continues, explaining how the M7CL simplified set-up requirements and reduced the need for outboard gear. "There were literally just a couple of CD players and processors at FOH." CX

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All feature light weight neodymium HF driver, new electronics with optional wireless control capability, more power, efficiency and bigger range.

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Check out the feature packed Art 705AS self powered 800 watt RMS compact sub bass module.

ROBE ROLLS AT PLASA

Robe introduced significant new products at PLASA in London recently, including the DigitalSpot 5000DT, StageQube 324 and the new 700 Series of fixtures.

Their trade show display featured a ring of 8 DigitalSpots encircling the top deck of the stand, projecting imagery onto a cylindrical gauze running right around the elevated area, which featured a bar, seating area and Robe's famous hospitality. At the rear of the booth was a StageCube 324 video wall showing an array of sources stored on Robe digital media servers.

The DigitalSpot 5000 DT is a 5000 ANSI Lumen output digital moving head projector. It offers two digital gobo layers with the selection of up to 244 x 255 video clips or images per layer. Two independent effects channels on each gobo layer offer 120 effects including kaleidoscope, squeeze in/out, alpha or black flash, Gaussian filter, Laplacian filter, gobo disc mirror and colour key effects.

There's also individual X and Y positioning and a scaling (zoom effect) for each gobo layer, plus rotating and indexing with continuous rotation for each gobo layer and adjustable playback speed. Additional functions include digital keystone, a CMY colour mixing system, strobe effect, analogue iris, zoom and focus, digital iris and digital framing shutters.

Supported video formats include MPEG1 and 2, and image formats PNG, TGA, BMP and JPG. SVideo and VGA inputs for direct video input to data projectors are handy for performing presentations. The



Ruth Lowry (Theatr:icks), Cucno Biviano (ULA), Koç Neminathan (Avolites) and Roger Hind (Theatr:icks) pictured with the first Avolites Expert in Australia. Roger also ordered the first Robe 700 Wash and Spot fixtures for the Australian market.



ROBE StageQube 324.



ROBE DigitalSpot 5000 DT.

fixture is aimed at anywhere where there is a need to maximize the integration between moving lights and digital imagery.

Robe's StageQube 324 is a new-generation LED panel. Designed as a plug & play application, it doesn't require any external power supply and control boxes. The complete electronic is located in the IP54 housing. Due to its integrated rigging system, even huge systems can be built up very easily. The resolution of StageQube 324 is 18 x 18 px at a size of 30 x 80 cm (pixel pitch 4.44 cm).

The StageQube 324 system uses a

video input (VGA) that is connected to the QubeControl PC. Using a Robe Media Hub, it can even be controlled via DMX - intuitive control from the lighting desk.

Robe's General Manager and CEO Josef Valchar says, "We received an incredible reaction at PLASA to all the new products. Once again, most importantly, the show gave us the chance to say thanks to everyone on our team - the Robe Crew, business partners, colleagues, and friends - and all those from around the world who have worked so hard to keep Robe a leading player in the show technology industry".





DIGITAL MIXING CONSOLE **LS9-32**

Two good reasons to go digital.



DIGITAL MIXING CONSOLE **LS9-16**

Audio professionals are turning to digital mixing to enhance sound quality, efficiency and commercial advantage.

Available in a rack-mountable, 16-fader, 32-channel chassis or a mid-sized, 32-fader, 64-channel format, the Yamaha LS9 is the most advanced, versatile and lightweight digital mixing console in its class, with an interface even easier to use than analogue desks.

This is the live digital mixing solution you've been waiting for.



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commercial audio

For more details on the LS9 go to:

<http://www.yamahamusic.com.au/products/commaudio>

Yamaha Music Australia, Commercial Audio Division, P.O. Box 268, South Melbourne VIC. 3205 Phone 1800 805 413

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SOUNDCORP

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www.soundcorp.com.au

YAMAHA LS9

Test Drive Yamaha's New Digital console

Yamaha's new 32-mic/line input 64-channel LS9-32 and the 16-mic/line input 32 channel LS9-16 make backbreaking setup a thing of the past. Compact and light enough for one person to carry and set up easily, both models boast outstanding sonic quality and features that have been field-proven in previous Yamaha digital consoles.

In addition to an extensive range of gating, compression, and equalization capabilities, there's also a built-in USB memory recorder/player for recording or BGM playback to give you everything you need for small to medium scale live sound and installations.



SOUNDCORP OPEN RETAIL SHOWROOM

It's a testament to the growth in the pro audio industry that there are now significant showrooms across Australia, and now Soundcorp have raised the bar. Soundcorp has been one of Australia's leading suppliers of audio and video equipment to professionals and corporations for the last seventeen years. Their new showroom is in South Melbourne.

'Because of our history we have unique industry insights that we've translated into an exciting retail concept,' says Michael Lasa, Soundcorp's General Manager. 'We're doing things that have never been seen in Australia.'

The jewel in the new Soundcorp showroom is 'the sweet spot', a feature unique to Australian retail. Designed by acoustic architect Peter L Brown, it's the ultimate in 'try before you buy'. The suite is an acoustically treated, sound-proof room where you can listen to speakers punch out beats the way the manufacturers intended.

Consumers will also love the dedicated stations for listening to headphones, the display wall full of microphones and the lounge area where they can relax and watch plasma screens as if they were at home.

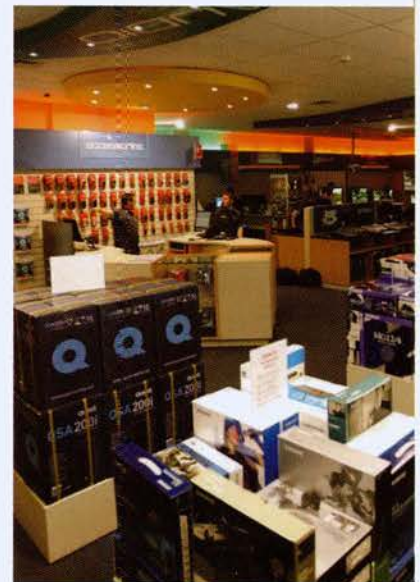
The showroom was opened in true industry style with a party, CX attended and can report it is a most excellent establishment.

Visit: 570 City Road South Melbourne.
+61 3 9694 2600

www.soundcorp.com.au



Jacqui – Rent The Rig, Tony Hosking – The Resource Corp, Chris – Rent The Rig
David Bell – Jands Electronics.



PT TOPS UP EAW

Sydney based production company, Production Technologies has recently expanded its equipment portfolio with the addition 8 EAW NT29 and 8 EAW NT26 Self Powered Speakers.

"Having owned EAW JFX260's and being very happy with them, the decision to purchase the NT29's and NT26's was an easy one. The fact that they are powered and incorporate Guinness Focusing Technology was also a major factor.

"They sound great, work brilliantly straight out of the box and have been flat out since we took delivery" commented Production Technologies Director Nick Macfie.

www.ptaudio.com



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All reasonable offers considered

10am to 4pm

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SHOWCORP

Theatricks



Production

ULA EXPAND MELBOURNE FACILITY

ULA was established in Melbourne back in 1988. Today ULA claim to be the number one entertainment lighting distributor in the Australasian region, with head office located on the Gold Coast and a soon to be opened new Sydney facility. They have just relocated the Melbourne base into significant premises featuring three separate showrooms, run by Andrew Stanley.

Each showroom caters to different areas of lighting. The Professional Showroom serves both the professional and touring market as well as the retail SoundiVision range. This showroom encompasses Robe, SGM, Acme, iSolution, Avolites, E:Cue, SoundiVision and Litecraft products. The Architectural Showroom focuses on LED technologies from Traxon, Anolis and iLED which are more suited to installations. The third showroom is dedicated to the HardCaseCo range, whether for the mobile DJ, pro touring or for storage.

Included is a technical service centre along with replacement part inventory, shortening the turnaround times on repair of key products. Warehousing has also been expanded to stock many popular products.

ULA held a Relocation Celebration recently, with over sixty members of the lighting industry attending. Cuono Biviano, the Managing Director of the ULA Group, said "The opening of the Melbourne office is a testament to ULA's ongoing commitment to providing our customers with only the very best resources to help grow their businesses."

Visit: 1/414-440 Dynon Rd, West Melbourne. +61 3 9326 4222



Dave Wilson, Troy Ruse.



Matt Hanson, Con Biviano & Aaron Humber.



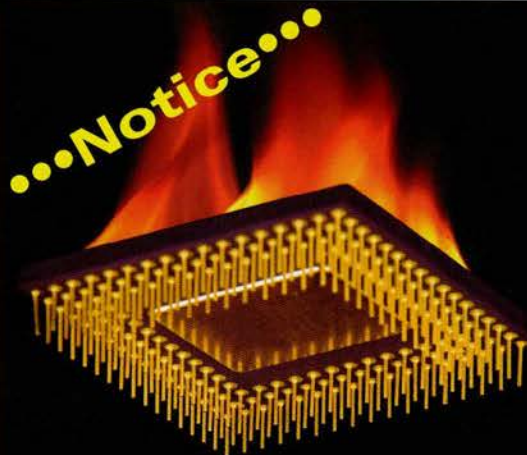
Braham Ciddor, Tim Hall, Jaime White and Joe Casamento.



Nadine Weaving, Renata Korot and Blair Terrace.



Stav Hatzipantelis and Claudia Biviano.



CX PRODUCTION DIRECTORY

Due to the collapse of our RAID array and the non backup of email .pst files, we LOST all Production Company Listings for the proposed feature in this issue. We deeply regret the inconvenience to readers who may be looking for this feature now; and to company management who took the time to supply listings. We will run the feature in the January issue, and ask production suppliers to re-submit the electronic form. This time, the (new) I.T. system at JuliusMedia will backup the data.

To get the form: go to www.juliusmedia.com and in the CX Magazine area, look at the bottom left for the Downloads link. In there is the .pdf form, called Production Dir 2006 form.Ink.pdf

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we've produced a console that works for you, rather than the other way around. The Vista is easy to use and quick to master. Be warned though: once you try it, you'll wonder how you ever put up with the endless hassle of your old console.

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TANNOY UPMARKET IN-CEILING SPEAKERS

Tannoy have two new in-ceiling models using a flexible 'eyeball' enclosure. The CMS401e uses a 100mm (4") drive unit. The CMS401 DCe uses a high powered and wide bandwidth 100mm (4") dual concentric driver including a titanium domed HF unit with a neodymium magnet system. Perfect for this type of application, both point source driver systems generate a spherical wave front unaffected by energy loss at the crossover frequency in either vertical or horizontal planes.

The injection moulded pod can be swivelled 25° in any direction within its ceiling mounting ring allowing precise targeting of the sound. Once the exact angle of the 'eyeball' is established the unit can be clamped securely to permanently maintain that position.

www.syntec.com.au



STANTON INTRO ACTIVE STUDIO MONITOR

The Stanton ATM.6 is the first active speaker designed specifically with the DJ in mind. The ATM.6 is a studio quality monitor, which can be used for remixing and production. The ATM.6 delivers clear sound with a flat smooth frequency response, which will not colour or distort your music. The built in amplifier removes the need for an external amplification stage and is designed specifically for the components in the monitor.

It is loaded with a 1" neodymium tweeter and a 6" composite woofer, in an MDF cabinet with a bi-Amplified monitoring system. \$898/pair.

www.jands.com.au



JTS SHIP IN EAR SYSTEM

JTS are shipping the SIEM 101 UHF In Ear Monitoring system. The transmitters and receivers are both of heavy duty metal construction and both are equipped with backlit LCD displays. The receiver uses 2 x AA batteries with over 12 hours life, and has features such as pan, limiter, hi boost and lock-on function. Utilising technology derived from their reliable UHF microphone systems, the SIEM 101 provides a full frequency response and excellent stereo separation.

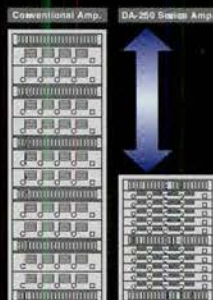
Each system has 961 frequencies, with 64 presets over 4 groups – allowing simultaneous use of 16 transmitters without inter modulation. IE-1 Earbuds are included with each kit. \$1299.95 from Music Link Australia.

www.musiclink.com.au

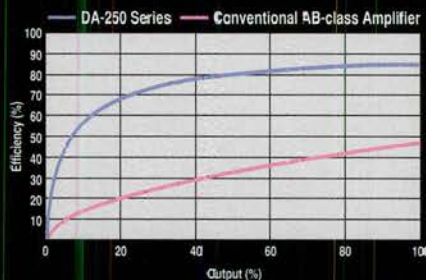


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SUPPORT ACT RAMPS UP

At The Countdown Spectacular recently, donations were received from the audience for Support Act - the musicians benevolent fund. Promoter Michael Gudinski fully supports the foundation.

Support Act also collected **\$9,751 at the Australian Music Association convention dinner recently.**

At the dinner Brennan Callinan, ex keyboard player in The Radiators and now head of sales and marketing at Roland Corporation Australia, joined with Lindy Morrison, ex drummer in The Go Betweens and now case worker with Support Act, to announce a new partnership between the AMA and Support Act. Support Act will now provide their services to participants and ex-participants in the music products industry when they are in need or suffering hardship.

The AMA kicked it off with donating a dollar for every diner - \$600. Roland matched that with double - \$1200. CMI pledged - \$600. Rode Microphones pledged \$600. Hal Leonard Australia pledged \$600. TL Audio Australia pledged \$600. MusicLink pledged \$2,000. Billy Hyde's pledged \$1,000. Many people filled envelopes with everything from folding stuff to the change in their pockets. And every cent counts for this great and needy cause.

For more info about Support Act, go here:

www.supportact.com.au



16 SEND MONITORING WITH A&H

According to Carey Davies, Allen & Heath's head of design "the evolution of multiple wedge and stereo in-ear systems means the required size for a typical monitor console has jumped dramatically." GL2800M is his answer. It's a fully-featured yet very affordable dedicated monitor console with 16 mixes, a built-in mic splitter and a comprehensive dual output engineer's wedge/IEM monitoring system.

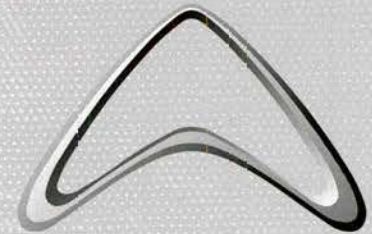
Mechanically similar to the GL2800 with individual PCB's and nutec pot construction, the GL2800M is available in 24, 32 and 40 channel frame sizes. Its 16 mixes can be globally assigned as mono or stereo with each stereo mix providing level and pan control as well as stereo AFL signal checking. Mixes can be configured as 'wedge' or 'IEM' so that AFL automatically routes to the engineer's speaker or in-ears as appropriate.

The new console, a derivative of the popular GL2800, assists at set-up and sound check with a built-in oscillator/pink noise generator and talkback which can be directed to each performer or to FOH. So that monitor engineers can listen to a wedge or an IEM mix exactly as a performer hears them, ie through a monitor speaker or In-Ear, the GL2800M has the necessary outputs to facilitate.

Each channel includes HPF, mix polarity, 4 band EQ with two mid sweeps, mute and PFL. Each master includes a polarity switch, swept HPF to cut unwanted low end and improve amplifier efficiency, wedge/IEM AFL, mute and a 'dim' button which cuts 6dB to quickly catch problem feedback. In addition mixes 1-8 include a 2-band swept frequency output EQ for tailoring the response of in-ears or for feedback control.

Big on being small the 32 channel GL2800M measures just 1.2m and is an easy two man lift. Retail price of GL2800M-24 is \$12,995.

www.supportact.com.au



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EVP-X SERIES

The Wharfedale professional EVP-X series loudspeaker systems are the latest evolution of the highly successful EVP family. The new EVP-X full range speaker system has been built around the development of the exceptional new compression driver. The 44mm HF driver brings unprecedented levels of dynamic pure clarity and sound quality, the crossover network has been designed to limit and protect the system from overloads. The ProTech driver protection system that is only seen on higher priced speaker systems, the sound performance out of these boxes doesn't match the price tag. The trapezoidal design gives low resonance and sonic accuracy in the low frequency range. The enclosure is built tough enough to withstand the rigours of the road, covered with a tough black industrial carpet, top hat for speaker stands and large handles with tough curved steel front grill. The speaker range comes in a 12" and 15" inch two way, monitor wedge design and 15" + 18" sub. The sub system features a dual voice coil woofer and low pass filtering when the job requires that kick ass punchy bass. Arguably this is the best value for money speaker system performance combination seen on the market today...

For more information, visit: the Australia
Distributors Website: www.cmi.com.au

BACK TO THE FUTURE WITH

COUNT DOWN

CX had trouble keeping away when far too many of the old bands we once worked with were dusted off and shown off with brand new production values. Julius Grafton went way down memory lane.....

Spectacular it was, and value for money at almost four hours running time. Countdown kicked off at 7.30 with John Paul Young singing alone on the thrust stage and a bunch of dance students doing a 2006 version of the Countdown TV show audience - hands outreached, hair akimbo. Half way through 'Yesterdays Hero' the rear revolve produces the house band whose work will back most of the acts.

There was the voice from the box, Gavin Wood who bantered effortlessly with host Ian 'Molly' Meldrum. Molly was the reason Countdown was such a central part of the music industry for two decades, and he is the reason that Michael Gudinski's Frontier Touring show worked so well.

In the first fifteen minutes there were four acts rolled out, looking and sounding as good as the house band and a professional production could make them. Within the first half hour there was rock greatness with the likes of Choirboys showing that you can still manage a long career and play like you mean it. There was cheese, courtesy of the irrepressible Brian Mannix of the Unfunny X-Men, and there was de ja-vu with Cheetah, the sister act that came on looking quite fabulous.

Real star quality emerged early with Leo Sayer who managed to engage with a female member of the audience, undo her hair and lay her on the floor of the stage for a kiss, without missing a line of the ballad. This was quality stuff.....

Alex Smith also managed to connect with the audience and to conjure up the sense of how it was by singing Gary Frost's smash hit for Moving Pictures, 'What About Me?' Acute memories of Mr. Smith's intense/egocentric stage persona were quickly revived this night.

By the second hour the audience had been up on their feet and back to the chair eight times, and a form of first half closure arrived with Hush, complete with fire breathing dragons and an extra guitarist. It was a strange segment made messy by the improbability of reviving a band whose singer has perhaps had some problems (and hopefully dealt with them) and who really only had one standout musician, Les Gock. They did what they set out to do, and all credit to them. Les rocked hard, but you would expect that from the guy who made a motza from Song Zu.

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For more information, visit the Australia Distributors Website: www.cmi.com.au



The Wolfgramm Sisters. Pic by Bob King.

HALF TIME

In the foyer the punters' feedback was excellent and the merchandise stand swamped with people fussing over XXL T shirts and Sherbet CDs. Memo Gudinski: it was physically difficult to buy a show program. Strangely the junk food stands were swamped as well. My girl Karen and I noticed on the way in that a lot of the audience seemed to exude nostalgia with hotdogs and hot drinks.

Part Two kicked off the gusto and delivered the first bumper of the night when James Reyne was hung out to dry by a technical fault that should not have happened. He stood strumming a dead acoustic for what seemed like minutes, telling the audience there were "problems with the backstage wireless", and glaring at the foldback desk. After about 30 seconds of this, someone found the correct wireless frequency or patch and the guitar was heard. Reyne didn't recover, and messed up his Australian Crawl medley.

There were some 'who were they' and even 'why' moments, with performers who could have stayed home and contributed to a trimming of the show duration. Likewise I was unsure that the Countdown Dance Segment was worthwhile, the four dancers on the tour were exceptional, but adding on thirty dance school kids and doing Flash dance, Fcc:lose,

Michael Jackson and Grease segments? Save the time and the money, I say!

If you wanted a real musical moment there were plenty, for my money it was Renee Geyer who good naturedly flounced her way through her big pop hit 'Say You Love Me', a song she no longer performs at her shows, then demolished the house with 'Man's World', made even mightier by Bruce Haymes on keyboard.

The house band were just mighty, made even more so by the three startlingly good Wolfgramm sisters - Kelly, Talei and Eliza - on backup vocals. Two guitars, two keyboards, bass, drums played left handed by musical director Peter Luscombe and two brass joined often by the omnipresent Wilbur Wilde made for a tight and almost note perfect band who were mainly toddlers when the acts they were backing first sung the songs.

Swanee and John English had presence and charisma, Grace Knight from Eurogliders looked and played the part, and four Chantoozies came on and reprised the girl band thing, looking great at the same time.

Show standouts included Frankie J. Holden who played off the aforementioned Wilbur Wilde, Joe Camileri made sax sexy again, and wow - Mondo Rock really did rock

30 Years and Still Rocking the House

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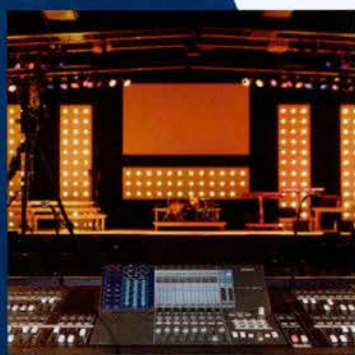
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and got my personal band of the night award.

Eventually after Molly's Humdrum segment complete with the desk, after good banter and bad, after a witty but sensitive tribute to the singers who have left us by a videotaped Red Symons, the headline act cranked up and left me flat. I was a card carrying Sherbet fan, and have always been impressed by Daryl Braithwaite's vocal delivery and style.

It wasn't that guitarist Harvey James spent the whole of the first song with his back to audience, trying to coax sound out his amp. Probably it wasn't even that the second song of the short set was a forgettable flipside that was included only because there was an entire film clip from the early days that the band could play to in sync.

It was all there, really good lighting by Hugh Taranto, supplied by Chameleon with a crew of five. A Vertec PA from Jands, mixed really well by Greg Rosman. Big screen video with tight camera work from Black Sheep (see side story). A great set designed by Otello Stolfo and built by ESS.

But at the end, the very late end, the headline band fell flat. They were then relegated to being just part of a show with almost 80 performers, most of who came on stage for the obligatory and cheesy all star band closing segment, that mainly seemed to comprise a lot of skylarking and the stage managed ejection of Wilbur Wilde.

A great night. Lots of fun.

It's conceivable that there could even be a Countdown II with Men at Work plus Hunters and Collectors headlining. There are enough other acts still creaking around, like Radiators, Mentals, and perish the thought, Jimmy and The Bcys. **CX**

COUNTDOWN TOURING VIDEO

Blacksheep Productions supplied the complete videc production solution for the show which included cameras, replay, projection, and a giant LED video screen with Blacksheep Project Manager Angelo Russo overseeing it all.

It was clear to producers from the beginning that video would play an important part in the overall design of the show. Show Director Paul Drane worked as Director/Producer on the original Countdown in the 1970s (incidentally, he also created pioneering music film clips, including AC/DC's infamous Long Way to the Top), and as such he placed strong emphasis on the visual element. When planning the event, Paul went to the ABC's archive to source a range of video clips. These were then compiled into a number of "breakers" and supporting clips which, when combined with a number of generic graphic backgrounds to be played behind songs, totalled over 100 video cues. These clips were played off Blacksheep's hard drive system. Paul also specified 4



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cameras to cover the show live-to-screen.

A main feature of the set was the large LED screen – Blacksheep supplied a 9.24m x 5.67m (11 x 9 panels) Monstavisision LED screen. There were a number of benefits in using this screen – rigging was quick as the panels traveled pre-rigged and pre-cabled in pairs; power supplies are separate to the screen itself, keeping weight down (the whole screen including cabling and rigging weighed in at only 3800kg); and programming was done wirelessly from front-of-house allowing for on-the-fly tuning throughout the show. The screen was fed an SDI signal via fibre optic, with a copper backup. Screen techs Joe Borden and Chris Deschamps kept the screen looking good during the tour.

Either side of the LED were two Barco R10s projecting onto 24' x 13.5' front projection screens. The Barcos were also fed SDI.

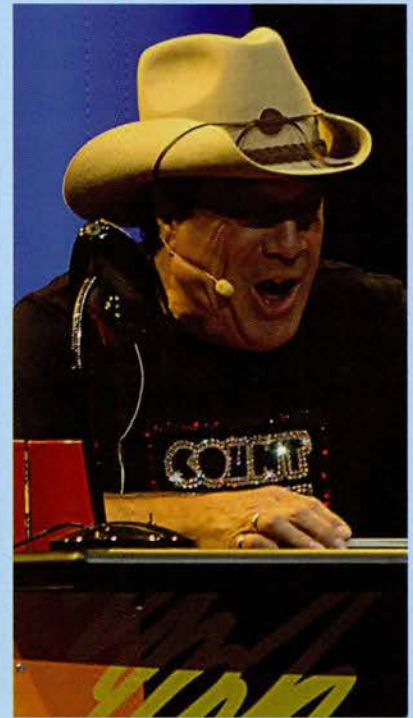
The whole system was driven by one of Blacksheep's portable Outside Broadcast units. 4 Sony

D50 cameras were placed around the venue – one camera sat in the middle of the audience on a jib (to allow for moves over the audience when they stood up to dance along); one camera was placed in the pit in front of the stage; and two were on-stage with wide lenses. Camera operators Mick Eady, Brandon Batten, Mark "BJ" Walkden, and Tony Marinceski put in the hard yards every show to get through 4 hours of hand held camera work (therapeutic massage fees were not included in Blacksheep's original quote).

These cameras fed SDI signals into two Sony DFS switchers – one for the main LED screen, and one for the projection screens. Other inputs included hard drive replay (which was controlled by TD David Beattie), a Betacam SP player, and other effects generated within the system.

Paul Drane (and wife Margaret, who worked as Director's Assistant) collaborated with Director Ben Alcott to get the best images to screen. The system configuration

allowed for any source to be displayed on any screen, and often all four cameras were on-screen at the same time so good communication was vital.



THE COUNTDOWN SPECTACULAR

Producer – Michael Gudinski
Co-Producer – Ian Smith
Concept Liaison, Host & Hat – Ian Meldrum
Director – Paul Drane
Writer – Margaret Drane
Set Designer – Otello Stolfo
Lighting Designer – Hugh Taranto
Technical Director – Eric Robinson
Production Manager – Peter McFee

The Countdown Spectacular House Band:

Peter Luscombe – Musical Director & drums
Bruce Haymes – keyboard
Lilith Lane – piano
Bill McDonald – bass
Ashley Naylor – guitar
David Newdick – trumpet
Mal Pinkerton – guitar
Paul Williamson – saxophone
Eliza Wolfgramm – backing vocals
Talei Wolfgramm – backing vocals

Tour Management:

Yael Cohn – Assistant to Ian Meldrum
Susie Steadman – Assistant Tour Manager

Bret Chin Quan – Assistant Tour Manager
Adrian Carbone – Assistant Tour Manager

Production:

Colin Skals – Assistant Production Manager
Denise Turra – Production Assistant

Stage:

Dugald McAndrew – Stage Manager
Dave Mayer – Backline technician
Matt English – Backline technician

Wardrobe:

Julie Smith – Costume Design

P.A:

Jands Production Services
Greg Rosman – Audio Director
Michael Burdett – System Engineer
Tristan Johnson – Monitor Engineer
Grant Barron – Monitor Engineer
Joel Whyman – Monitor Rigger
Matthew Ownsnett – Audio Technician
Guy Gilchrist – Audio Tech

Lighting:

Chameleon
Graham Walker – Lighting Crew Chief
Michael Simpson – Lighting

Technician
John Streckfess – Lighting Technician
Derick Weith – Lighting Technician
Danny North – Lighting Technician

ESS:

Set Builder

Pyro Oz:

Peter McGill – Pyrotechnics

Screens & Cameras:

Blacksheep
Ben Alcott – Screens Switcher
David Beattie – Screens TD
Tony Marinceski – Camera
Brandon Batten – Camera
Mick Eady – Camera
Mark Walkden – Camera
Joe Bordon – LED Technician
Chris Deschamps – Screens/VT

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PRODUCTION NEWS

By GREENROOM GERTIE

DOME OP OK AFTER CHAIR FALL

The Boy from Oz company were shocked when followspot operator Andrew Oakshot fell from his chair above the stage, pre-show in Adelaide. It appears that he was not connected to the fall arrest system at the time. Local safety inspectors are investigating. Although hospitalized Andrew is said to have been very fortunate, CX was told he is expected to make a full recovery.

BLASTER BATES EXPIRES

According to The Stage (London), Blaster Bates has died at the age of 83. He was a demolition guy whose use of explosives ended up the topic of a one man show that toured the UK. His slogan was "I'll blast anything" and he had a habit of carrying around some spare dynamite in his pockets. Just in case. Blaster

died of natural causes. Blaster is not related to Master Bates.

WIRELESS RAGE

Theatres in the UK are trying to have the law there changed to allow the use of mobile phone blockers within the venue. Some actors have adopted a policy of walking off stage if a mobile phone rings. More than 75% of audiences agree that a ban, or electronic spectrum blocking, or on the spot fines, should be introduced.

REPENT, AND HE DID

Just how civilised the theatre industry can be ... Director Tim Highman was sacked by the Theatre Royal, Stratford East after the venue alleged thirty thousand pounds went missing. He made a full confession and apology, repaid the money, and told the industry that his actions were in comprehensible. After obtaining counselling, he found a job in another company, whose management were fully aware of his mistake. Could that happen in Australia?

20 MINUTES TOO LONG?

Star Wars has been rewritten for the stage, in a show that runs for just 20 minutes. It was first played recently in London, by the people who (re) wrote the Complete Works of William Shakespeare in 90 Minutes. CX applauds this initiative, having never quite 'got' the six movies despite having seen them all.

PIGEONS UPSTAGE FESTIVAL

The Quadrangle Festival at Texarkana, Texas featured more than bands. Some of the 40,000 punters at this year's event were startled to see suicide pigeons. It appears the birds had consumed poisoned corn at an adjoining farm. An ice cream vendor told Pollstar magazine that he saw a pigeon nose dive onto the concrete. "It just kind of hobbled over and around and sat there and twitched", he reported. This is now an extra line item for every festival safety officer.....

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ONLY IN EUROPE

For a sociocultural event you can't go past the Zürich Love Parade. It lasts from lunch till midnight. More than 35 "Love Mobiles" parade through the streets running at about half a mile per hour. I'd just love one of those to come past my place. They are long-bed trucks equipped with powerful sound systems, foam firing cannons, DJ booths, and Go Go platforms- basically dance music factories on wheels. More than a million people attend this, umm, event.

The history of the Zurich Street Parade goes back to 1992, when a Swiss student conceived an event based on Love, Freedom, Tolerance and Generosity. Although nobody believed in this student's project, two thousand people gathered together dancing freely along the streets of Zurich for an entire day in front of the flabbergasted local authorities. The number of 'demonstrators' grew from year to year to such degree that nowadays the Street Parade is considered the cities largest peaceful street event.

Strangely, even though the weather this year was cold and wet, the audience had a good time.

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NEW BLOOD PA OPERATOR

How a 15 year old school girl did a full band mix on a concert console – and survived. Our writer goes undercover to a church somewhere and is almost trampled by 500 pumped teenagers

If you mute the PA on Crown IQ, it stops. This was just one of my hurried lessons to Jess, aged 15, at a youth gig on a recent Friday night. They asked me to assist Jess on her first front of house mixing gig.

Jess had spent a few months doing foldback in the youth hall. They have a Soundcraft SM12 monitor desk, and she was uncommonly good at understanding what the musicians wanted. When the girl with the semi acoustic looked over, Jess knew to crank channel 21 on send 4. She knew that send 4 was the wedge in front of the muso in question.

This youth hall was very well endowed with audio. There are eight sends of monitors, 10 EAW wedges. All the EQ is locked up on Media Matrix so the operator just rolls up, switches on, and starts mixing. The mic up is standard, the drums are left in place, and the two guitar players drag their combo amps in and even point the mic and boom in roughly the right place.

It's a fantastic place for growing

new sound people – there are a bunch of college students there, from around the planet, and you can find all accents and all kinds of wacky ideas behind the sound desks. To the enormous credit of someone, young Jess got the bug for sound, behind that SM12.

So here we were, at 5 minutes past 4 on a Friday. Jess had rushed breathlessly from year 8 at her high school, and trotted in with her newest possession, a gorgeous pair of Sennheiser closed ear headphones that her mum had donated. I'd suggested they go to Jaycar, since I doubted that a 15 year old could afford the right gear, but here we were – and those cans sounded great!

CRASH COURSE IN LIVE SOUND

I teach sound basics at my college, but we start with a Yamaha 8 channel desk and a good text book – Live Sound Mixing by that Fry guy. Jess had the book, and had learned some

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Church audio training usually doesn't include anything to do with equalisation.

of the jargon. But she hadn't done my course, because she was being trained 'on the job', an opportunity that doesn't often arise.

Here are the things that can stop this mix', I told Jess. She has learning eyes, the kind that see and register things. In short order we went through muting the PA on IQ – she was amazed that there were 3 delay sends, 2 sub sends, and 4 more bi-amped clusters – 13 amplifier channels to verify.

We walked around and heard it was all working OK.

Then we focused on the 1,700 knobs and 800 switches on the Soundcraft MH4. This is a very sweet analogue console, with 48 channels, 8 VCA subgroups, and sophisticated channel EQ. A lot for a 15 year old to handle. Probably also a lot for a 49 year old, but I had already mastered this console!

FIRST THINGS FIRST

We grabbed the three hand held Shure wireless microphones and I had Jess talk into each one, to see and hear straight up what the differences were. Sure enough, each one had a different input gain set at the top of the input channel strip; and different EQ.

We matched the three of them to the one that sounded the best – by copying the EQ controls for those from the best one. The channel input gain was set different for each, so that we had +5dB on the light ramp next to the channel fader, set to a firm voice level without shouting.

Then I went to the stage and checked the four wired SM 58 microphones for Jess, while she adjusted the input gain for each one.

This done, we knew we had 7 microphones that were roughly matched. We knew they all worked, and that they sounded semi-OK. There were a couple of Samson headset wireless systems, these are probably the only wireless systems I have seen where the transmitter is in the head band, so there is no belt pack. They work really well, but sound fairly ordinary.

Jess told me they never got used for this Youth gig, so we left them alone. As chance would have it, one did end up getting used, so we should have checked them!

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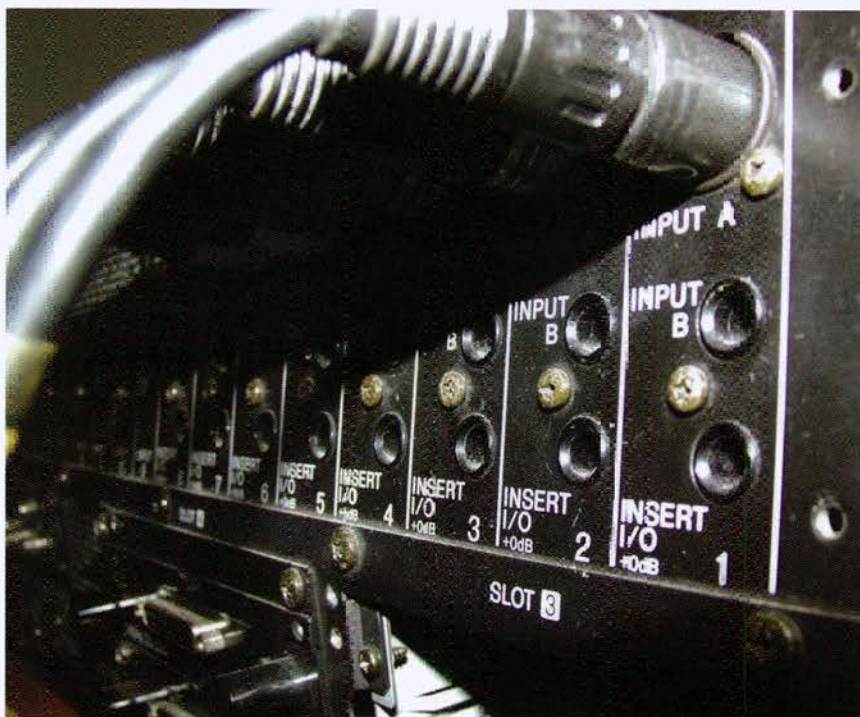
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Plug and patch - the other part missing, along with trouble shooting, is most church audio training

MIX KILLERS

The LCR button on any given channel will stop the mix. Jess wanted to know why this happens, so I showed her. 'When you select LCR this means Left, Centre, Right - so the signal is routed to the Centre output fader, the black one next to the pair of yellow main output faders. But it will go only to the centre, unless you pan left or right, whereupon it starts to go left, or right. Try it. ...'

LCR is confusing at first, and sure enough, any channel with the pan control centred at 12 o'clock high will stop when that button is depressed, unless of course you actually have a centre speaker cluster. Which we did not.

The next sound killer was the 'Mix' button which de-selects the channel from the output routing. It is backlit, so easier to spot than the LCR, which is right next to it.

Finally, the fairly obvious 'Mute' button is on each channel, plus the VCA masters. I showed Jess the master masters which allow a preset pattern of mutes, those buttons are in a depressed area so they are more difficult to accidentally press.

She was ready to know what could go wrong, and had already earned the hard way, on monitors, about wireless batteries going flat, and things stopping abruptly mid song.

MUSICIANS

Sooner or later, we needed to communicate with the most random component of the system - the musicians. They were fiddling about, making noise, being disorganized, and occasionally looking to the front of house position.

'They want you to take control', I told the 15 year old. 'Tell them on the desk microphone you are ready for a soundcheck'.

I'd already had a bit of a talk about the difference between a soundcheck and a rehearsal. But these borders get muddled, and I find it really helps everyone if the sound engineer just takes control and establishes what the band are thinking they are doing.

'Get the drummer to start', I said. For this, I had a ready showed Jess the universal hand signals for a drum check. Pointing low, at the kick drum, usually inspires the drummer to kick the beater. They are accustomed to doing that first. Then a vertical impression of repeated snare action will get the snare going. A horizontal slash is the 'kling' or stop command. Flicking the right wrist will usually mean 'hi-hats' and a pointing action gets the first rack tom going. When the rack(s) and the floor tom are checked, a left-right ping pong pointing action means that the drummer should hit the toms in sequence. Finally a circular action with your finger means play a pattern.

At this venue the system is equalized, the drums are not changed, and the chances are the previous operator has set a semi OK drum sound on the parametric channel EQ. The main thing Jess needed to sort was the channel input gain, since this drummer was hitting at a different velocity to whoever was there previously.

It's also essential to visually check all the drum microphones are in place before you start.

We didn't spend long on the drum check. Nothing on this earth is as annoying as a prolonged drum check. We moved along through Bass, the 2 electric guitars, 2 keyboards, and semi acoustic. Then it was time for a vocal check.

'Tell them you are done, that they should rehearse, and that you'll get the vocal sorted out during the rehearsal', I told Jess. The monitor engineer had materialized, not introduced himself, and was organizing the vocal monitor levels. Sorting out those levels onstage is the primary thing before a rehearsal.

MIXING 101

'Just listen to what comes off the stage, with the PA turned all the way down', I said. 'You need to process in your mind the things you hear, before you can start doing anything'. Sure enough there was a wall of drum noise, cymbals, snare, hardly any kick, and strangely plenty of bass guitar, which proved the monitors were already running too loud, since there was no bass amp, just a DI direct into the PA system.

It was relatively straight forward to carve some audio into this, and from here forward it was just a matter of staying slightly ahead of the action on stage.

Jess had managed to command some respect from the musicians, who learned to stop asking me for things because at this stage I decamped and left the rehearsal to happen with Jess at the console. I was outside, a quick phone call away.

Things were routine now, and I settled in to watch the unique entertainment which included tribal wars where four leaders each tied a gherkin on a string to their ankle, and ran in circles while two fourteen year olds on all fours tried to bite part off. This degenerated into a gherkin fight as small chunks of the green garnish hurtled around the hall.

Tonight was slightly more sophisticated than a previous episode, where an entire McDonald's happy meal – cold burger, fries and warm coke – were placed into a food processor and whizzed into a happy bubbling mass. Or mess. Then, a brave volunteer from each tribe chugged as much of the glutinous, sticky, fatty mess as possible. Buckets were on hand for any returns. One girl turned green and ran out.

The band played hard, impressive since they were teenagers, the singers sung, danced and jumped, and hundreds of teenagers had a whale of a time without booze or drugs. No one swore, everyone was happy and nice, and I was left wondering what planet I was on.

If this was flight training, then Jess was ready for her first solo, which I am sure will have happened around the time this is read.

CHURCH AUDIO TRAINING

Aside from college courses, the church is the new training ground for

audio people. In my time working with a band was the training ground, but those days are mainly over. Now there are bands in churches and with the ultra fast growing Pentecostal youth movement, there are many large and very well equipped churches popping up.

I've met a lot of church trained sound people, and most have picked up some terrific experience. But almost all have no experience at plug and patch, and especially no experience at setting up and equalizing a system. Along with very limited trouble shooting ability.

I was amazed to see a church crew at a youth camp set up the monitor console next to the front of house console, because they could not figure out how to get a split happening with the multicore - and to put the thing side stage; where it was needed.

Even with these shortcomings, the church trained sound dude - or dudette - is uniformly more useful than people who enroll in a long and expensive recording studio engineering course – where the

whole paradigm is focused on a pre-wired, pre-patched sound proof room and the luxury of awfully fabulous studio monitors. The studio is a place where if it doesn't work or sound right, you just stop and do it again. Maybe after having a beverage or a meal break. There are around one THOUSAND kids enrolled in these studio / sound engineer courses across Australia right now, and almost everyone we know in the professional audio industry holds the music production (studio engineering) qualification in low regard.

The main message here is for church audio trainers and team leaders to emphasize to their crew that although they may become very proficient within the church, there is another world out there, and over confidence needs to be avoided. I say this because some of the church sound dudes I meet (usually those from overseas) have an inflated confidence that has not been abated by reality, and I really hate to be the reality check that they need to have.



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SHOW SAFETY

Barriers...confidence in a brand

By **MAT DOHERTY, THE UNUSUAL COMPANY**

With today's music events relying so heavily on certifications and the 'sign off' by accredited engineers, it is important that discussion be kept alive when issues that can affect safety come up. One of the most important items of infrastructure that we employ when building our events is the crowd control barrier. Currently in the world market there are two main barrier brands that are accepted widely as being the best.

When I say "the best" I am, like most industry professionals, relying on the history and reputation of these credible barrier companies. These companies are constantly studying their products in use and revising designs, as well as working with the industry to come up with new and more efficient designs.

In my position, I am often asked my opinion of this product or that product and, equally as often, asked to endorse various products. I always avoid aligning myself with one particular product but when it comes to barriers I find that I must make a statement. Not a statement of outright endorsement, but rather a cautionary message to other event managers about the possible traps that one can fall into.

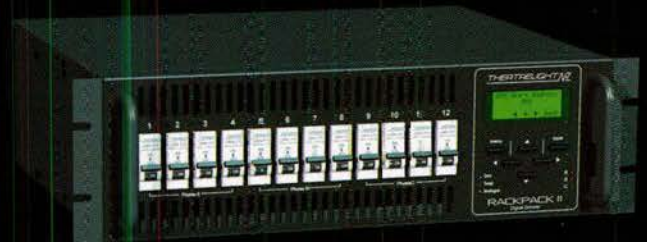
The game we play in the world of large scale outdoor event management, especially in the area of music events, is one of percentages. Every little thing must be looked at as the big picture is only a sum of all the parts.

The barrier plays a big part in managing a crowd safely. More than the actual physical barrier it is the careful positioning of this that is key. Whether an event requires a secondary barrier system or not. Whether there should be a controlled area where capacity is managed throughout the day etc etc.

My point is that whilst we are continually monitoring and managing our show, we should be able to rely on certain things. Our responsibility to the audience is primary and we cannot afford to be distracted from this. The idea that a barrier could fail is not something that we like to think about but think about it we must, as such an occurrence could cause loss of life. I have managed a show where the barrier did in fact fail. It did not break but we spotted a weld that had fractured and acted quickly to reinforce the barrier so that the show could continue safely. No one was injured and the show was only halted for a brief time. I learnt from this and implemented several changes and procedures to ensure that this would not happen again.

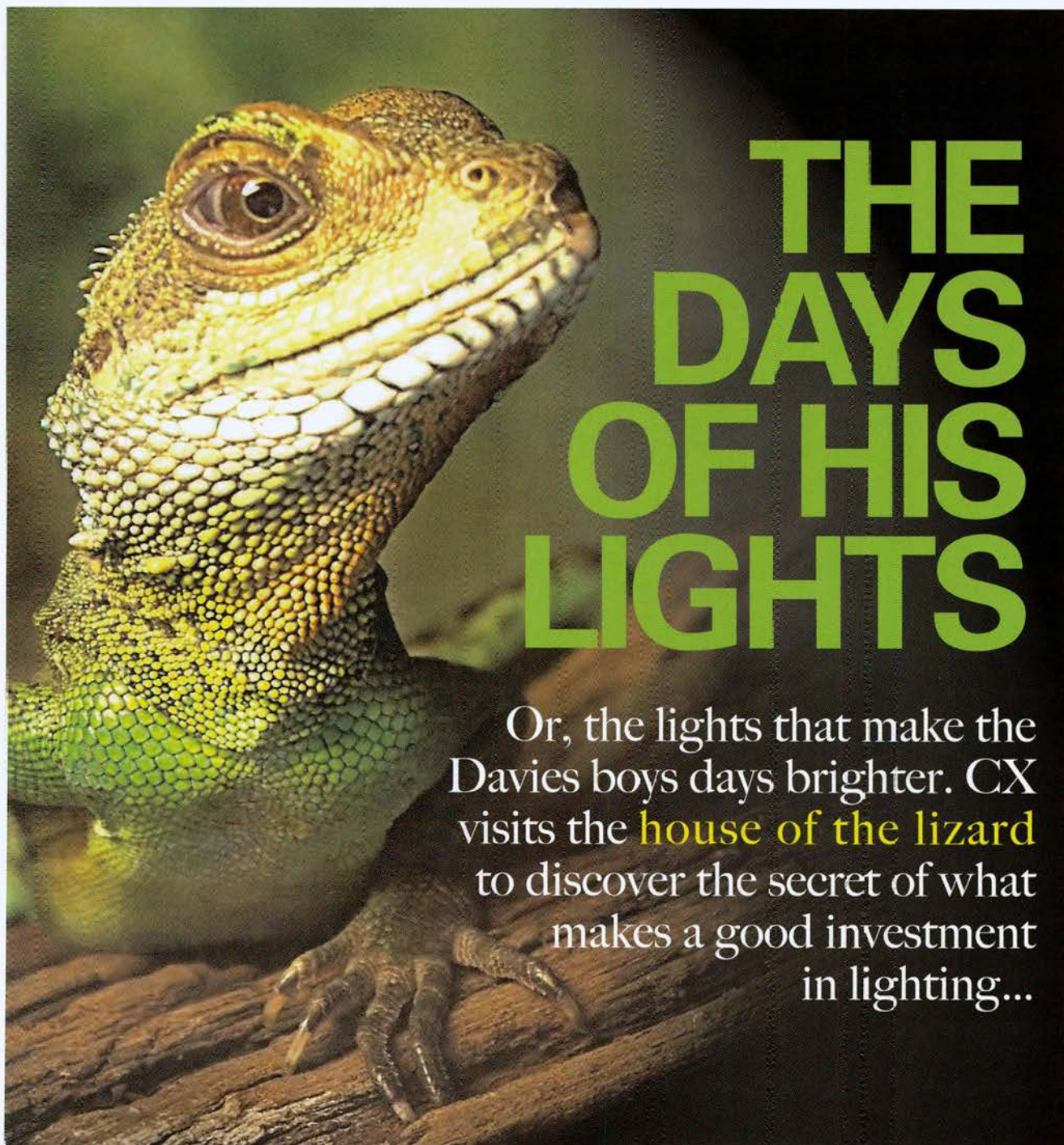
I use Mojo Barriers and Blunt Barriers on all my shows. I am not here to tell you to go and only use Mojo or Blunt. I am here to tell you to make sure that the barrier you use is certified, regularly tested, and that the company who provides it is committed to working with you to ensure the best possible result. This is one area where you should never compromise because of budget or other difficulties. It is simply not worth it. You can change the stage...not a big deal...you can change the sound company...also not a big deal...lights...the same...but barrier??? Dont go there. **CX**

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THE DAYS OF HIS LIGHTS

Or, the lights that make the Davies boys days brighter. CX visits the **house of the lizard** to discover the secret of what makes a good investment in lighting...

The light that really built the foundations of Tony and Greg Davies' Chameleon Touring Systems was the Leko. Made by A titan, the 360Q was and still is an inexpensive 1000 watt profile spot with an axial lamp. When it came out, the choice had been a heavier and much more expensive Strand or CCT profile spot. The Leko was brighter, lighter and much cheaper.

Fast forward twenty plus years and Chameleon now have a more robust and better version of the Leko, the ETC Source 4. Chameleon have 3,000 of them at last count. Brighter, lighter

and cheaper is a good principle for choosing lights, says Tony.

"The Jands Instinct desk was a defining product for us", he says, "at the time most other desks were analogue", needing a control wire for every channel. "I could buy the Instinct for the cost of a concert multicore with 14 pin carnons and a pin matrix patch at the dimmers". This Australian made, dmx controlled desk was acceptable to the Chameleon client base back then, and if it wasn't then it was not uncommon for a producer to hire an Avab or Celco console from someone

else, while Chameleon did the rest of the show.

Coming off the back of touring Australian bands in pubs, Chameleon picked up some smaller corporate work, and theatre work in conjunction with the late Roger Barratt. Theatre did not embrace moving lights until later, but some moving mirror movers were commercially viable for corporate gigs.

' Back then if you wanted Vari-Lites you needed to get 12 or more, with a trained operator and an Artisan console (with a backup console). Whereas I could send four Golden



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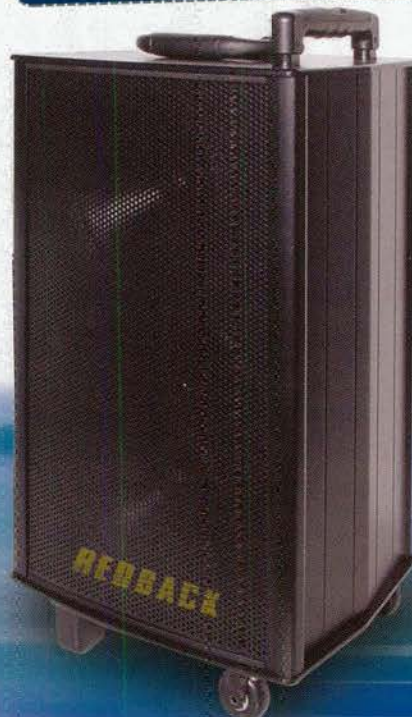
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Tony Davies.

Scar 3, a couple of DMX heads, and run them off the show board."

Moving lights came into existence alongside a variety of specialized moving disco effects, like Astro Disco, Astro Fagg, Spiders and Galaxy Balls. Tony worked for Lightmoves who had a lot of them, and recalls shuffling inventory with Francesco Calvi who worked across town at the opposition; Graftons Lighting.

A really aspirational part of the Star Light (as Chameleon were then known) inventory was the Dynalight cimner rack, with circuit breakers and rack mounting kit. "At the time Strand offered the green Min Pac with proprietary ceramic fuses that you had to buy from an Authorised Strand Outlet. As if they were on every corner. And they cost a packet, so paper clips and cigarette paper got popular...."

The first really deep breath purchase that Tony made, when his business was called Star Light, was a dozen Martin Pro 12C0 RoboScans. Shortly after this he got 8 AutoCans, the remote controlled par can. "We decided the Par E4 bubbles were too heavy, since they kept clagging out, so we put RayLights in there".

At the end of the 1980's, Vari-Light was it. The Pan Command system, which Tony says was better than Vari-Lite, was just emerging and Trevor Lloyd's Concert Lighting Systems in Melbourne bought a rig full. Tony also competed against Colin Baldwin, who had his own 'Trcg Board' desks that were very popular at the time.

Jands released a memory board called the Aurora (before the Instinct) and it had troubles. They later quietly bought back all but one Aurora, and arranged for them to be destroyed. The surviving Aurora appeared at the ENTECH 2000 museum display, "it was still marked up from one of my Mental as Anything gigs", Tony laughed

Back then Chameleon were using the Zero 88 Eclipse Touring Desks, which actually had the amazing addition of a cigarette lighter. "That's why I bought it", Tony laughed. "and to think that today we are whacking guys over the head for smoking near the equipment!"

At the time the other really big investment that Chameleon made was a bunch of Colourset Par 64

Scrollers, made in Sydney by Lee Conlon. They went on to own almost 100, and still have them today, alongside another 870 Wybron and Rainbow changers.

"Those Colourset scrollers were really reliable, they had two motors not one motor and a belt. We upgraded them to Version Two, and have probably changed all the motors by now, but they keep going. They are out on Australian Idol right now".

With more Clay Paky Golden Scans, purchased in job lots of four, Chameleon suddenly saw that the era of the disco effect was over. "There was no point having different fixtures doing different things, when a moving mirror could do it all", Tony says.

Then Clay Paky released the Tiger Scan, the first fixture to do rotating gobos, and with a 1200 watt lamp as well. In the early 1990's, Clay Paky reigned supreme. Until Martin released the Mac 500 and the Mac 600 around ten years ago. Tony ordered 12 of each. They went on to buy 300.

Today Chameleon own 1,380 moving head fixtures, and most of these are by Martin. There is a growing inventory of Vari-Lite, and a few High End Systems Studio Color units, purchased for a musical.

The Mac 2000 was a watershed investment, because it seemed to increase demand for Mac 600s "as fillers, the way we used to put Par cans around Mac 500s and 600s, now people were asking for Mac 600s as well. In fact I had to buy more Mac 600s for the Commonwealth Games this year".

Alongside Martin movers, the other constant in the last decade at Chameleon has been the Jands desk, racks and power distribution systems.

Both Jands and Show Technology (importers of Martin) have been very good supporters of Chameleon, Tony says. "When I first bought a bunch of second hand gear from Jands, I asked Mike Tanner what it would have cost me new. It wasn't going to happen, but I just wanted to know. So he took the time and the trouble to quote it all out as if it were new for me. I appreciated that", Tony says.

Today's real big news at Chameleon, and in professional lighting, is the LED. Take a four way cyc light as an example, compared to a Chroma bank. "The Chroma Bank costs way more, but with the cyc light you have to test and tag four leacs, replace lamps and lamp bases and cut colour. The Chroma just plugs in, uses very little power, and doesn't need colour or lamps."

The division between video and lighting is dissolving too. Chameleon co-own ten Mainlite LED curtains with TDC, a Sydney vision specialist production company. "Until now we have avoided buying media servers, but now we have seven", says Tony. He doesn't rule out buying LED panels when and if the time is right. "We buy what people want us to buy", he says.

Labour saving is a big issue these days, with a shortage of skilled labour.

"That's why I am in love with the Tungsten mover", says Tony, "since there is no (discharge lamp) ballast, the lamp is off when it is off, not cooking the inside of the fixture, and you don't need to carefully match the colour temperature of the all the discharge lamps in the preo phase".

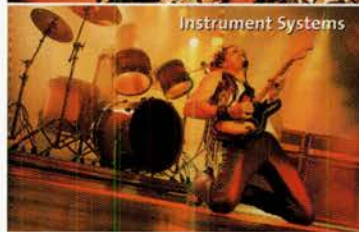
But it is the LED that will be the really big change for lighting people. "It uses next to no power. It runs cool. It's safe. You don't cut colour. There is no glass. LED is very exciting!"



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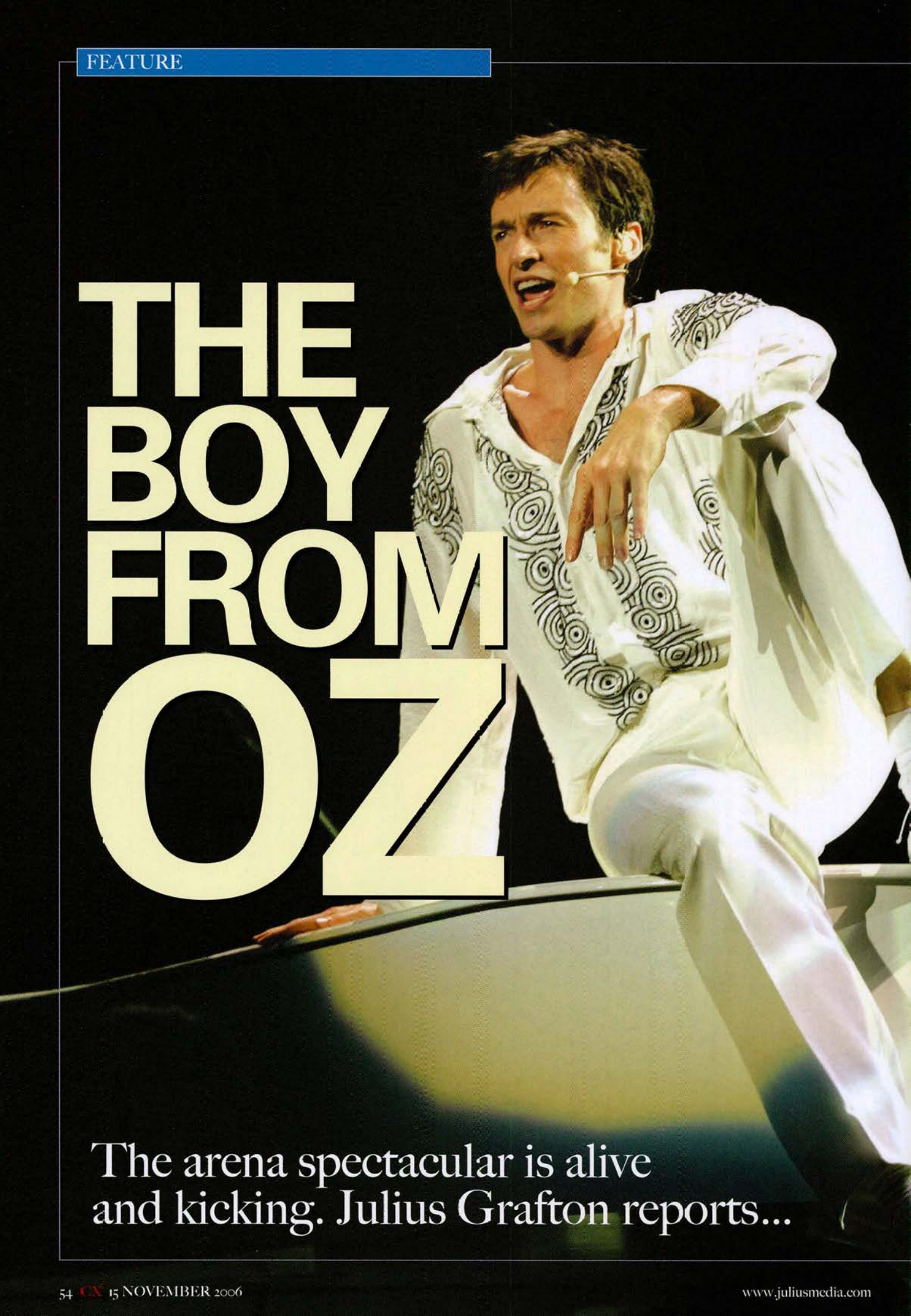
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THE BOY FROM OZ



The arena spectacular is alive and kicking. Julius Grafton reports...

By JULIUS GRAFTON

The modern era of the arena spectacular started in 1992 when Jesus Christ Superstar ran for a staggering 93 shows, mainly off the back of John Farnham's career ascendancy. It helped that the Christian community flocked as well.

Then came Grease, with 75 shows the first time, and 18 last year, also with John Farnham headlining.

The Boy from Oz has just finished 42 arena sized shows across Australia, which is probably as good a result as you can get in this entertainment awash era. Certainly the word we heard was that the producers; Ben Gannon and Robert Fox; were more than happy with the run. Tickets started at \$90 and ranged up to \$250, so the tour gross was likely over A\$50 million before merchandise.

Much of the time, tickets were very scarce, and the show we attended had just two empty seats that we could see, out of 12,000 – a complete sell out. Media were complaining there were no comps, and the very formidable and amusing Executive Producer Lesley Shaw confirmed this. Ms Shaw runs a tight ship, which is exactly what a Producer should do.

These arena spectaculars are part theatre, part concert tour. This one sits half and half, with a story line, dialogue and of course Those Songs from Peter Allen, one of Australia's most successful songwriters. The show reminds just how successful he was, his material was recorded far and wide.

House lights down and the opener was worth the hurry-on from the ushers. Australian born Hugh Jackman descends

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atop a white grand piano, cressed head to toe in a mirrored glitter suit, singing 'Not the Boy Next Door'.

The stage stretches the maximum possible width of the arena, and has an upper deck upstage that contains the orchestra of nine touring and seventeen local players, lead by Michael Tyack. They are in front of a very large LED video wall which in turn is set behind an arch of LED elements. The LED wall and the LED in general does a huge job on this production; the wall is like an animated backdrop most of the time, and has camera images at crucial moments.

Under the orchestra deck are access doors, since an arena has no wings, and a split stairway which also is loaded with those most incredibly friendly showbiz devices, Light Emitting Diodes. The stairways



John Vasey and Bob Daniels.

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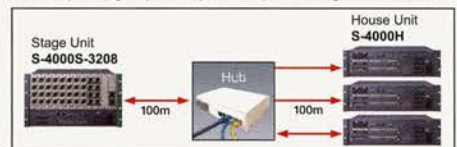
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Brendan Kane and Bob Daniels.



traverse the upper cheek face, according to what is next to arrive or depart.

Under the top lip of the upper deck are a line of movers, which spend most of the show pointed down to light the dock face of the deck.

The hand of Lighting Designer Patrick Wocroffe is seen early, with two audience trusses running out from the stage and providing the platform for plenty of crowd atmosphere. In the first moments of the show, L'Er Star Hugh Jackman

calls for Jason (Frapp, lighting operator, programmer, and deputy head electrician) to light the crowd. It is the start of an easy dialogue as Jackman bonds with the audience.

The Associate Lighting Designer was Richard Pacholski, and the lights came from Chameleon Touring Systems who also provided a crew.

The show is lit with an easy confidence, actual moves of the moving lights are considered and in context – a less mature designer would lose control with the scale of

the arena and the opportunity offered through the trust of the producers. This is one of those times when a big rig seems just big enough, when there is not dazzle for the sake of it, where the devices are used with intelligent thought. I think that's what people mean when they say 'intelligent lighting'. Isn't it?

If the lights are hitting the key, the video is the nailed down standout, the one technical element that is truly newest to the audience. They now expect large screen video, so there are two screens either side which faithfully reproduce camera work from the very capable Big Picture.

But it is the large LED video screen stage centre that does the lions share. It features really lovely, rich imagery created by Interactive Originals, who colluded with Director Kenny Ortega and show designer Brian Thomson to come up with city skylines, a Tenterfield pub backdrop, and appropriate stars and fireworks. That is all on screen, along with a digital deep red velour house curtain that does the show open and the close.

Sometimes, not often, the centre screen has a camera image, and when it does it adds intensity. The camera image on the LED screen seemed to be at moments of power, like the show closer, 'Once Before I Go'.

Man, this is the era of the LED and the big screen, and the excitement amongst the creative community about just what can be done on LED is downright contagious!

While Kenny Ortega and Brian Thomson were cooking up the looks, the feel and the visuals, Richard Martin (Technical Director) and John Vasey (Production Manager) were running the slide rule over what could actually be done in the arenas.

Pyrotechnics were ditched in favour of a big glitter burst; stage automation was pared back to a pair of scissor lifts. The flying (fake) white grand piano was never in danger of being rationalised, so a man lift and a catwalk for the talent were faithfully engineered into the show.

The show looked lavish, and the direction is on the money with the stage used well. It was a wardrobe heavy show with over 400 costumes, designed by Roger Kirk.

Designer Brian Thompson: "Peter Allen always wanted to play his Radio City Music Hall spectacular to Australian audiences. My idea was to

RICHARD PACHOLSKI

was the Associate, working with designer Patrick Woodroffe who is one of the world's leading lighting designers. We spoke to Richard, having failed to connect with Mr. Woodroffe while he was in the country. These are Richard's words.....

Patrick devised three main looks for the show. They were one: the realistic scenes of the show lit in a traditional manner and look. Number two is what we call the limbo scenes which were non location specific scenes and third, the live concert scenes. The Boy from Oz script drifts between all these looks.

The "realistic" scenes were lit to suit the environment....a pub bar, a Hong Kong club, a disco, a New York apartment. Some are lit quite simply, others lit with complex cues.

The "limbo" scenes were lit very simply usually just with specials as they would simulate things like a phone call to someone, or an intimate thought in Peter Allen's head.

The "concert" scenes were treated like a Peter Allen live concert, with followspots, colourful backlight and effects where needed.

Patrick started with basic looks for all these scenes and over time built on them layer by layer. He never sat down to light one scene and then rejoiced by saying that's lit...next scene please. He let the lighting grow with the show, just like the performers build on their acting, or a director with his direction. I think that is part of the success of the lighting of Boy from Oz. The lighting helps tell the story.

Rarely did Patrick hit that "ballyhoo" button, but in saying that, the show still has a big lighting look with lots of tricks. Patrick is one of the few designers that know intimately what works and what does not work in an arena venue. He helped bring the audience into the story subconsciously, rather than try with razzle and dazzle. His lighting is one important part of a successful combination of director, choreographer, set designer, sound designer, costume designer, video designer, producer and of course... the star.

Patrick and I took no chances with our equipment list and asked for very specific tools for each job. The Martin Mac 2000's were the workhorse of the rig, ever reliable and punchy. The Vari*Lite VL500's were the only light to fit in some very tight spaces in the set and we were lucky their release date coincided with the start of this tour. The PULSAR Chromabanks gave us endless looks in the stair trucks and without PULSAR building the "worlds first" half bank we couldn't have used them at all.

And of course 285 of the first Element Leba Verse-Tubes in the country gave the arch the look it deserved. Threw in a MA GrandMA and a MARTIN maxedia and we had the tools.

But all this does not magically happen without the endless co-operation of Tony Davies and CHAMELEON TOURING SYSTEMS to give us the rig. And then add the tireless efforts of all the lighting touring crew....Dale, Jason, Adrian, Jeff, L'Argent, Rob and Gordo.

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"The arch referred to Radio City and the Hollywood Bowl as well but came from a desire to play the show under a beautiful rainbow - which culminated in the Rio rainbow parade. This shape is also a focussing spatial device and softens the edges of a huge video screen".

Audio is also on par with the rest of the production values; Michael Waters from Jands designed a system which delivered the goods. It was mixed fat, with plenty of drive from the rhythm section and more

than adequate vocal gain. Performers mostly used hand held wireless microphones for the 22 songs. Spoken dialogue was captured with head mic's.

The show was mixed initially by Michael Waters, who then left this in the hands of Tony Love, assisted by Pat Richardson.

If the house sound was complex, with as many as 70 people on stage, the monitors were enormously complicated. Bob Janies and Brendan Keane each drove a Yamaha PM5D console which ultimately fed 28 wireless transmitters. Most frequencies would end up being used

by more than one person. There were some ensemble sends where up to six multiple performers were on the one frequency. Some conventional foldback wedges were used around the stage, for dancers and for redundancy.

Bob had sub mixes of strings high (violins) and low (cellos and violas) coming from front of house, and sub mixes of groups from his colleague Brendan's console. He had midi scenes established so that he could shoot cues on Brendan's console if Brendan had to attend to a situation. They mixed from under the band stage, viewing the show on video

monitors.

There was a bunch of Aviom personal monitor mixers set up amongst the band, with sixteen sub mixes created out of one PM5D just for these. Any one Aviom user could custom create a mix of these sixteen inputs. Cat 5 cable fed each Aviom, with one PM5D console having two Aviom cards installed.

Bob says the show had around 100 foldback cues, there were plenty of mic on, mic off cues within songs. "It was our most technologically complex gig yet", he told CX.

Equally complex, the video control area fed two discrete forms of vision system, a pair of projection screens and the central wall of 138 Lighthouse panels, measuring 15.2 metres wide and almost 7 metres tall. It weighed in at around 7 tonnes, and had a 200 amp 3 phase power feed.

The video wall was flown, and then trimmed off to a position just above the band deck. The band deck itself was also flown up off the stadium floor during setup, then lowered on top of the stage which was wheeled into position using two forklifts. This

way the stage and the orchestra deck could be pre-rigged up at the sound console end of the arena floor, out of the way of the lighting, sound and video wall. Once those were flown, the stage was wheeled down and jacked up, off its wheels and levelled using spacers.

John Vasey showed me the customised stage framework, which was toured with the show and onto which Sico floor panels were placed at each venue. The floor didn't need to tour, since each arena has at least 115 floor panels, which is the number required.

The stage was supplied by Edwin Shirley Staging Australia, and with other items of set was trucked on five B doubles. Another 8 pantechs were required, three for lights, two for sound, and three for LED, video and wardrobe.


Aside from the touring party, there were up to 40 supernumeraries in each city including the Australian Girls Choir who played the east coast cities and Adelaide. In Perth the choir came from Penrhos College.

Up to 180 performers were on site for each show, giving stage manager



Anneke Harrison a very busy day. The choreography was by Director Kenny Ortega with Kelley Abbey.

Set up typically took 2 days, followed by at least one dress rehearsal in each city. The load out could be achieved in as little as five hours.

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ON THE ROAD

A roundup of shows and people, working!

First stop this month was Howard Freeman's temporary INXS tour office - located in the upstairs disabled toilet at Sydney's Big Top. Next door is the Family Room, a dressing room that has a makeover, with timber screens, carpets, candles and whatever is needed to make it into, well, a Family Room. If there are traditions within a band that has toured for 25 years, one of them must be to do everything well.

"They don't usually soundcheck", Howard tells me, "they have complete confidence in their crew". Howard is the local production manager for Andrew McManus Presents, who were promoting the Australian leg of a world tour for the revived band who have pulled off the hardest act of all, reinventing themselves with a new singer.

Running the sliderule over this tour, it looks a little like the band are not making too much money in Australia, touring 26 internationals and 9 local crew from Cairns to Perth. Press reports from far north Queensland focussed on how grateful local fans were to see the band, as not many large tours get up there. Cairns is twice as far from Brisbane as Sydney, it is a very, very arduous place to tour.

The local crew were slumming it on

a new touring coach from Austwide Coaches - a 12 berth Scania. This enabled the tour to function across distances such as Kuranda to Townsville; and Mackay to Rockhampton.

"It kept the team together", reports Howard.

The Australian leg of the tour featured lights by Bytecrafft and sound by Johnston Audio Services.

BIG POND BAND ON DEMAND

Jimmy Den-Ouden reports on an interesting concept

Telstra's Band on Demand concept is very simple: punters decide which bands they want to see in a series of free concerts, and vote for their selections either by SMS or on bigpond.com. Voting closes at 10:30am, and the winning band plays a live set at 1pm.

I headed down to Warringah Mall shopping centre and found Bob, Jimbo, and Otto from Mastersound, and Noel from Lightfoot sound. The Mastersound boys were been brought in to provide larger scale monitoring and FOH drive than is normally required in the venue. They provided a line into the in-house FOH system, which comprises JBL Venue

series boxes (flown above the stage), and Amcron Macrotech amps.

A large format Soundtracs console was supplied for FOH, and Jimbo was on monitor duty for the day, using an A&H GL3K3 console with Aussie Monitor 2K4 series amps, and some big JBL wedges. EQ's were Klarks all round.

In front of us we had stage plots for After the Fall, Sarah McLeod, Evermore, and Sneaky Sound System. Any one of whom may arrive. Just how do you setup a stage including backline, frontline, mics, and instruments for a band when you have no idea who's playing? Pick one and hope? Perhaps not...

The basic principle would seem to be that you bring enough gear to cover every act and be good at setting it up fast. For the first couple of hours before the show started, the stage was littered with backline gear, monitors, a drum kit, stands, leads and mics. Mercifully the four stageplots supplied were not too far removed from each other, so whilst there wasn't a lot which could be done until we knew which band was on, the common elements could at least be set in place and run up (i.e. frontline monitoring). Some side fill boxes appeared, and then later disappeared. Similarly, the drum kit

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which had been assembled and mic'ed up was struck 20 mins before scheduled show time when the final word came in: it wasn't needed.

In due course we found out the band playing was going to be Evermore. Referencing their stage plot, we finished setting up the stage and ran some line checks. Jay (FOH) and John (stage tech) arrived and setup instruments, keys, and some extra stage gear. Jay made a bee-line for FOH as John started tuning guitars.

The band started on-stage shortly after 1pm. Jon from Evermore explained this was one of their first shows with a new addition to the band – a mandolin (which worked out pretty well!). The band stuck around after the performance to do some album signings. The show was recorded, and some highlights made available for download on the bigpond.com website. CX

BAND LIST

Jon Hume – Acoustic Guitar, Vox
 Dan Hume – Mandolin, Guitar, Drums, Vox
 Peter Hume – Keys, Bass, Vox

CREW LIST

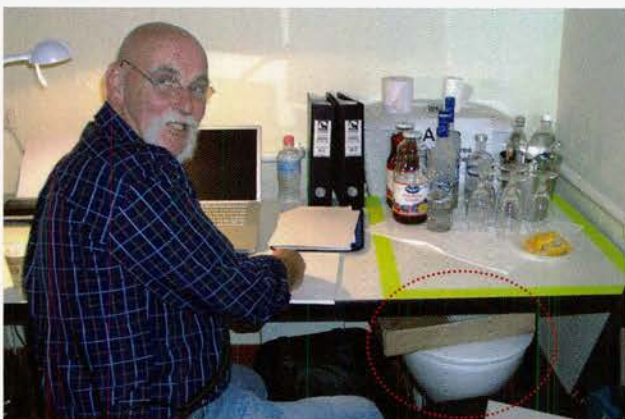
Venue Tech – Noel Lightfoot (Lightfoot Sound)
 System Tech – Bob Scirpo (Mastersound)
 Monitor Operator – Jimbo Peisley
 FOH Operator – Jay van Lieshout
 Evermore Stage Tech – John Nelson
 Roadie & Drum Guru – Otto Solis



Noel Lightfoot.



Jimbo.



Howard Freeman's office with all the mod cons.

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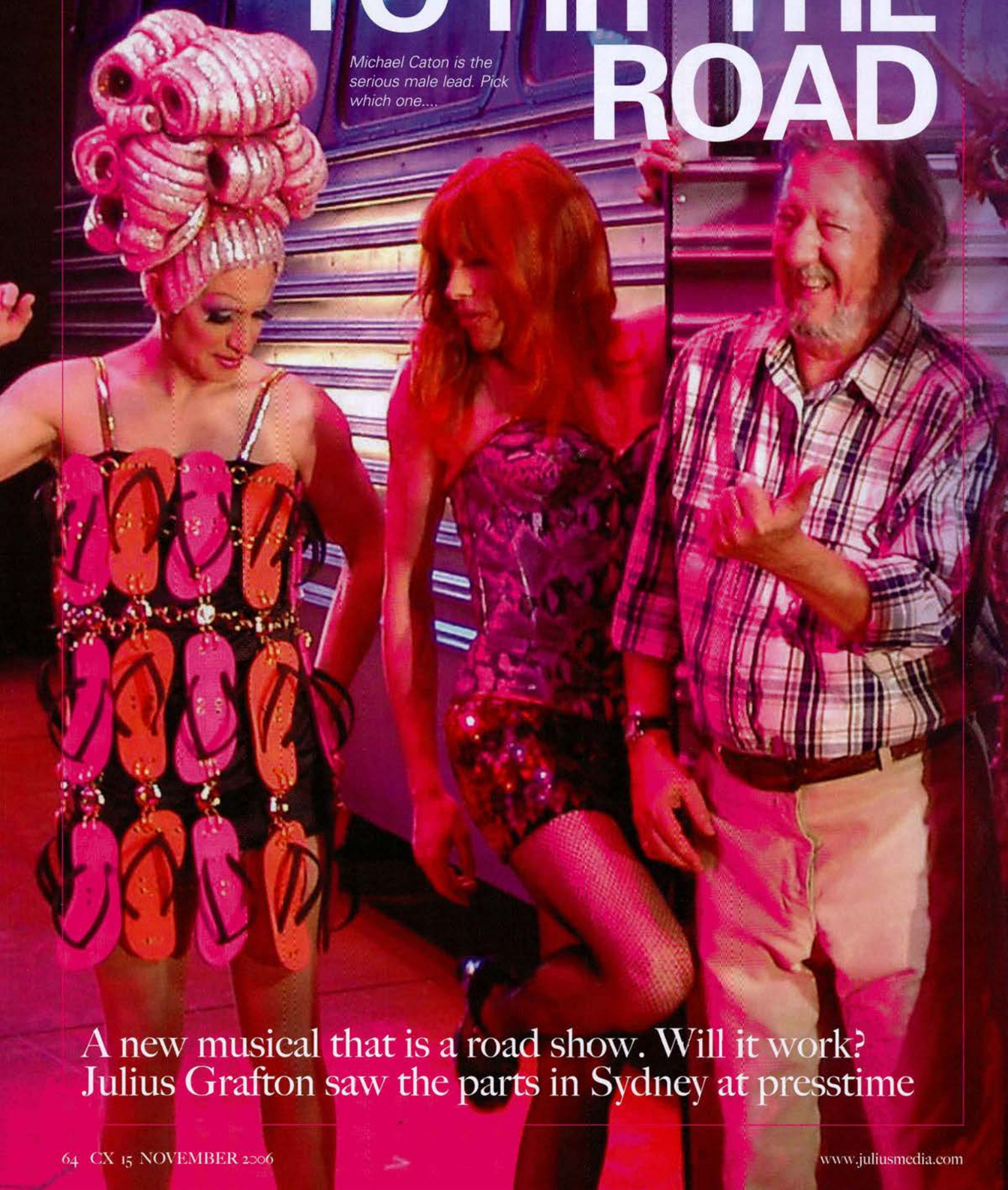
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**A new musical that is a road show. Will it work?
Julius Grafton saw the parts in Sydney at presstime**

By JULIUS GRAFTON

A new musical that is a road show. Will it work? Julius Grafton saw the parts in Sydney at presstime

Nick Schlieper is strangely relaxed in the days leading up to previews of *Priscilla Queen Of The Desert - The Musical*. His lighting design was implemented with 500 fixed luminaires and 60 moving lights hanging in the air at the Lyric Theatre in Sydney. And the bus wasn't working as advertised.

This is one of the most anticipated new Australian musicals of modern times, and some would say one of the riskiest. When the idea of morphing the movie into a musical was first floated, many in the industry were openly skeptical. Some of the skeptics were at the workshop in January, and left impressed enough to invest in the show.

This is a road show, which is more about the journey than the beginning or the end.

"What is to gain by the translation from film to the stage", questions



Liz Coops and cast member.

Nick. He collaborated closely with designer Brian Thompson to bring the show to life, and at rehearsals it certainly looks like it has the parts of a winner. The opening, as this issue is printed, will confirm whether

Director Simon Phillips, Choreographer Ross Coleman, and Musical Director Stephen Murphy have meshed the promising elements into the winner that is required.

The producers are Garry McQuinn

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Nick Roadkill.

and Liz Koops, of Back Row Productions, who have sold shares to Michael Chugg, Specific Films, John Frost and Allan Scott. Bryce Hallett wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald that the show was costing around five hundred thousand dollars a week to run; and that it needed 65 percent houses for 37 weeks to break even. Certainly there is optimism, as the Lyric Theatre is said to be penciled for seven months before it tours – if it does. Talk about the future is part muted, part boundless. These shows take on a life of their own. The crew are circumspect.

There is interest from afar, with talk of a Vegas version. The Americans were enamored with the film.

Nick Schlieper is keen to show me just what The Bus will do. He has had it wired for LED to within an inch of its chasis. The bus itself is probably the icon of the show, as it was in the movie. Measuring 9.5 metres, it is the final of three concepts that were designed, and then the winning concept was made by Stageweld in

Melbourne.

"Scale factor is a major part of this", says Nick. "The stage is not a small space. We will use theatre to the max here, and theatre has its own language – the close up is different to the film close-up."

The stage is trimmed with a surround framework that is stylized to remind of the Australian outback. Legs and borders are themed in outback orange, with pink through to purple colouring.

"The box is completed with three backdrops, so there are three depths of stage. We have the classic downstage half scene, the three quarter, and the full depth. Before the action even leaves Sydney there are some classic Sydney icons shown. Into that we have added a number of specific, stylized objects, like the pub wall at Broken Hill. This is seen from behind. Then as we move further outback more corrugated iron creeps in."

Then there is The Bus. It looks remarkably real – indeed it has real



Simone Parratt.

parts stuck on. It has a sense of movement, even while static. But it also has a tonne or more of batteries stashed inside to run the rivers of lights that Nick has specified. The ones that are causing grief when I call around.

"The bus needs to change colour, and unlike the film, we can't just have a bunch of people paint it pink. It has been long and involved to get the design so it works".

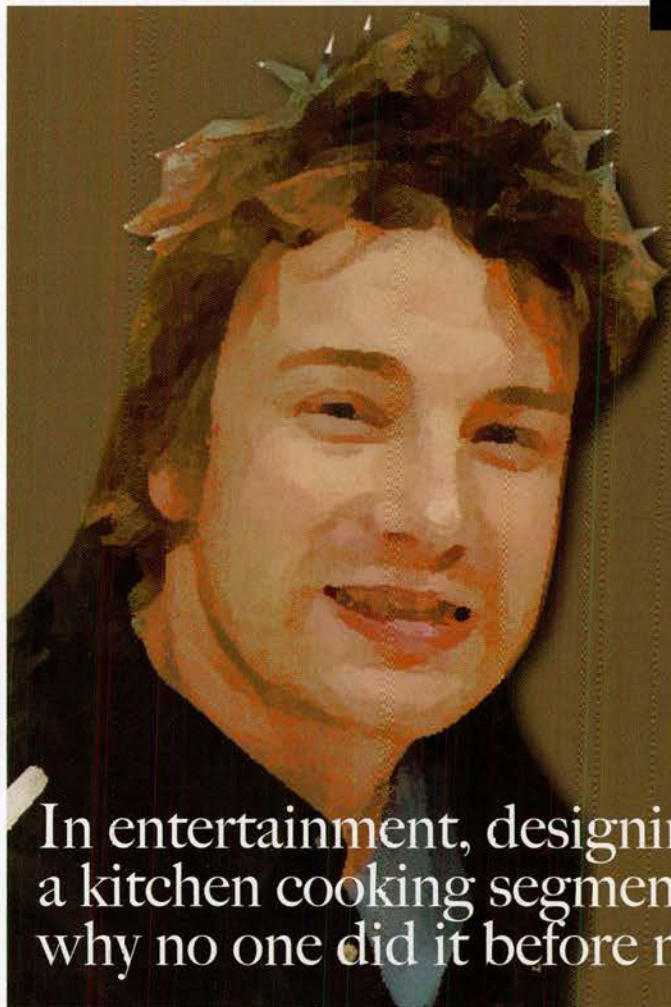
Likewise the automation is not behaving either, since the bus must not only drive forwards but it needs to traverse sideways as well. The side needs to open up, as a scene is scheduled to be performed within it.

Actors on the bill include Michael Cato who says he is the serious and strong male lead. There are 380 costumes. Rehearsals started mid August.

There is plenty of eye candy, as if the costumes are not enough. There are two LED webs of 10 x 17 metres, hung slightly offset, with a cutout for the bus. Nick has a run of digital light curtain, several flood bars, and 14 new Vari-Lite VL 3500Q's. "There are six Source 4 auto-yokes – these are revolutionary", says Nick. "It's a real coloured light source, with a scroller, not a mix." The balance of the moving lights are Martin Mac 2000s.

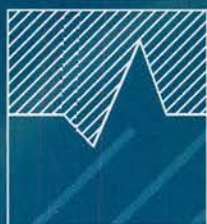
"It's like having one and a half lighting rigs – one conventional, to light a play with music and one automated one over the top".

Nick has to go and figure something out, so I take leave. "Don't forget to mention Tony Davies and Chameleon, they have been fantastic. And very patient with the changes we have made. The gear is in fantastic nick – we ever got 120 new Vlybron scrollers." CX



FOOD ON THE ROAD

In entertainment, designing a touring show based on a kitchen cooking segment is almost too hard. That's why no one did it before now.



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In entertainment, designing a touring show based on a kitchen cooking segment is almost too hard. That's why no one did it before now.

Jamie Oliver has, and his show is a hit everywhere it tours. The show recently sold out in Australia, and CX send our resident cooking trainer Amalia Portelli along to review the lights. She doesn't know anything about lights, but boy – she can cook!

Amalia reports that at show time the house lights dim and two guys (Black Sheep 1 and Black Sheep 2) appear in black curly afro hair wigs. Black Sheep 1 has 70's flare trousers and does some dance moves at his DJ equipment.

Black sheep 2 moves the camera through the audience, surprising people and zooming in, audience members projected with cheeky captions. So the vision team are the show opener.

Jamie Oliver is sitting in the audience waving, grinning and

reading his own cook book. The music gets louder, faster and he runs on. The stage was set like an open planned living area in your home. The kitchen is centered; to its left is a dining table for two, in the far back right corner is a stage with a drum kit and in front of this is a lounge setting area.

With a loud bang "Jamie" starts the evening with a drum act then moves into his first food demo. There are no dull moments, as part of the audience you are either captured by what "he" is doing, the camera man, and waiting for the cheeky comments to pop up on the large screen.

Some are chosen to participate on stage and get a prize from the "Dolly Trolley" - a lady who comes out on stage pushing a shopping trolley full of Jamie Oliver memorabilia, accompanied by the theme music from The Price is Right. Or maybe its best you don't get chosen; Jamie might get you to kiss a stranger on

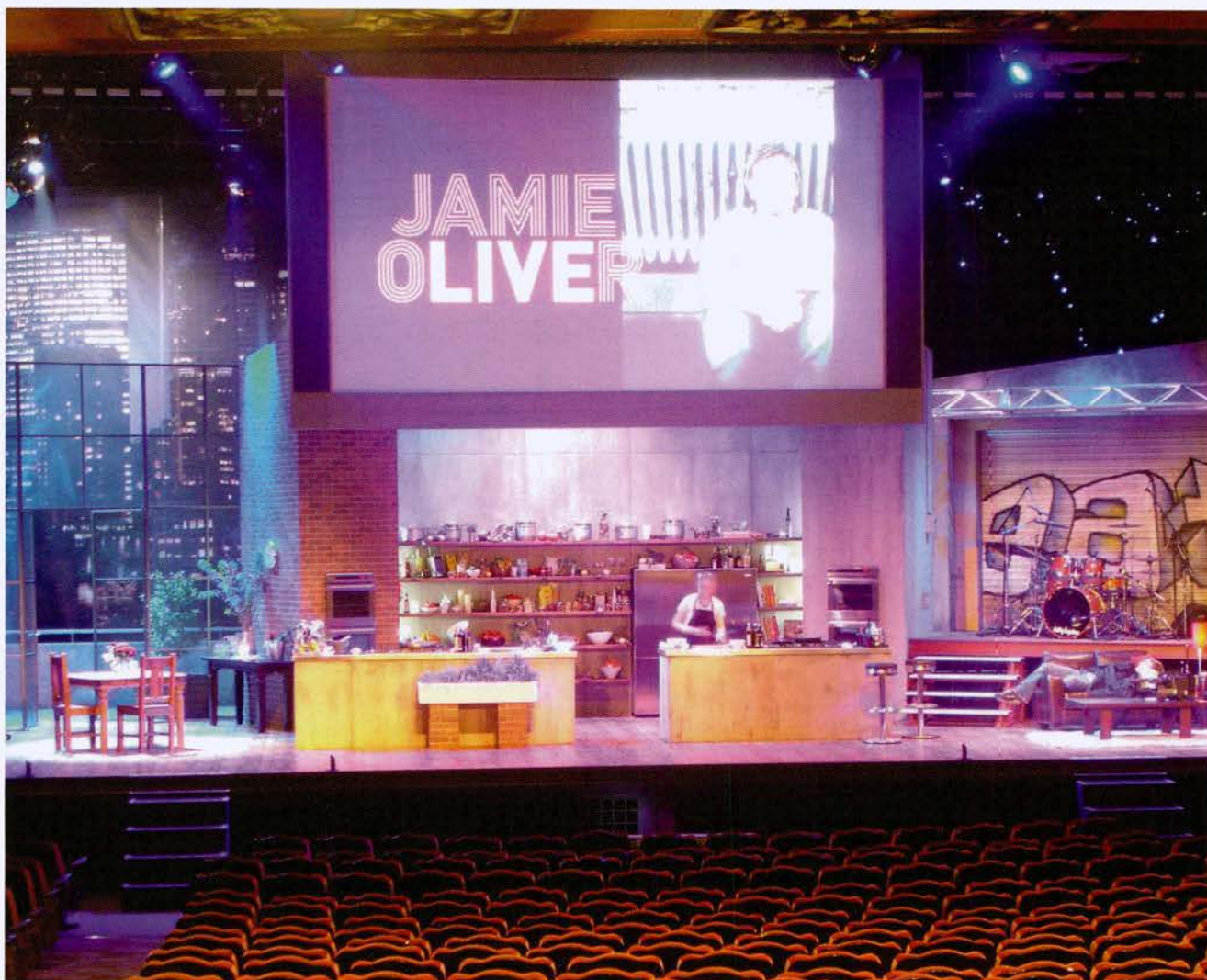
stage or crawl on all fours in a race to get the "Side Car" a strong, or let's say alcoholic drink served in a martini glass.

The show is consistently visual, interactive and you won't want to miss a thing. Black Sheep won't let you.... you can even see Jamie looking straight back at you when his looking into his refrigerator via a mini camera in there.

There are video segments at cued points, a support act in Gennero Contaldo (Jamie's mentor), whom with audience support make a batch of home made pasta and rolls it out to 42 feet. Plus a fine musician who serenades the audience from time to time during the show.

A fantastic fun show, lots of food smells, sing a longs and heaps to see, says Amalia.

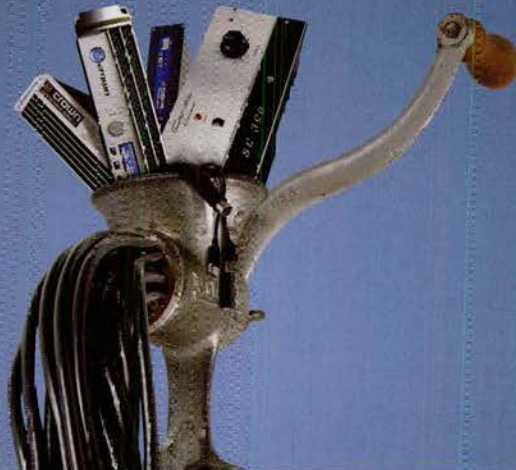
Black Sheep's Ben Alcott is the director, and tours with Jamie around the world to supply video and vision. Richard Neville was the lighting designer for the Australian tour. **CX**



The show is consistently visual, interactive and you won't want to miss a thing.



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FEATURE

AUGIE MARCH PLAY THE FORUM



By ALICIA BEE

The Forum is now popular as venue for the bigger rock shows in Melbourne.

The 1929 building is best seen from across the road. It has a neat outside letterboard which names the shows. Inside the foyer the blue dome roof lighting begins the experience that impresses everyone.

With a capacity of 2300, many good nights have been held here over the past years. This is the season for big name Australian acts. Jet played there earlier the same week as Augie March. Next up was Eskimo Joe..

"It's very majestic, it's actually quite pleasing to the eye. There are good sightlines, you know a lot of venues don't have good sightlines. The atmosphere of the place makes the gig. People come in awe 'cause it's The Forum and they go 'aw waw' and they look at all the plaster work, all the statues," explained Production manager and Augie March FOH engineer, Paul Martin.

"As far as sound goes, you got to really know your stuff to get a really good sound in there, it's really easy to mess up because its such a big space and sound travels as its hits that top balcony and moves around," said Paul.

"Its my favorite venue in the country, because its such a beautiful space," said Stan Zylinski, stage manager for the band. "It just always creates a special feeling for the audience, but up on stage you have a real sense of occasion when you do a show here".

This was a mini tour with shows at The Tivoli, The Enmore, The Forum and The Queen's Theatre. A show at a Darwin Festival concluded the run. This Friday night show was days since their Sydney Enmore the weekend before, and the backline had been in the Show Freight warehouse waiting all week.

Stan doubled as stagehand guitar technician and he did not rest throughout the set. "They have a lot of different tunings in their setlist, so I'm busy for the whole show," explained Stan. He has done about 30 Augie March shows this year, and has worked with such bands as Magic Dirt and Bjorn Again.

The five piece band have a 5 member crew to execute the tour. Stan says the key to putting on a smooth show is to "stay calm, every problem's got a solution, and I'm not saying that I always stay calm. But that's the ideal, stay calm and nut it out. And fix it as soon as possible."

Paul Martin has been a fan of Augie March since their first EPs, and is proud to have worked with them for the past 6 years. He receives a non-notated setlist about 20 minutes before the start time, and knows the songs enough to work with their choices.

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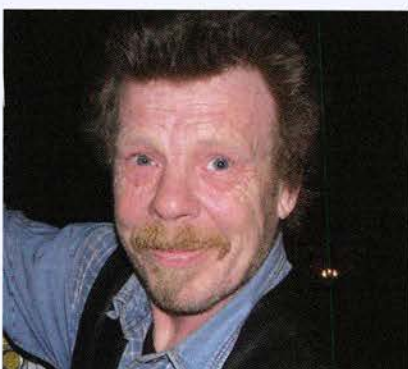
Star Zylinski.



Taylor Hyslop.



Tom Cooper.



Peter Ward.

He has done sound at The Forum about 20 times for shows like The Living End and You Am I.

He describes Augie March as 'unique', 'refreshing,' and 'intellectual'. Their style he says ranges "from pure mastery to shamboicism, if there is such a word." (There isn't)

If this seems to be too positive, you may have to listen to the band or be a fan.

"The synergy, the way they play off each other, Glen's songwriting ability is amazing, the way the guys interpret the songs is amazing, they, you know, its very emotional, you know, they never get off stage and

go, you know, another day at the office, everyone's going 'wow,'" explained Paul.

This show promoted studio single One Crowded Hour produced by Paul McKercher, a sound that Martin tries to match for a live show.

"I try and emulate the mix of the CD, with the tones I get off stage. So, if they've spent four hours getting a tone in studio I can't emulate that, I can try but its really hard to do. I do the best I can with what they give me basically," stated Paul.

"These guys have their own unique footprint in the way they do things, and they do what they do really well," said Paul.

"It's amazing how we can treat each gig like we are doing our first year of university thesis on live sound like it's the Empress of (bloody) India," commented band singer Glenn Richards of their approach to the gig.

Mid set Glenn picked up a spare microphone that was placed with lead on the floor near his main stand and questioned what it was for. Other interactions with the crew led someone to yell out "He can't get it right can he?" in defence of the sound engineer. This and other sound comments were in good humour, and contrinuted as stage banter.

All but one member of the band had dressed formally for the occasion of the venue. Even Stan had slacks and a dinner jacket for his short walks onto stage.

Johnston Audio Services supplied the system at The Forum, and also packed it away at the end of the night using some loaders from Gigpower. This meant that there was also Johnston staff alongside each of the band crew at the console and monitors.

Lighting guy Taylor Hyslop has worked with such acts as Lior, The Black Keys and Hoodoo Gurus. He also has a longstanding relationship with the Corner Hotel in Richmond 'one of the greatest rock music venues on the planet' which led to him being hired by some of the best alternative acts from Australia and around the world.

To control the entire rig (in-house and movers) Taylor used a Jands Hog 250 desk, which "is industry standard. There's not a lot you can't do with a hog."

Although The Forum have an ongoing relationship with Phaseshift, Taylor liases with them to ensure,

"everyone gets the best show for the best price. I can't speak highly enough of Steve and Laurie from Phaseshift, who are uber helpful, and true pros."

"As far as the lighting used, I firstly worked with the Forum's production crew to colour, focus and patch their in-house profile spots, frontwash and side/top cans, mostly NSP par64's," said Taylor.

Taylor's favorite color is Cyan and most of the show was a beautiful display of simple blue. "I used a lot of Lee L180 and L132 for Augie March, as well as L105 and L135 for the cool to warm contrast that works so well with their dramatic style," said Taylor.

"Onstage I floor-mounted six Martin Mac 500 intelligent scans which have a great range of movement, very powerful beams, and a wonderful array of colour, gobo and effect wheels."

"Rigging a mirrorball at the Forum would have been a nightmare, as it would have obscured the projections I was using, and it would have had to have been above centre stage, rather than in the middle of the room, so to achieve a mirrorball-like effect I used the tri-pinspot gobo on the Mac 500's, blasted through a rotating prism with a slow colour chase. Once aimed at the beautiful arches and faux balconies of the room an atmosphere was created that echoed a mirrorball effect, without the straight up cheesiness,"

Taylor says that it helps to know all functions of your equipment. He says his recent lessons are in understanding the Jands Hog. "Trying to operate complicated tools in a noisy, hectic environment is far from easy, so when you need beam two, gobo six, colour four in position twelve, straight away, you've gotta be able to do it without thinking. This is especially true when my attention is divided between the projection equipment, the lighting gear, and the action onstage."

CX

AUGIE MARCH BAND

Glenn Richards - vocals, guitar

Edmondo Ammendola - bass

Adam Donovan - guitars, keys

Kiernan Box - keyboards

David Williams - drums, percussion

AUGIE MARCH CREW

Paul Martin - Production manager, FOH engineer

Stan Zylinski - Stage manager, guitar technician

Taylor Hyslop - Lighting technician

Daniel Thomas - Monitors

Tom Cooper 'Coops' - Stage Assistant

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LITTLE RIVER BAND, NOT ON TOUR



BSG or LRB, the songs are mighty and the band rocked

By JULIUS GRAFTON

Regular readers may recall CX dipping into that most bitter of legal cases, where Little River Band sued itself and the rights to play under that name were awarded to an American version of the Australian band.

This left the three Australian founders somewhat unhappy, they have since performed under their own names – Beeb Birtles, Graeham Goble, and Glenn Shorrock. They call themselves BSG for short. They put together a smoking eight piece band, and released a live DVD. They feature the LRB 3 part harmony, and they play all the songs they wrote that were hits around the world.

Meantime in the USA the five piece LRB features one member from the bands history, American bass player Wayne Nelson. He is an employee of Stephen Housden – an Irish born lead guitar player who was also a member of LRB and who carefully purchased the rights to the name as each founding member quit. Housden did not join his men on this year's six month seasonal tour of American clubs.

They have to live with themselves when people come up and say 'I saw you guys thirty years ago.....'

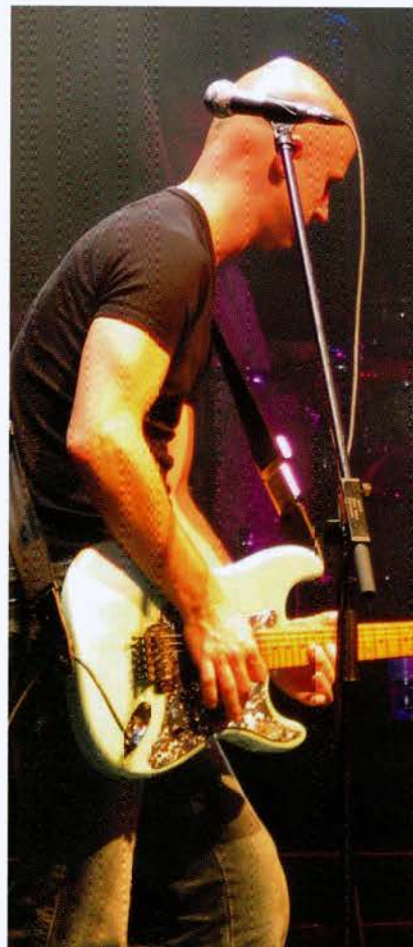
For those interested in the emotions and the politics, see the CX News website. There was considerable mail on this topic when raised, along with some blistering emails from the American band who felt somewhat upset with our coverage.

BSG recently performed some shows in Australia, joined again by long serving crew members like Chris Newman, on lights.

"I have been working for various incarnations of The Little River Band for nearly 23 years now. I did the last tour with the John Farnham fronted version (prior to John recording 'Whispering Jack'). Then with a lot of different lineups ever since, including 3 USA summer tours during the 90's, some with Glen Shorrock out front again.

"I still love the band and will never get sick of the songs. Every one a classic and a style of music and dynamics that suits my operating style.

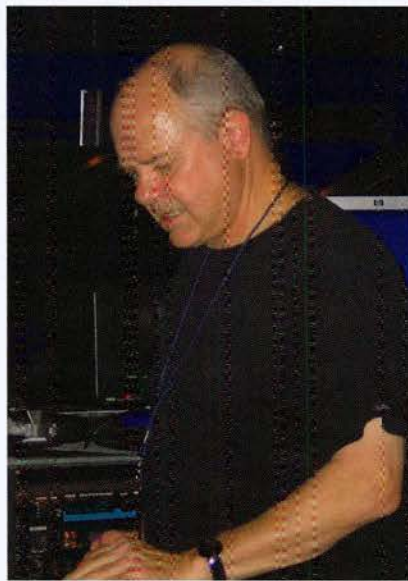
"(Now) House lighting and sound systems are most often used as we attempt to keep costs down. Fortunately we did do a longer run two years ago with touring production which allowed me to get a complete show programmed on a Whole Hog II using mostly Martin



Simon Hosford.
Pictured above; BSG.



Alejandro Vega.



Ern Rose.



Mark & Beeb.



John Henderson.



Cris Newman.

Mac 2000 Spots & Washes.

"I have been adapting that show ever since to fit.

"This run of 4 shows was initiated by a corporate show at Crown Palladium Melbourne, allowing the band to book some extra shows while Beeb Birtles was out here from his home in Nashville.

"The Crown Palladium (show 1) was always going to be tight. Due to the event time table there was no on site programming time, barely enough time to do any focus. The supplied fixtures were to be Mac 700 profiles & Mac 600 washes with a Hog 1K console.

"The Star City Sydney (show 2) house fixtures are Clay Paky Alpha Spots and Alpha Washes, with a Hog 1K console (again).

"Then the Twin Towns Showroom (show 3) was mostly analogue instruments.

"Down at the Crown Palms (show 4) those house fixtures are Clay Paky 1200 spots & 1200 Washes, with a Hog II console.

"I operate the BSG show with a page for each song containing a master cue list, usually 1 or 2 triggered lists or chases and front profiles as required. The full 32 song show is about 600 cues and I run all the band specials manually.

"The biggest drama of short tours and house systems is that there is no choice of fixtures or control systems and not quite the placement of fixtures you would prefer. Not having access to a Hog III or Grand MA or similar fixture cloning consoles meant that I had to re-program the show for the different fixtures.

"Having said that though, I think that these 3 venues are extremely well set up & run by their respective production crews who are all extremely helpful and knowledgeable.

"I firstly needed to make sure that I could save my WholeHog II console show back to a Hog 1K which I had never done before.....which thankfully did work fine once reduced to 2 data streams.

"Using Hog PC I loaded up my original show and over wrote all the pallets with information for all the new fixtures for each venue.

"It was then just the time consuming routine of copying all the cue information for every song with the new fixtures.....the hardest part

of this is just getting the fixture pallets right.

"It wasn't any real advantage to use any visualization software (WYSIWYG or similar)

"Never having used any of the Clay Paky fixtures before I just guessed at speeds for gobo rotates and rolls with a view to checking all these when actually on site. Thankfully Kait Hall at Crown Palms and the operator at Star City were both a great help with my many questions regarding fixture control channels and gobos.

"Once I had re-programmed with all the new fixtures I then saved different versions to suit each venue and got rid of the fixtures that didn't apply.....reducing memory use and file sizes.

"Happily I can say that this did work for me and apart from a few programming blunders which I fixed on the day, everything went fairly well.

"Fortunately the band sound as good as ever and deliver a great show which makes the extra work worthwhile.



Angus Burchall & Jason Vcherr.



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SIX WAYS TO FIX YOUR MIX

Ever found yourself in a position where it just doesn't sound right? You've tried all night but it still sounds like a shambles? No matter how many adjustments you make, it still sounds like five musicians rather than one band?

By **ANDY MACKENZIE**

MICROPHONES

If you want to get good sound out of the audio system, step one is to put good sound in. This means making the right choices about mic selection and placement.

What do I want this microphone to pick up? Thinking about what you want to pick up can have a significant effect on your microphone decisions.

Yes, reduce your feedback problems. The correct decisions about mic placement with reference to things like foldback wedges can make a whole world of difference.

Do I like the sound of this mic on this instrument/singer? Never be afraid to try new things.

What is this thing, and where does the noise come out? Try as you might, sooner or later you're going to come across an unfamiliar instrument (I came across nine in one day at an event for Iranian expats) and the best way of figuring out where to put the mic is to listen to the instrument from various positions and put the mic where it sounds best.

GAIN STRUCTURE

Once you've used your magnificent mic technique to get pristine, beautiful sound into the system, wouldn't it be a shame to ruin it? Any audio signal passing through a sound system is likely to pass through about twenty amplifiers on the way and this gives plenty of opportunities to blow it. To reduce a complex topic to its simplest terms, the key point is not to put too much or too little signal into any amplifier stage – too much will result in increased harmonic distortion and clipping, while too little leads to a degradation of the system noise floor.

The key to good gain structure is something called unity gain. The term unity gain means, confusingly enough, no gain at all and refers to a situation in which the output signal has the same power as the input signal. The general idea is that the mic preamp (controlled by the input gain control) should increase the signal from the mic to a

level that will need no further amplification before the power amplifiers. Every level control from there on is designed to maintain unity gain – the output gain controls on equalizers and other processors are there to let you match the output signal level to the input.

DON'T OVERPROCESS

Modern audio technology gives us a bewildering variety of processing toys to play with, especially those of us using digital consoles with fifty zillion on-board processors including parametric EQs, gates, compressors, plug-ins and so on. The temptation is to use processors where we can, rather than where we should.

The problem with using too much processing is...that it sounds like too much processing.

TURN IT DOWN

Lots of things are too loud. Aircraft over my house, 8x10 bass rigs in small pubs, and a great deal of the audio I hear perpetrated in venues. Consider the restrictions placed on industrial employers with regard to SPL exposure. Using the formula suggested by Workcover NSW, we find that the safe exposure level for one hour (a fairly short gig) is 94dB without hearing protection.

Even before this level, your perception of sound begins progressively shutting down, leading to a perceived loss of sound quality. Mixing more quietly with accuracy and clarity gives a better result for all concerned, and may enable us to carry on conversations in thirty years time.

Obviously, this means convincing the band to turn down as well.

BE CONSISTENT

Make sure that your mix works as a whole, not as a pile of 'great sounds' stacked on one another. If you use four different vocal mics for four different singers, not only will your monitor EQ be a horror show, your vocal tone will be inconsistent from one singer to the next.

Sort out each sound as part of the mix, not as a sound on its own. This

is one of the problems with soundchecks – the engineer sets up each sound in isolation, then mixes them together and voila! garbage. If it's meant to be listened to on its own, then soundcheck it on its own.

If you are using effects, aim for the minimum number of effects. The purpose of these digital magic boxes is to create the illusion of different spaces and it is worthwhile to remember that under normal circumstances it is traditional for all the members of a band to perform together in one space. While different effects may work on different sources, too many can make the mix seem cluttered and incoherent.

LISTEN...

...all the time. To everything. Listen to what the band ask for, listen to the house tech, listen to something suitable in the truck on the way to the gig, listen to a wide variety of music at home. As the FOH engineer, you are the one who decides what the audience get to hear, so you should be doing everything you can to make sure you get it right.

...critically. Don't process signals in isolation, process them in the context of the mix. You might have set up the best kick drum/piano/bassoon/Hershebian elbow flute sound in the entire history of audio engineering, but if it doesn't fit into the rest of the mix it may as well be the worst sound ever.

...to lots of different music, and try to understand what the performers are looking for. You may have preferences for your recreational listening, and that's all to the good – but if you're going to mix it you need to know what it should sound like.

...to the people who know. Sure it's possible, but it's fairly unlikely that you will know the band's songs better than they do. Similarly, you would hope the house tech or system tech has a good working knowledge of the gear you're using.

...to your instincts. The reason you're on the gig in the first place is that someone, somewhere, has confidence in your ability to do it right. **CX**

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Roadcases on the cheap



By **DUNCAN FRY**

I've got a regular gig with the Fabulous Harris Tweed Band, some friends who work the yacht clubs/aging baby boomers 50th (and 60th – oh the horror) birthday parties circuit.

They have their own PA system comprising various leftover bits and pieces from other systems, the overriding concern of the whole deal being economy.

Anyway, I got a call from the drummer the other day.

"We've decided to upgrade the system," he announced grandly.

Dreams of me at the controls of a state-of-the-art system flittered through my head, only to pop like bursting bubbles with his next comment.

"Yeah, we need some cases to put everything in. Have you got anything we can use?"

My heart sank. "OK, what's the budget?" I asked.

"Budget?" He laughed, "Get real!"

So I assumed that a new set of Anvil ATA approved cases was out of the question. What he said was true though; they did need a minimalist drive/effects rack, and cases for the leads and the multicore.

Even in a previous lifetime, when I was doing system rentals full-time, I never like spending too much on cases. You had to have them to protect the equipment, but they were an unquantifiable cost as far as the renters were concerned, something that you couldn't charge for but were expected to supply. Call me an old tightarse if you will, but I was a lot happier when the cost of the case wasn't more than what was inside!

I built my leads case on the milk crate system – an outer case that would hold the multicore in the bottom, and four milk crates on top of it full of mic leads. It fitted my needs perfectly, and the crates also doubled as drum riser supports when necessary!



The Fry-conomatic Road Case Mk1. Note cloth custom colour black hinge ir g.



The Fry-conomatic features bended aluminium racks fixed to the plastic case with state-of-the-art pop rivets.

So, what to do for the Tweed's system? I didn't have the luxury (?) of an eight tonne truck to load it into, so it had to be car friendly sized, able to be handled by one person, and super economical. I could knock something together from scratch, but even with

a minimal amount of latches and corners the cost was going to be substantial.

And it's not like the stuff was going to be bounced around in the back of a truck from here to Woop Woop and back. The hardest work it was going

to see was sitting in the boot of a car occasionally trundling around the bayside suburbs.

When the going gets tough, the tough go to Blokeworld, those enormous hardware barns populated by the haunted faces of men who know in their hearts that the seemingly simple household chore they have undertaken is going to take the best part of four weekends. There, walking those hallowed aisles, I felt sure that the spirit of Mr Miyagi would inspire me to succeed.

And then I found the answer to everything I needed. A stack of those clear plastic tubs that you see everywhere – from the smallest Chinese import shop to the hallowed aisles of Blokeworld. Hmm - just about the right size, as far as I could tell.

But were they 19 inches wide? I went down to the tape measure section to borrow one to check out. Bingo! 20 inches - it was perfect. Light, enough room for a compressor, an EQ, a reverb and a cassette deck or CD player. Plus it came with a clip-on lid, handles, even four cursory wheels, and the price was exactly in my budget range - \$8.95! Less than the cost of a single recessed road case latch.

I counted off my requirements on my fingers; effects rack, leads case, multicore case, and even a small one for microphones. Happy at last. I took them back to work (after remembering to return the tape measure to its correct department!) and started setting them up for their new life.

The leads case, mic case and multicore case needed no changing – I just filled them up, clipped the lids on, and that was it. For safety I stuck a couple of lengths of gaffer tape on each lid as a secondary latch – better safe than sorry!

The effects rack needed a bit more work. The first job was to bend up some aluminium for the front sides, to add some strength and so I could mount the stuff inside, then pop rivet it in place, using a staggered line of rivets to reduce the risk of the plastic cracking between them.

I then screwed in the cassette deck, a compressor, and an EQ. Worked like a charm.

A test run with it revealed a couple of limitations. The bottom of the plastic tub was now the back of the rack, but there was nowhere for the power leads to go. Out with the Stanley knife, and thanks to the ribs in the plastic there was the perfect small door area to cut out. A bit of gaffer tape for a hinge on one side, and as a latch on the other, and we had power to the people. I also discovered at the first gig that there was very limited access to the ins and out of everything, so all the equipment had to have its leads attached before being screwed in!

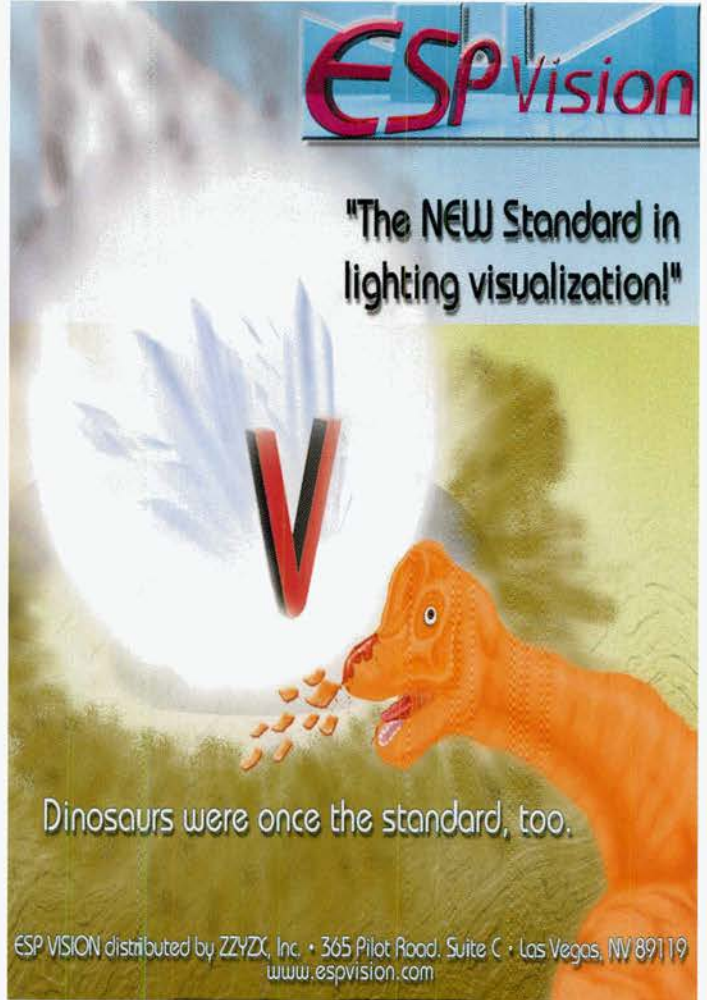
The cassette deck I found quite by accident. As frequent readers will know, I'm a sucker for Council non-burnable roadside rubbish collections, and was during one of these that I found a complete Akai stereo system by the side of the road. Someone had beaten me to the CD player (if there was one), but the amp, tuner and cassette deck were still there. In a flash they were shoved into the back of my little Suzuki rice burner, to be examined once I got to work.

It didn't look good - nothing worked at all, or even lit up the meters. Lifting the lid revealed the source of the problem, though. Someone had wrapped all the blown fuses with cigarette pack silver foil, unfortunately with the tissue paper side outwards! I replaced them with real fuses and click – everything worked just fine.

Sometimes a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Like to pass on your own econo PA tips? Email me on dunk@dunkworld.com

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CX PRODUCTION DIRECTORY

Due to the collapse of our RAID array and the non backup of email .pst files, we LOST all Production Company Listings for the proposed feature in this issue. We will run the feature in the January issue, and ask production suppliers to re-submit the electronic form. To get the form: go to www.juliusmedia.com and in the CX Magazine area, look at the bottom left for the Downloads link. In there is the .pdf form, called Production Dir 2006 form.Ink.pdf

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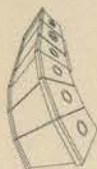
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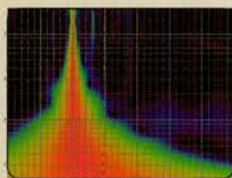
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