

PRODUCTION DIRECTORY

Our listing of production and AV firms far and wide

ON THE ROAD UNearthED: ROADIE TALES

More debauchery

Backstage at BDO

How the iconic festival is put together

NEWS! Bytecraft sold for \$42.5 million. Quickie: the one year gig, done in just 40 days. New manager for Hordern. Turbo demo Aspect. Yamaha LS9 tested. Wireless microphone ban threatened...

....AND WHO IS DOING WHAT WITH WHICH. NEW LIGHTS, SOUND, VIDEO AND STAGING CONCEPTS FOR THE NOW WORLD.

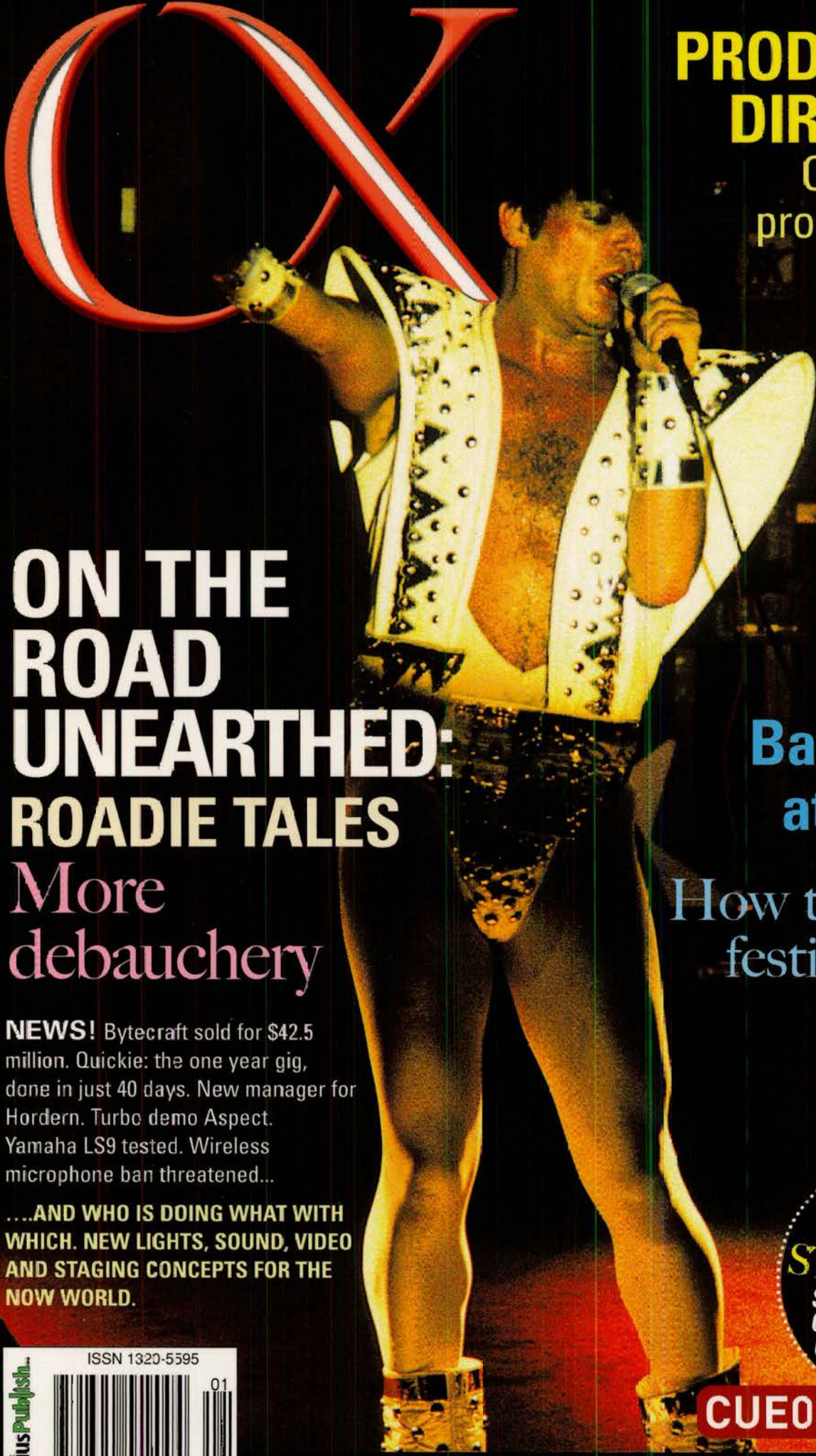
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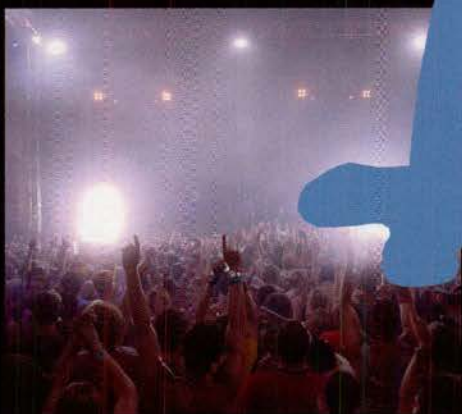
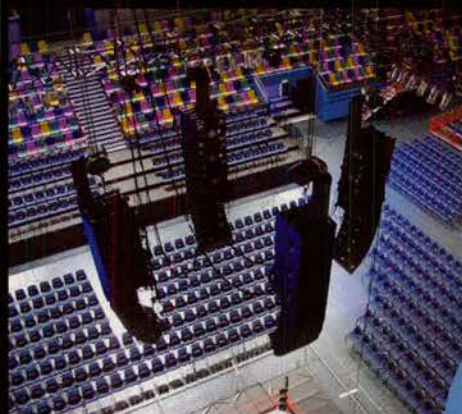
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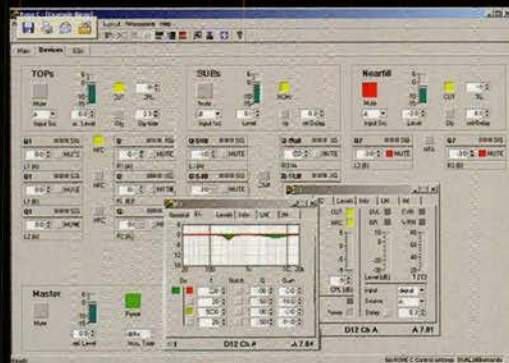
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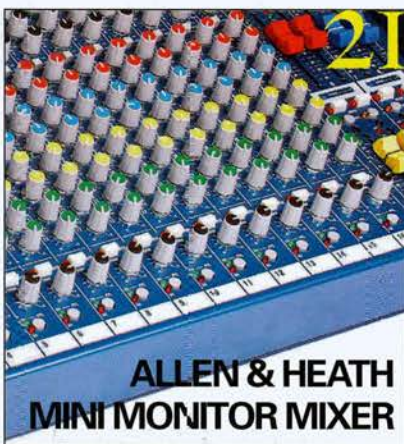


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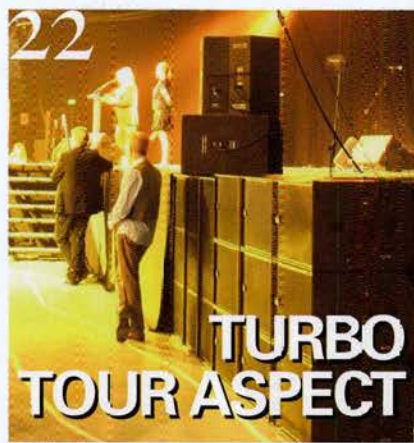
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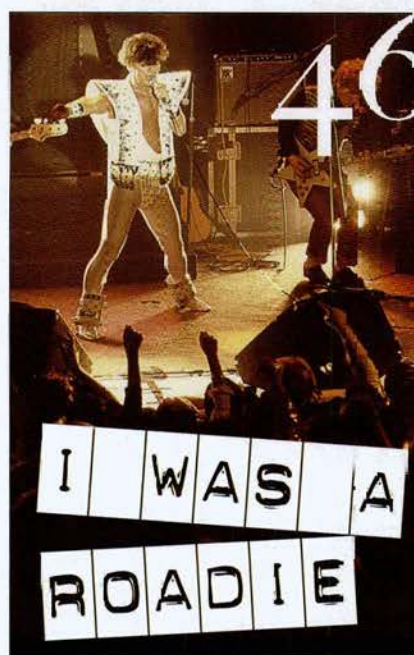
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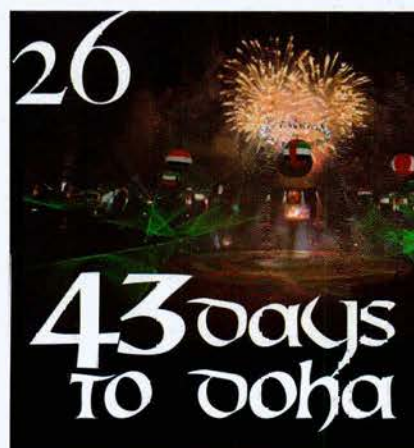


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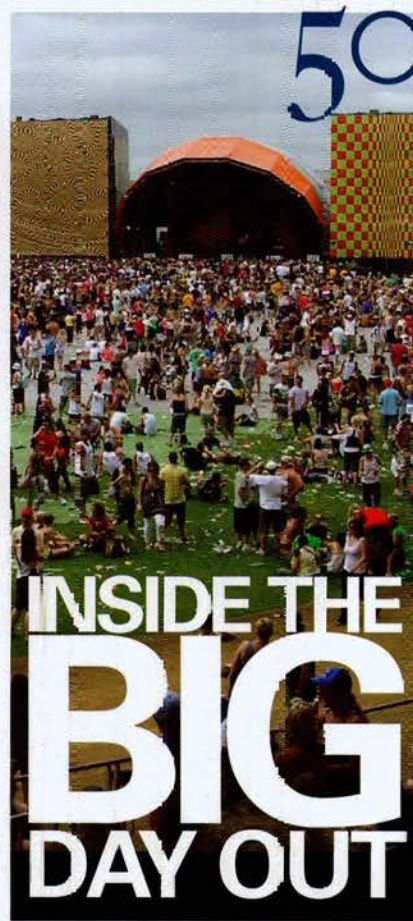


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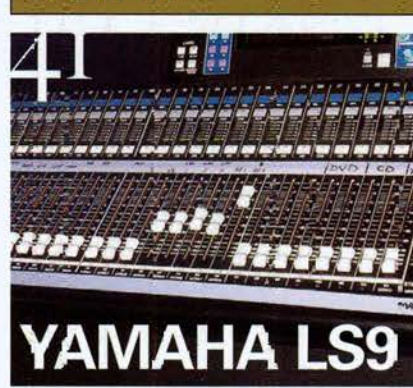
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Audio Justice: Case N° 1



There are a hundred good excuses for using the old industry standards: 'I didn't think anyone would notice' 'I did what everyone else was doing,' 'I didn't have time to test anything new.'

Unacceptable! It is the solemn duty of every professional audio engineer to seek improvements in their technology and their performance. Audio-Technica's new Artist Series are just such improvements.

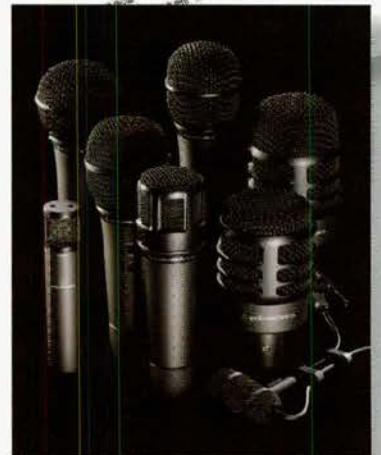
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EDITORIAL

PIONEERING PRODUCERS!

Tip your hat to the producers of Dirty Dancing; and Priscilla. Two Australian shows that have got serious legs and are now firmly in profit. Dancing is the hottest selling show on the West End today, and is spreading over to Europe. It came not a minute too soon for Jacobsens, who had a very bad run. Col and Kevin are actually good people – they've spent their lives in the Australian entertainment biz, and deserve every bite of success they can get.

Likewise Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. It has recouped its setup costs and remains entrenched in the Lyric Theatre in Sydney. Elton John is reputed to want a share of a London run; and there is talk of a Vegas version. All this before it tours Australia! Back Row Productions shareholders include Australian theatrical producers Liz Koops, Garry McQuinn, John Frost and Michael Chugg.

What a difference a year makes – John Frost was rightly flabbergasted when The Producers closed early in Sydney.

RADIO MICROPHONE SPECTRUM

Readers will be concerned to read that the Australian Government plans to sell off the frequencies we use for the 100,000 wireless microphone and in-ear systems across the nation. The Australian Music Association has picked up the fight, and at presstime had made submissions.

This is an election year, so don't sit on your hands. Imagine if we had no spectrum – back to the wired microphone, guitar, and forget about wireless in ears. Entertainment is a multi billion dollar industry. Start asking your local MP whether they support this short term grab for dollars.

I WAS A ROADIE

True to say, the article last month was workshopped before we ran it, and there was some trepidation on my behalf about outing myself. But as I said, I think the time has come to stand up and be proud. Until recently being a 'roadie' conjured up bad imagery. Many guys on the road were on remand or on the run – and drugs were a big part of the scene. Yeah, we were bad, mad, had, and sad.

But now we've all grown up, and so inside this issue is another instalment in the chronicles of sin. It's here because the article in the last issue was very well received. Thank you!

FORTY TWO AND A HALF MILLION REASONS

We applaud the sale of Bytecraft Entertainment to Staging Connections Group, and look forward to an announcement that this conglomerate has purchased the final, missing link. The sound company.

Thanks to readers from within SCG who have rallied to the organisations defence with heartfelt letters that can't be published because they are confidential. Why don't you want your name put to a positive letter about your company?

070707 OR 777

Hot rumour at presstime is a live-aid style concert in seven locations on July 7. One location is said to be Sydney – the whole series would be linked for TV. A local promoter with a track record doing large scale charity events is said to be inked.

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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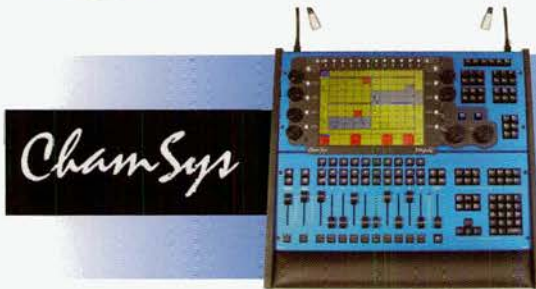


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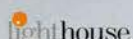
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NEWS

DEVICES, PEOPLE AND CONCEPTS

STAGING TAKES BIGGEST BYTE YET

Growth through acquisition continues as Bytecraft Entertainment moves to new ownership

Staging Connections Group Limited has cemented a place in history as an aggressive acquirer, having taken on extensive new operations in the last year. The latest and largest of these is the purchase of Bytecraft Entertainment from Tattersall's Limited for \$42.5 million in cash.

The sale is an evolution of the original master plan they had for the Bytecraft business, since Tattersall's were originally interested in Bytecraft Entertainment to expand into theming and technology for pubs and clubs. At the time, Systems also serviced their pokie machines, and this became a good "value add" for the deal. Systems itself now only derives 15% of its annual turnover from gaming machine service, and more directly assists Tatts with their increasing diversification in other markets nationally and internationally. Tattersall's were given the option to sell the Entertainment division or continue to buy other entertainment companies.

Tatt's paid around \$40 million for both Bytecraft businesses and have now banked more than that by selling half of the business. For its part, Staging Connections Group gets something they desperately need – an



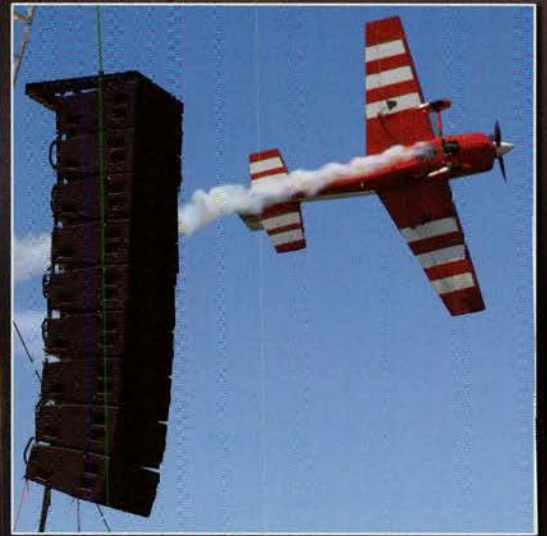
Stephen Found, CEO of Bytecraft and now operational visionary at Staging Connections Group Limited.

operational visionary in the form of Stephen Found

Stephen Found is arguably the industry's greatest dealmaker; he won the lighting contract for the Sydney

Olympics and elevated Bytecraft's already formidable reputation. He split with his founding partner Ted Fregon several years back, Ted took the Bytecraft stage automation business,

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which has since been reborn as State Automation.

The original Bytecraft business was formed out of the ashes of Strand Lighting's Australian operations which fell foul of a large multinational. Strand withdrew, and Bytecraft took on the service contracts for key venues like the Sydney Opera House. Today that early move has resulted in three separate businesses – the State Automation company, Bytecraft Systems (gaming machine service) and Bytecraft Entertainment which is now part of Staging Connections.

Prior to selling to Tatt's, Bytecraft Entertainment acquired at least seven other companies or major stake holdings, two of which were included taking over the lighting side of Jands Production Services for around \$5 million, becoming the Vari-Lite affiliate for Australia in the process.

They then purchased Clipsal Vision, giving them an outdoor LED screen business, which positions Bytecraft – and now Staging Connections Group – in a growth market.

The takeover or sell-down of Bytecraft Entertainment was mooted for some time, with CEO Stephen Found believed to be seeking a greater role in the technical production industry. He has a passion for production, which would have sat awkwardly inside a business that serviced poker machines.

Staging Connections say the acquisition is done out of existing debt facilities.

SC CEO Michael Gardner had this to say: "Mr Stephen Found, who established the Bytecraft Group in 1984, will remain with the business as Managing Director after the transaction, along with the Bytecraft

Entertainment senior management team and the entire Bytecraft Entertainment workforce of skilled lighting and Superscreen technicians, totalling 70 people.

"Mr Found and his team revolutionised large scale event lighting, Superscreen and vision services for major sporting and entertainment events and I am pleased to say that they will continue to manage the Bytecraft Entertainment business following its acquisition by Staging Connections. We look forward to continuing to support the Bytecraft Entertainment business, brand and expertise across Australia's and the world's leading events. Additionally we welcome Stephen into our global events leadership group as his experience, network and expertise in the crafting and delivery of world class events in this specialist field is second to none," Mr Gardner said.

STAGING MOVES FORWARD

Staging Connections have now amassed an impressive array of operations beyond its core Australian audio visual businesses. They have newly purchased businesses in China, Singapore and Dubai, alongside the ETF business in Australia which operates trade shows, including ENTECH.

Having recently disposed of the listed name, AAV, Staging Connections Group is rebuilding senior management and recently appointed events industry guru Paul Kenny. Stephen Found will plug a gap in senior management, and without doubt will bring new vision.

Adding Bytecraft onto the Staging Connections Group roster of firms leaves one glaring omission, that of an audio company. Norwest Productions are rumoured to be 'in discussions', but so is every second production company in Australia. Chameleon Touring Systems, Australia's largest lighting production company were also approached by Staging Connections around the time that Bytecraft were in negotiations. It is likely that Bytecraft were chosen as an acquisition due to Stephen Found's inclusion and also because Bytecraft already has public company lines of reporting established.

It was also rumoured that Staging Connections were interested in Haycom Communications last year.



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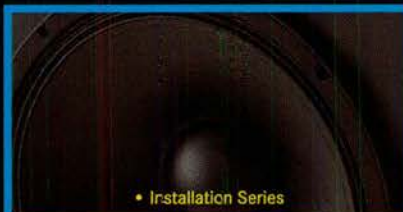
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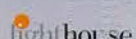


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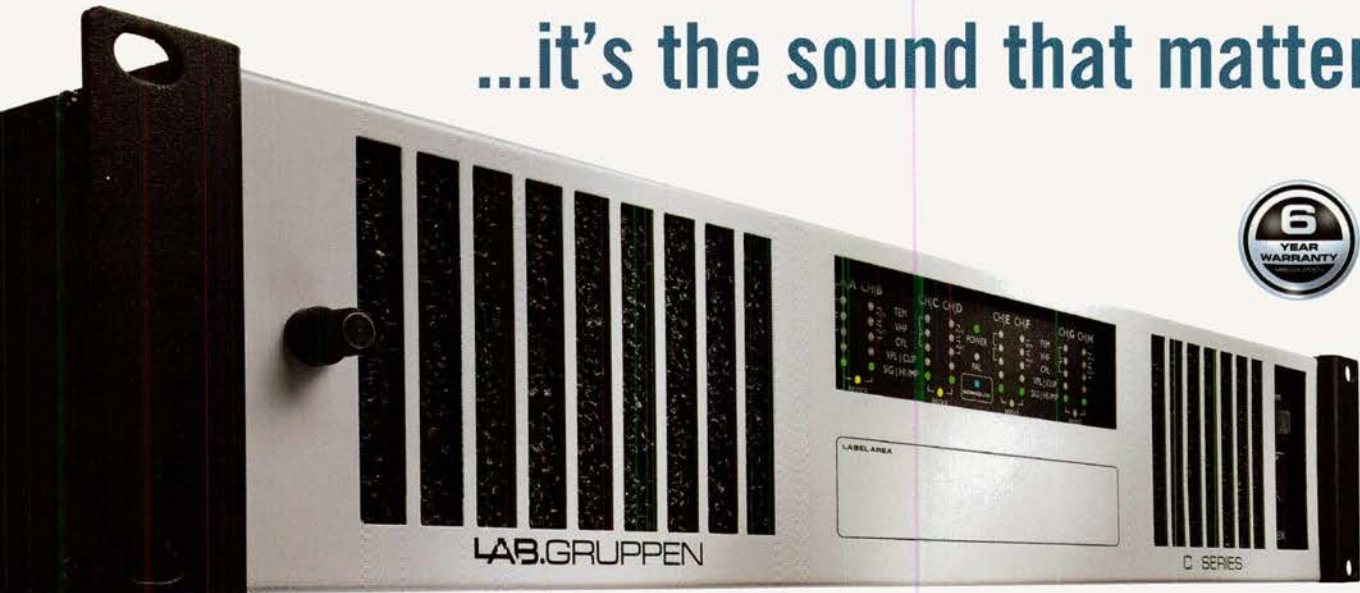
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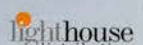
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WIRELESS MICROPHONES: BANNED?

Spectrum up for highest bidder, so no stage use. AMA call to action

The Federal Government, through the Australian Communication and Media Authority, is reviewing the use of radio frequency spectrum in The current proposal means that from 2009 our industry will not be able to sell radio mics, in ear monitor or RF transmitters for guitars and other products because the frequency spectrum they these products currently use will be sold off to the big telco's, such as Telstra, so they can send more digital data and streaming to your mobile phone.

Over 35,000 of these devices are sold throughout Australia each year, schools, churches, community groups, musicians, as well as major sporting and cultural events will not be able to benefit from RF equipment. Musical life will be diminished as a result of the proposed action. Crucially, unlike most technologies, there is no next generation technology on the drawing boards that has the potential to replace these products in the foreseeable future and certainly not by the 2009 date.

The AMA (Australian Music Association) have been very active recently on this issue. They have drafted an industry response and commenced discussions with government at a political level.

"The wireless microphones and the other RF products we sell comply with the Radiocommunications (Short



Range Devices) Starcard and the Radiocommunications (Low Interference Potential Devices) Class Licence and the requirements stated there in and operate within the 520 – 820MHz band and share the spectrum with the analogue free to air broadcasters", says Ian Harvey, the Executive Officer of the Australian Music Association

"We understand that the ACMA is currently considering reclaiming some or all of this spectrum as part of the move from analogue to digital transmission. However, we wish to point out that the music industry in Australia would be adversely affected if there is not sufficient provision given to the 520 – 820MHz spectrum for the products that we sell and that are an integral part of these industries.

"If our customers are not able to use wireless microphones as they currently do, the entertainment and

cultural life of Australia would change enormously for the worse. Professional music and theatre production accounted for \$620 million in ticket sales with over 14 million people attending live performances in 2002-03 alone.

"Annually, around 35,000 or so of these units are sold each year, the total number of users would exceed 100,000 at this time. Virtually, all of these users would be adversely affected by the proposed changes.

"If the proposed action of reclaiming all or part of the 520 – 820MHz spectrum goes ahead then we will not only be impacting negatively on major cultural events and the professional organisations that supply these audio services but also on the lives of average Australian's as they go about their business as members of schools, churches and other community groups.

www.australianmusic.asn.au

POWA AUDIO BECOMES POWA PRODUCTION

Powa Audio has become Powa Production. Their lighting division has added around 60 Robe intelligent moving fixtures, with the Robe ColorSpot & ColorWash 1200s expected to be added this year. The current inventory covers the bulk of the Robe range, including Robe ColorSpot 250 ATs; ColorWash 250 ATs; ColorSpot 575ATs and ColourWash 575 ATs.

Powa services a large variety of clients, from rock to corporate, and is particularly successful in providing production for the "one truck tour" where many clients are benefiting from supply of event production and transport. "The updated lighting inventory is enabling us to bring big show looks, to a small event budget"



says CEO Geoff Knight.

Powa Production has also recently added Traxon 64 Pxl LED Tiles into their inventory, these LED tiles have been used in a wide range of

installations and events world wide, including the famous Jet night club in Las Vegas, Cirque du Soleil - Las Vegas, USA and many more.

www.powaudio.com



The Power of Sine Wave

IES Sine Wave history of success

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TVE Spanish Television

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Het Muziektheater, Amsterdam

Copenhagen Opera House, Denmark

BBC Television, United Kingdom

Matrix Dimming Rack



Het Muziektheater, Amsterdam



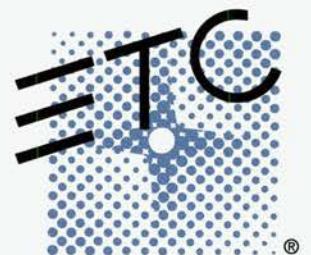
Hugo van Uum, Head of Lighting
Het Muziektheater, Amsterdam

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- Hugo van Uum, Head of Lighting, Het Muziektheater, Amsterdam, on the challenge of developing a stage lighting system suited to the varied demands of opera, ballet, drama, and concerts.

For more information about the Power of Sine Wave, go to www.silentdimming.com



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SHACKLES NOW GM AT HORDERN

PLAYBILL TAKE FULL CONTROL FROM LEND LEASE

Playbill Venues in Sydney have taken full control of the Hordern Pavilion and Royal Hall of Industries at Moore Park, after acquiring the share held by Lend Lease since the iconic venues were refurbished late last decade.

Michael Kent has been appointed general manager of the venues, which cater to concerts (5,500 seats), dance parties, corporate functions and exhibitions. The site was the original Sydney Showground, itself relocated before the Olympics. Nowadays Fox Studios occupy most of the old Showground area, with the Playbill Venues the only remaining Showground buildings that retain their original purpose. The balance of the site is branded EQ: The Entertainment Quarter, with retail, restaurants, bars and the showring which is sometimes host to tent shows like Cirque du Soleil. EQ as it is known has had several managements in recent years as it struggles to forge an identity.

No such problems exist at Playbill Venues, owned by Brian and Michael Nebenzahl. Hirers enjoy good facilities with a high audience profile, assisted by easy parking and located just off the busy East Sydney entertainment precinct. Playbill have a co-operative relationship with Centennial Parklands where an increasing number of outdoor festival events are staged. It

BURSWOOD THEATRE UPGRADES WITH 180 ETC SOURCE FOUR

With its impressive two-tiered auditorium and seating for up to 2,500 people, Perth's Burswood Theatre is a popular venue that hosts a variety of entertainment productions as well as large conferences and product launches.

Recently the venue underwent a major update of their conventional lighting replacing their old CCT Silhouette lamps with 180 ETC Source Four Zooms supplied by Perth's Concert & Corporate Productions.

"The ETC Source Four Zoom is a great lamp and the output from their 750 watt lamp is equivalent to the 1200 watt Silhouette," said Jerry



Michael 'Shackles' Kent outside the Hordern.

is also part of the Moore Park Precinct, containing Aussie Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Michael Kent was the Operations Manager and the Technical Supervisor prior to that. He established a world class OH&S system for the venues (online at www.playbillvenues.com) which allows contractors and promoters to fix lines of responsibilities and risk management issues around the clock.

Answering to 'Shackles', Michael

Reinhardt, C&CP's General Manager for Sales and Production. "They're a smart lamp; they burn cold and they're easy to use. There's also very good support from the manufacturer."

Jerry reports that when the Source Four's were unpacked and tested he was amazed to find that there were no problems. "Everything worked first time," he said. "There were no cracked lenses, all the lens trays were fine and everything fired up straightaway. We've been using the Source Fours in our hire department for some time and they've proven to be very robust. All in all they're just a great lamp.

"Jands did a sterling job, delivering the shipment when promised and they really were a pleasure to work with."

Kent joined Jands in 1991 after working freelance with bands on the touring circuit. He has extensive operational experience in sound, lighting and staging.

Playbill Venues first offered the General Manager appointment to their most senior staffer, Greg Pullen, who decided to stay in his business development role.

Playbill is well known as a highly successful theatre program publisher and merchandiser since 1958. They continue in that line of business. **CX**

GREG HUGHES JOINS LSC

LSC Lighting Systems, has appointed Greg Hughes to the role of Sales Consultant. Greg comes to LSC with an extensive background. In 1982, 'Greg Hughes Concert Lighting' came into play and in 1984 'East Coast Lighting Pty Ltd' commenced trading.

'East Coast Lighting' were Queensland's Principle LSC sales & service outlet from '985 till 1996 (when the Sales Division of East Coast Lighting was sold to Herkes Electrical. The 'East Coast Lighting' production arm continued trading till 1999 when a former partner purchased the remaining equipment: to form 'Lighting Dimensions'. To contact Greg email him on greg@lscighting.com.au. **www.lscighting.com.au** **CX**

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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 authorised Mackie dealer for an Onyx 4-Bus mixer demo today.



MATRIX MIXER

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



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

ONYX 24-4

ONYX 32-4



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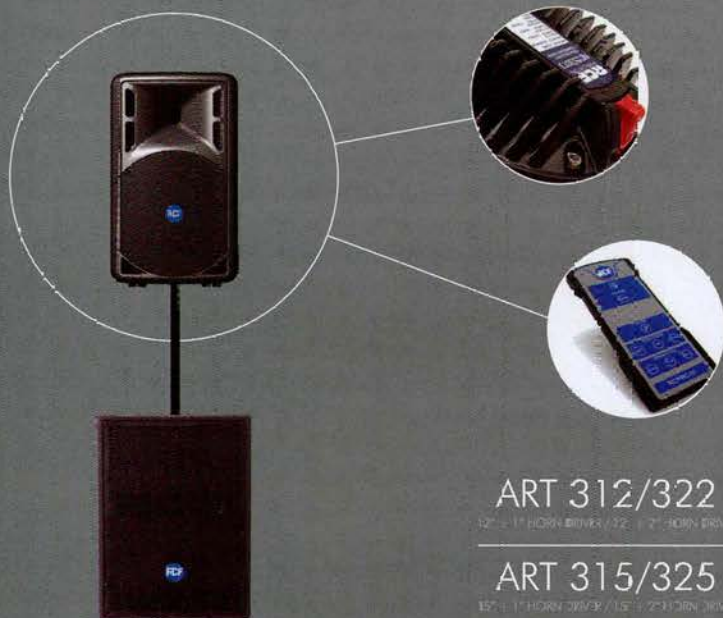
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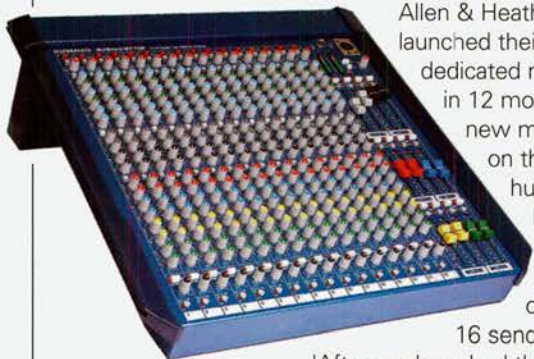
Need more bass?

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



System Sound have a rig on the road through Asia for the Cats Asian Tour. Head of sound Alan Mourant is pictured in 'the office' in Taipei, and reports "We have roughly two and a half days to bump in lights, set, sound and vision with cast on stage for soundchecks on the third day. Sounds like a long time but it aint!" The tour plays as few as 5 shows, with as many as 17 different venues in 6 months.

MINI MONITOR MIXER



Allen & Heath have launched their second dedicated monitor mixer in 12 months. The new mixer is based on the company's hugely popular MixWizard and follows the success of the larger 16 send GL2800M.

'After we launched the GL2800M, we realised there was an untapped demand for small monitor desks that can handle lots of outputs' commented WZ3Monitor designer Mike Griffin. 'The WZ3Monitor is the result. It's loaded with inputs and outputs and everything's arranged neatly to provide clear and precise control of mixes.'

The new mixer squeezes 16 mono mic/line inputs and a staggering 12 mix outputs (linkable in pairs for IEMs) into a 19" rack mount chassis.

Input channels feature the WZ3 preamplifier, a passive microphone splitter, individual phantom power and four band EQ, with two mid frequency sweeps. A rotary channel fader, mute switch, PFL, signal and peak meters complete the strip.

The auxiliaries are arranged so that sends 1-4 may be switched pre or post fader, whilst sends 5-12 are set to postfade, although these may be set using internal jumpers to prefade. The mix send controls are configured as level controls in mono mode but are level and pan in stereo mode. All mix controls are on 60mm faders, colour-coded in pairs, plus each stereo mix is provided with stereo AFL signal checking.

A wedge speaker output, as well as a stereo headphone out, provides ample send monitoring.

Mechanically identical to the other MixWizard's the WZ3Monitor is constructed with individual channel PCBs, nutted pots and quick change connector pod for rackmount or desktop use. An internal power supply is standard with the rackmount MPS12 back-up supply optional.

Retail price of WZ3Monitor is \$4,995.

www.tag.com.au



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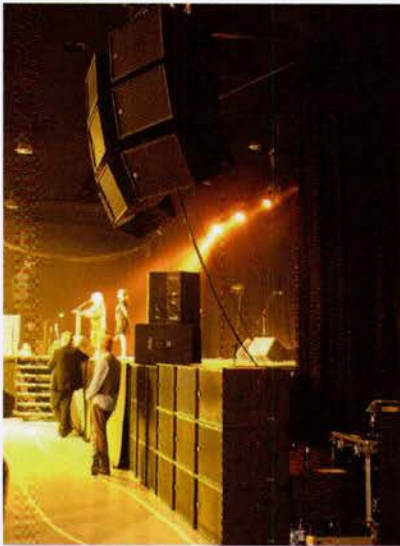
For even greater flexibility, the processor in the self powered subwoofer has the parameters to be combined with 8", 12" and 15" ConTour Series speakers.



The CT 112 & CT 115 are Hi Powered passive speaker cabinet that may also be configured in bi-amp mode. Offering an extended low frequency range and featuring a dual-purpose housing, it can serve as a FOH speaker as well as a stage monitor.

The CT 108 is an extremely compact, passive public address / full-range speaker cabinet. Featuring a dual-purpose housing, it may be employed as an FOH or delay speaker as well as a stage monitor.

HK AUDIO Portable Sound
For more information and supplier list
<http://www.cmi.com.au/branddetective>



TURBO TOUR ASPECT

Not a line array, which makes it interesting

Audio Telex has a sizeable Turbosound Aspect PA system on the road in Australia, and CX caught up with the system at Sydney's Hordern Pavilion. Aspect is a replacement for the Flashlight System, which was renowned in the 1990s as a highly directional solution for increasingly difficult shows where noise could cause environmental complaints.

Jumping ahead to Aspect and Turbo has considerably improved the concept. Where Flashlight had firm dispersion in the high frequencies but became variable in the midrange, Turbo assert that Aspect is highly controlled across the range of the box, which in the case of the mid/high unit is a 25-degree horizontal and 15-degree vertical dispersion.

The Aspect architecture is appealing; with inbuilt and captive flying hardware that allows fast set of hang angles. The system is designed for use with two hands, thus minimising the chance of injury during set-up.

At the mid-high box a viewer is intrigued by the waveguide, which was inaccurately described as looking like a cheese grater by this magazine at the previews in 2006. The waveguide for the high frequency section sits in front of two high frequency drivers, which operate from 6kHz to 20kHz. Formed into 36 little wavelets or 'hornlets' in front of each driver, a total of 72 small portals deliver audio at the same time, courtesy of identical length tubes that are punched into a strange form of

twisted cone. The rationalisation is that all high frequency paths need to be at matched wavelengths, unlike the primitive and dissimilar 'multicell' approach that Altec called revolutionary in 1968. The multicell had different throat lengths for many of the 'cells', delivering audio confusion out of the mouth of the horn.

Aside from the far better control of dispersion over Flashlight, Aspect is more efficient as well. This reduced number of cabinets required, and again the cabinet weight is substantially reduced, at around 76kg per mid/high box.

Turbo blew it with Flashlight by requiring production companies to purchase 'proprietary' amplifiers sold by Turbo. This feature eliminated a lot of sales, and the Aspect comes with an open invitation to use whatever is good that you already have in stock. There is a choice of third party system processor types as well.

Somewhat revolutionary is the claim that system processor settings need not contain much if any equalisation - we were shown settings that validated the claim, with Turbo said to have sorted out the cabinet voicing within the cabinet, which is almost a nirvana concept for loudspeaker designers.

Aspect comes with several subwoofer options, and a wide box for infills. The voicing of the range is not dissimilar to the Turbo Q series with a powered box option opening up solutions for audio designers who almost always prefer to have one brand of loudspeaker on a show.

www.audiotelx.com.au 

DIGICO HITS CENTRE STAGE AT THE VAC

At the Victorian Arts Centre Darren Golding, Manager for Production has just installed DiGiCo across various venues. The State Theatre seats 2,085 and has one of the largest stages in the world. A DiGiCo D1 digital console has been installed and Ray Rogers, Sound Supervisor for the State Theatre, says "During the recent Melbourne International Arts Festival we staged George Orwell's 1984 which had 97 sound cues and the D1 managed them well, you press a button and it's done," said Ray. "I can't imagine doing that show on a normal console as I wouldn't have had enough hands! For this theatre it's basically a big fold back job; I've got maybe ten sends of fold back in various locations around the stage and in the pit." With the State Theatre frequently in rep the D1's ability to store shows in the console, is a godsend for Ray who is using all of the onboard effects.

The Hamer Hall hosts varied performances such as the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, concerts, comedy



Darren Golding (L) Nick Carroll (R) from The Victorian Arts Centre.

and gala film events. It seats up to 2,600 over three levels and is now home to a DiGiCo D5 digital console. "It's a fabulous console," said Peter Ripor, Sound Supervisor for the Hamer Hall. "I use the onboard effects and I don't use any outboard. The comps are good, good to read and work better than the ones in the rack. It's easy to use and logical.

Promoters are also very happy with the D5. The previous console in the Hamer Hall occupied 37 seats

whereas the D5 only requires the space of 15. "At \$700 a ticket, you could say that the console pays for itself indirectly," added Darren Golding. Casual crew at the Centre has had training on the DiGiCo consoles at Group Technologies and Darren reports that it has been a remarkably smooth transition. "Group has done a great job training - and they also did a fab fiber optic install so that everything is all plug and play."

CX



Norwest Productions



Norwest have expanded their Lab Gruppen inventory to 196 units with the purchase of 24 FP+ 10000Q amplifiers.

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- LabGruppen fp6400
- Camco Vortex 6
- Crown Macrotech VZ5002

- Yamaha PM1D, PM5d
- Yamaha M7CL, DM2000
- Yamaha O1V/96 (40 consoles)
- Digico D5 112/EX
- Midas XL4, XL3
- Midas Heritage 3000, 1000
- Midas Verona, Venice

AKG DEBUTS MICROMIC

AKG Acoustics has unveiled the newest generation of its MicroMic Series miniature microphone line.

The new series includes five products: C 516, designed for use with accordions and for mounting on instrument amplifiers; C 518, for drum and percussion applications; C 519, for use on woodwind and brass instruments; C 520, a premium condenser vocal microphone; and C 555, head-worn microphone for dancers and back-up vocalists. Each of the new MicroMic models offers a flexible gooseneck for optimal positioning and elastic suspension to suppress spurious noise. Additionally, the C 516, C 518 and C 519 offer metal capsule housings and an adapter plate that allows them to be attached directly to AKG WMS 40 Pro and WMS 400 bodypack transmitters, eliminating a cumbersome cable run between the mic and the wireless transmitter. Cabled versions of the new MicroMics terminated in 3-pin XLR-type outputs are available too.


www.audioproducts.com.au 



Nice suit and tie!

ALDO ALIBRANDI JOINS NAS

National Audio Systems has hired Aldo Alibrandi as NSW/ACT Account Manager along side Michael Prestipino. Aldo comes from a very knowledgeable and experienced background in professional audio and distributed systems as well as previous management experience.

Aldo can be contacted on 0400 024 010 or via email aldo@nationalaudio.com.au 



MIRROR BALL CASE

What can you say about this? A picture tells a thousand words. The editor once had a fleet of mirrorballs, and either had them in cardboard boxes or made expensive road cases for them. A broken mirror is indeed bad luck, and bad form at a show. Now Arriba offers a full line of soft cases for mobile lighting products. The AC-71 Mirror Ball bag fits an 12" diameter mirror ball and sells for only \$29.95.

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AUDIX INTRODUCES DP-7 DRUM MIC PACK

Audix has expanded its line. The latest pack, the DP-7, is perfect for miking a 5 piece kit for both live and studio applications.

As the name implies, the DP-7 contains 7 microphones. At the heart of the mic system is the D6 dynamic microphone for kick drum. For snare drum, the i-5 is provided; for rack toms there are two D2 mics, for floor tom there is a D4, and for overheads there are two ADX51 condenser microphones with pad and roll-off. Additionally there are 4 D-Vice rim mounting clips which eliminate the need for mic stands for snare and toms. The entire miking kit is packaged in an aluminium carrying case.

www.productionaudio.com.au



INTELLISTAGE BY ROAD READY

Road Ready's Intellistage system can be set up by one person. The System features an internal, locking system that allows for easy set-up and tear-down and ensures that all components are bolted tight and are safe to use. The system can hold up to 185lbs per sq foot / 900kg per sq mtr and comes in either a rugged carpet or Duraflex finish.

Accessories include: Riser couplers (to attach risers on top of risers), Steps (range of sizes and heights), Riser clamps, Stage Skirts (fire rated), and a heavy duty Road Ready/Intellistage flight case.

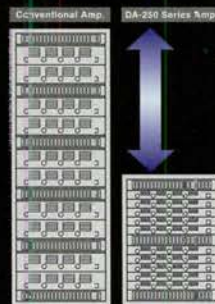
Platforms (1m X 1m) from \$249 and Risers (30cm to suit 1m Platform) from \$209.

www.nextet.com.au

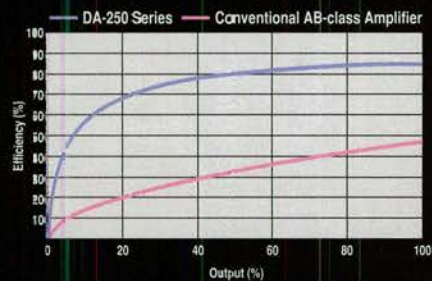


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43 days TO CREATE A MASSIVE EVENT

Australian team pulls off massive show in Abu Dhabi

By **LOUISE STICKLAND**

Andrew Walsh had a call. The massive Doha Asian Games were about to commence, and a large number of Australian crew were there. It seems another large scale event was to be run nearby, and its management were keen to get some Australian expertise.

"When is it?" he asked.

"Oh. 43 days time....."

For an event with an opening ceremony similar in scale to the Commonwealth Games, planning timelines of about one year are common.

This is the story of how this one came along, out of thin air. By Louise Stickland.

Dubai-based production company HQ Creative, working in close

collaboration with Done Events, delivered a sensational opening ceremony to the for the 18th Gulf Cup in Abu Dhabi, staged in the Zayed Sports City Stadium.

The show – a 37 minute mixed media spectacular – was the largest ever opening event to date for a football tournament.

It was conceived by HQ's creative director Katie Veira – for the

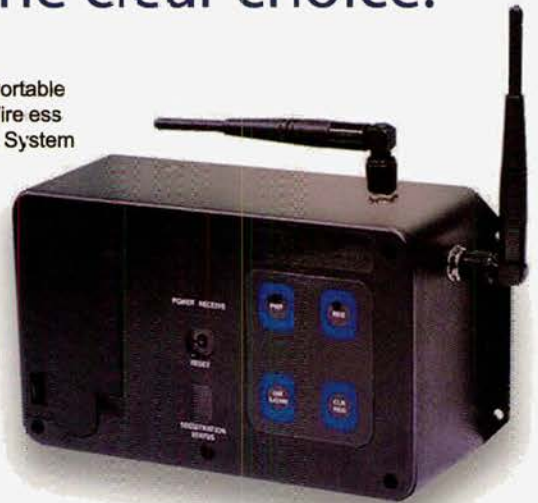
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DX100 Portable
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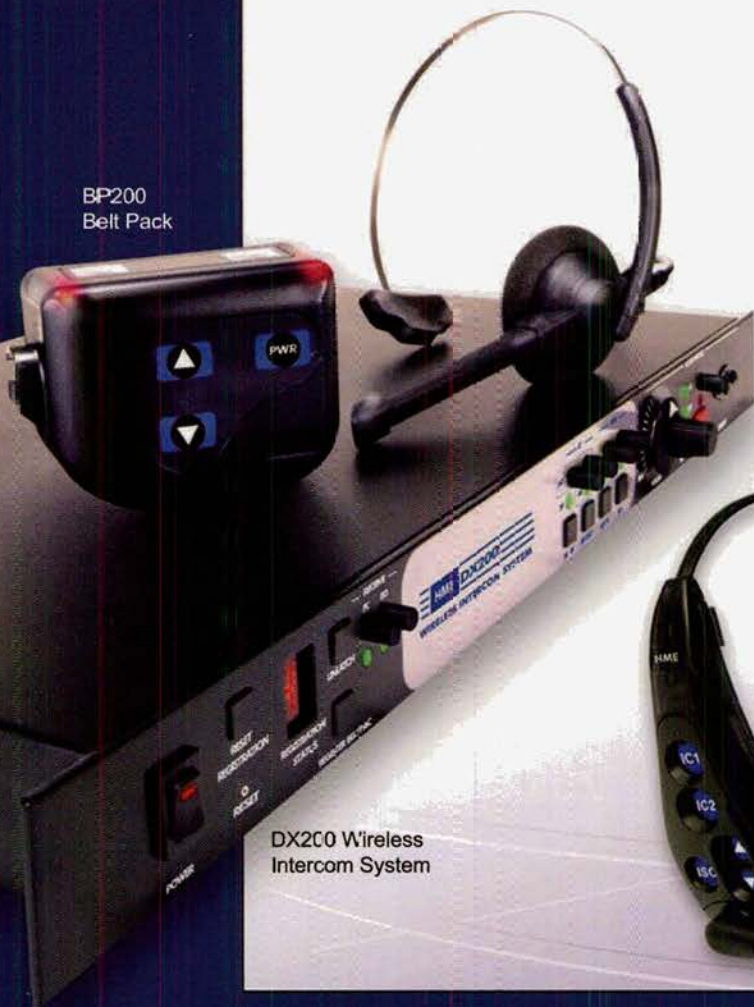
With its digital encryption and frequency hopping technologies, you'll never have to worry about unauthorized users. Diversity antennas and dual-slot diversity technology maximize performance to ensure the strongest possible signal.

SIMPLE. INNOVATIVE. EXPANDABLE.

The DX200 system is supplied complete with lightweight, rugged belt packs featuring voice prompts, rechargeable batteries and a 4 port battery charger for reliable and cost-effective operation.

Whether it's used at professional sports events, military operations, churches, performing arts or other venues, the DX200's superior digital design and ease of operation make it the **ONLY** choice in wireless intercom systems.

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Belt Pack



DX200 Wireless
Intercom System

WH200
All-in-one
Headset

HME



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Organising Committee of the 18th Arabian Gulf Cup, which is headed by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mubarak al Nahyan (also the Minister for Public Works).

The performance featured 1200 live performers, 55 horses and an international production team of over 400 people, who worked with approximately 1700 local crew over the build period. The show was enjoyed live by 55,000 excited spectators and a TV audience of 50 million who tuned in to Dubai Sports.

The task of building the complex technical infrastructure required to stage the event was co-ordinated for HQ by production director Jo Marshall, working with his key HQ team including project manager Jo MacKay, production co-ordinators Ian Greenway, Candice Dalziel, Nadine Manning and site manager Nigel Beaton.

They had just 43 days from receiving the green light from The Committee to producing a world class ceremony show.

The Sheikh took a very hands-on role in the whole event attending meetings and proactively articulating ideas. It was more than just a show and an opening, it was a matter of massive national pride. He wanted this to be the most memorable opening ceremony of any Gulf Cup and indeed of any football tournament to date!

The show contained several technical world firsts – the first seamless fully spherical HD projections and the highest built version to date of ESS's renowned tower system.

Creatively, the visually-based performance had a lively, contemporary feel. It linked local culture, sport and the environment via a short poem at the head of each section with key-words like 'passion', 'speed' and 'strength'. It did this in abstract and more provocative ways rather than using a simple linking narrative. With the Doha Asian Games so fresh in everyone's memory (and the opening/closing ceremony content not revealed until December), it was also vital that there were no overlaps in this show explains Katie Veira (who presented her original Gulf Cup ideas in February 2006!).

With such an incredibly short timescale, HQ enlisted the services of Sydney-based veteran ceremonies producer, Andrew Walsh as artistic

consultant. Walsh's previous experience includes executive producing the Athens Olympics opening and closing ceremonies in 2004.

A creative workshop followed between Veira, Marshall and Walsh, together with PIGI projection designer Peter Milne and technical director Nick Eltis who were both brought onboard by Walsh.

A front line production management team was also brought onboard. Chris Hey (covering rigging & staging), "Philby" Lewis (lighting, PIGI projection, video) and Ian "Baldy" Baldwin (audio, comms, pyro & lasers), all of whom were overseen by Nick Eltis.

Eltis describes the timeframe as "insane", adding that it was extremely helpful that so many of the people who were able to join the show production had all worked together before on various ceremony occasions.

Leading international production companies included Procon (lighting), Neumann & Mueller (high definition 360 degree video projection) and Tarm (lasers) from Germany, Norwest (audio) and the Electric Canvass (PIGI projection) from Australia, Groupe F (pyro) from France and Stage One (rigging and performer flying) and ESS (towers, steel and rigging) from the UK. The Inflatable Event Company designed and supplied the 'solar' system, 'flagballs' and the main projection sphere, and the aerialists came from Showtech Rigging, both companies also based in Australia

The production was greatly aided by the close proximity (both geographically and timeline wise) of the Doha Asian Games in December. It meant that lots of top level technical and production personnel were available once that project was concluded, and there was also a slew of equipment and other resources in Doha – not that this made it any



Creatively, the visually-based performance had a lively, contemporary feel.



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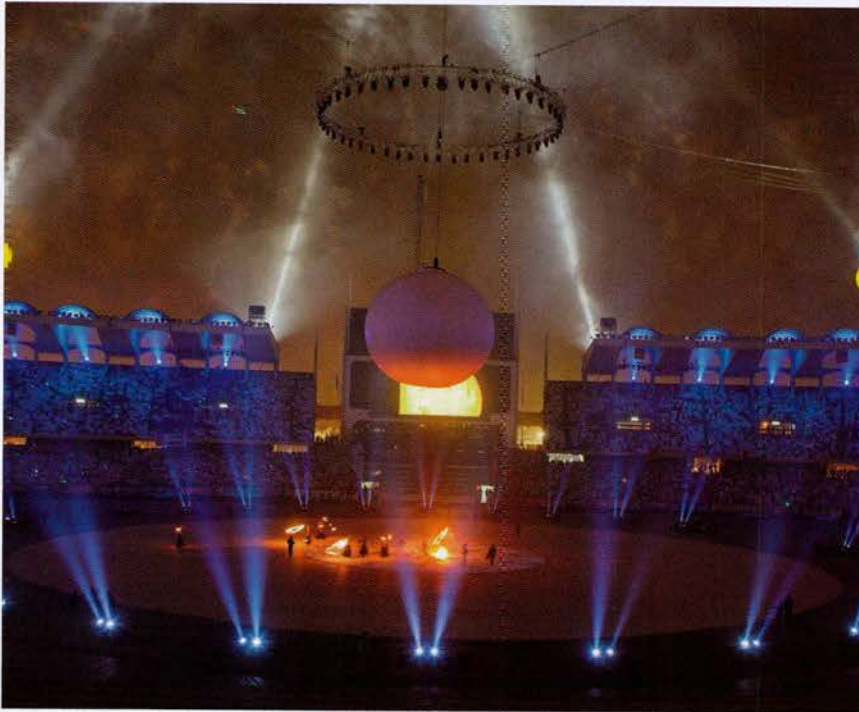
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Lighting equipment was supplied by Procon.

easier to get them to the UAE in a sensible timescale. In the end, four military planes were scrambled to air lift equipment to Abu Dhabi.

Although the two countries are both in the Gulf, freighting of any description – road, freight, air – between them required endless patience and was the proverbial uphill struggle! It consumed serious logistics, number crunching and a daunting mountain of paperwork and procedural challenges for HQ's freighting department, headed by Russell Mason. And that was just the kit coming from Doha ... in addition to that, they had gear coming from all over Europe, Australia, Asia and America.

"Timescale was easily our biggest challenge" says Jo Marshall. "We had to go from zero to a show that would stun and amaze in 5 weeks, with only three full weeks on site. Most shows of this size and complexity would be running on at least a 6 month lead time or more!"

That included everything - booking the artists, sourcing the technical and creative personnel, organising contractors, freight, flights, transport, labour, catering, costumes, paperwork, and getting the stadium ready to stage its biggest and most prestigious ever event.

TOWERS AND RIGGING

Once the creative started to develop and aerialists were written

into the script, it was immediately obvious that an overhead flying system was needed as well as some sort of lighting positions over the field of play.

The solution they found was to build eight 70 metre high towers, all at 45 degrees from one another, constructed from standard ESS tower truss located around the outside the stadium walls – of which they're nearly three times the height!

This allowed Stage One to attach one of their Q-Motion performer flying systems and rig a series of catenary wires to hang a 20 metre diameter circular truss right over the centre of the pitch. The bottom rail of the truss was trimmed at 36 metres, the minimum FIFA requirement for a football match to continue below.

Just one additional small logistical conundrum on actual opening night was that the tournament's opening match - Oman v UAE - had to commence within 30 minutes of the show ending!

Seventy metres is the highest that ESS has ever built their tower system, so first came some special calculations to ensure it was feasible. After an initial site visit explains Jeff Burke, they then dispatched a surveyor to Abu Dhabi to double check the accuracy of the stadium plans they'd been given. This prompted the discovery of a whole underground infrastructure of drainage, electricity, gas, water and

other services, which severely limited in the amount of chemical fixings they could utilise in anchoring the towers to the stadium.

Each tower had 24 building anchors plus an additional 6 fully laden containers of ballast, made up from a total of 1100 tonnes of sand and 600 tonnes of concrete ballasting. The anchor work was completed by The Specialists, based in Abu Dhabi, who used Hilti products and were "Absolutely brilliant" according to Burke.

Stage One installed a 17 axis of Q-Motion system for flying 8 aerial performers in two axes – (up/down and backwards/forwards along the wires), plus a 30Kw electric winch at the base of Tower 5 to raise and lower the central inflatable sphere. This hung below the circular truss and served as the main video projection surface.

The hub of the Stage One flying system weighed 3.5 tonnes (with steel attached) and was suspended using 2800 Kgs of 22mm steel wire rope and another 1800 Kg of 18 mm wire rope was used for the performer trolleys. The final height of the hub above the field of play was 38.8 metres.

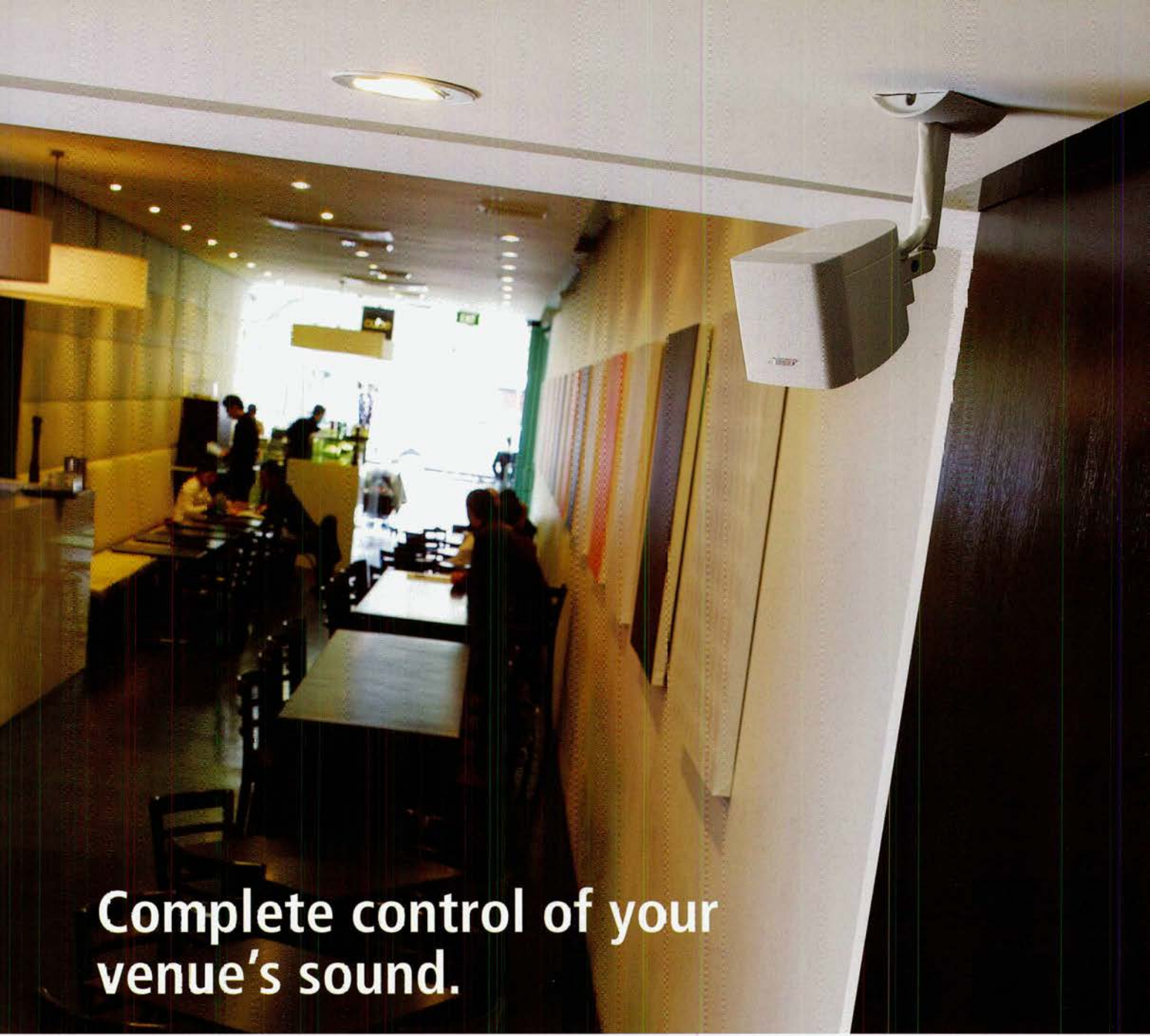
Also attached to the hub was a radial system of tensioning wires (12 per tower) and they fabricated a specials head for each tower to tensioned the cables as the whole system was erected and adjusted, a complicated operating taking 3 days to complete, described by Chris Hey as "More of a civil engineering exercise than rigging".

Inside the stadium, they ran 22mm steel wire rope catenaries to hold up the centre truss which was constructed from Total Fabrication heavy duty trussing. It was suspended by four pairs of wires all running back to the towers at no more than 10 degrees from horizontal. The total weight of the trussing (unladen with lights) but including 8 motors was 3800 Kgs.

Stage One's crew totalled 22 – 12 riggers, 6 technicians and 4 operators – all managed by Jim Almond.

CRANETASTIC

Rigging the rope system also needed four 200 tonne cranes with reaches in excess of 70 metres, which came onsite towards the end of December and were co-ordinated by Ian Greenway. His crane-duty



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tasks also included locating one that fitted the spec and would also pass underneath a 3.5 metre high sewerage pipe to get inside the stadium! Cranes were also used to lift all the pyro and numerous other kit onto the roof including power distribution, BigLite searchlights and PIGI projectors.

PROJECTION

High definition video and PIGI projection – although working completely independently - were highly successfully incorporated into the show for additional visual diversity and depth.

The PIGI projections filled the field of play, painting it with patterns, emblems and bold slashes and pools of colour and texturing, proving it's still an unbeatable medium for creating these very specific effects and for covering vast distances.

Fully spherical HD was used – probably for the first time - onto a 10.2 metre diameter inflatable sphere hung underneath the central truss. The main sequence of HD projection was a major element of the show's visual narrative, stitching together metaphorical images of speed, diversity, athleticism, passion, power and others linking sports people with natural elements and wildlife.

Munich-based Neumann & Mueller supplied all the HD kit and expertise, fresh from having worked with HQ Creative on the DIFC 2 (Dubai International Financial Centre) event at the end of 2006. Here they projected across the whole of DIFC's iconic arched building in HD video with amazing results.

Katie Veira and N&M's Klaus Ostermaier worked on the Gulf Cup content, the final versions of which were produced at N&M's studio in Munich.

The HD sequence was beamed onto the inflatable sphere using 12 Digital Projection 30 SX machines, stacked 3 high (overlaid) at four positions around the stadium. They were on special platforms about half way up the seating stands - all at 90 degrees to each other.

Each group of projectors sent a quarter of the full image to the sphere, and the seamless wrap-around of the flat artwork was achieved using a Pandora's Box control system, developed by German-based Coolux. The Box also stores all the content, which is played back – to timecode triggered DMX – from a GrandMA

lighting console.

The biggest challenge actually on the night was keeping the sphere still and in precisely the correct position for the video sequence, with variables like the wind and the vibrations across the flying system caused by other moving elements like the planets (solar system) and flag-balls as they ran along the track.

Sydney-based Peter Milne was in Doha and embroiled in the Asian Games events when he received the call about this project, and popped over for a day for the aforementioned pre-dation summit with HQ Creative, Walsh and Eltis.

He collaborated closely with Katie Veira on the content, which was turned into PIG artwork and films by his company, The Electric Canvas. Because of the fluid nature of the creative when they initially met, a degree of flexibility plus some contingency for 'unknowns' had to be incorporated into this artwork, which was no problem for a PIG guru like Milne.

The effects were primarily atmospheric, filling out the vast pitch space, and PIGI was a vital layer in the show's imaginative matrix.

The 12 PIGI projectors were positioned on the roof of the stadium. Four were on a custom built scaffold platform on the eastern side (opposite the Sheikh's enclosure). They all had double rotating scrollers on the front, each loaded with approximately 10 metres of film per projector, containing about 50 frames of artwork.

Milne operated the show using PIGI's OnlyCue PC-based playback system and worked with a crew of five.

He made a flying visit to Abu Dhabi when returning to Sydney at the end of the Asian Games to undertake a laser survey of the Zayed Sports City Stadium. This was necessary as they had no accurate CAD drawings available of the venue, and with a time pressure of just 5 days to install and commission the system - including getting kit up on the roof, in position, lined up and fired up ... there was no room for errors.

LIGHTING

Lighting designer Paul Collison's brief was "Fluid" considering the intricacy of the show, but understandable in the context of available time in which to build a real WOW factor show.


He says that normally he would have concentrated further on how it should be lit as a broadcast event, but part of his brief was to present the show as a theatrical spectacle in the stadium for the 55,000 people enjoying it live and direct.




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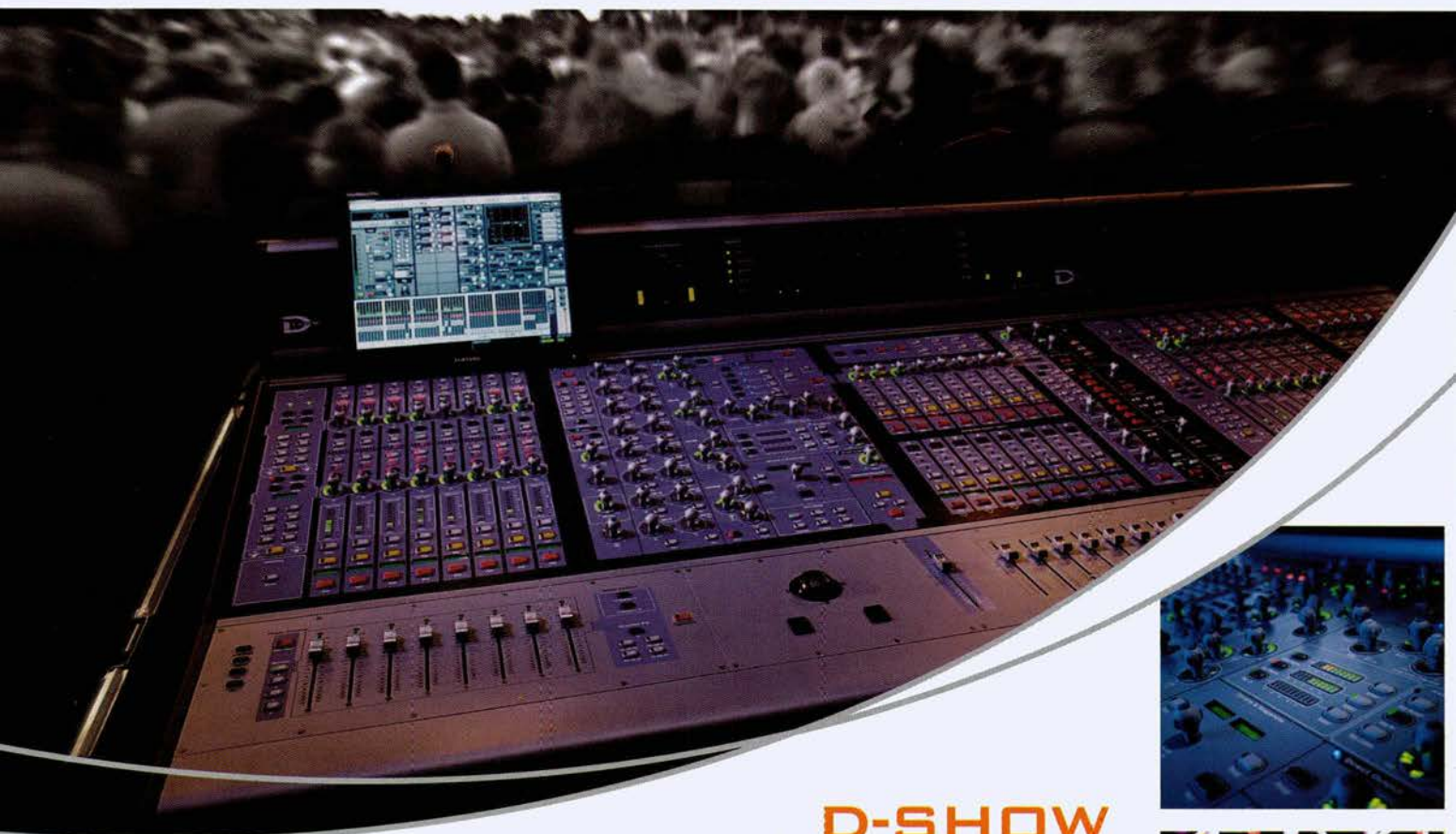
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He focussed first on the 66 metre performance space, and then went on to highlight the stadium's arched and rounded architecture with 55 Martin MAC 2K washes that pointed up and filled out the undersides of the roof arch, "It's the kind of gesture that really states where you are" he elucidates, adding that he deliberately chose to keep the audience lighting subtle.

Ten metres back from the periphery of the main performance space on the ground, he placed 32 custom made lighting trolleys, each containing two MAC 2K Washes and two Clay Paky Alpha Spot 1200s. He used the Alpha Spot's bar gobo when lighting the performers to help avoid drowning out the PIGI projections.

Fourteen BigLite 4.5Ks were positioned around the roof and used to produce stunning aerial framing effects.

On the circular truss, which he describes as "Right where it's needed and a great tribute to ESS and Stage One in getting it there" were 24 Alpha Spots and 24 MAC 2K washes.

He controlled the show using a GrandMA console. With fibre optic backbones running around the roof and the floor of the stadium they broke out to Ethernet using MA NSP nodes (which can expand up to 64 DMX universes to one console) which he describes as "An absolutely rock solid system".

Lighting equipment was supplied by Procon, all of it coming from Doha, apart from the 8 Lycian Followspots, and Collison's design was based around what was available from that gig. The total fixture count was 280 MAC 2K Washes, 38 Clay Paky AlphaSpot 1200s, 48 VL 3000 Spots and the 14 BigLites.

Procon pulled a crew of 24 from Doha. It took 10 days to get in, rigged and ready for the first rehearsal and the cruise team was led by technical director Mateus Rau and crew chief Daniel Steffe.




AUDIO

The sound system took advantage of the house EAW system which was augmented with equipment supplied by Norwest Productions, who also did the Asian Games, so had gear to hand that could be sent on from Doha.


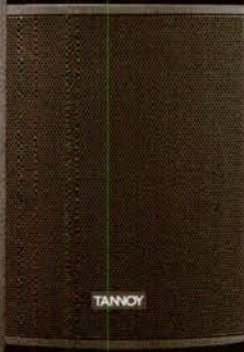
In Abu Dhabi, the sound installation and set up operation was overseen by Adrian Riddell working with his team of 8 crew from Norwest. They were given the show's music track (created by music producers Christo

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Curtis from Australia and Mohammed Yanaz from Abu Dhabi) which was taken into Pro Tools for final editing and the addition of timecode. It was then transferred into a Pyramix hard drive playback system for the show.

The show FOH sound was mixed on a Yamaha PM5D by Ian Shapcott. Right beside him on the control platform at the back of the western stand was Ewan MacDonald, mixing the monitors on a Digico D5 console. This included over 750 in-ear sets and a system of 8 field of play wedges. Both consoles were patched up to do both FOH and monitor mixes, so one could take over in case of an emergency.

The 750 plus IEM FM receivers were looked after by Ian "Baldy" Baldwin, production manager for sound, comms, pyro and lasers. The FM receiver feeds were divided into three levels – Level 1 (10 Shure PSM 700 systems) for headline talent, the conductor, aerialists, etc; level 2 (40 Shure PSM 200 systems) for specialised ground-based performers, and Level 3 featured proprietary PA People badged FM receivers, made available to the mass cast including the painters (630 painters created a 12 metre wide portrait of the Sheikh 'live' on the pitch right in front of him – in 2 minutes – choreographed by Wanda Rokiki).

RF interference was a serious issue, and one of the 8 Norwest audio crew was dedicated to scanning and monitoring all the frequencies in use.

It was also a huge challenge distributing and attaching 750 receivers to people who don't normally use them, complete with instructions in English and Arabic – a diligent task that was handed to the cast management team.

PA People from Australia looked after all the comms including 200 portable radios and 40 cabled comms packs. They used a Clearcom Matrix system with radio-based antenna systems and combiners that interface to the matrix. There were 12 concurrent radio bases in operation and another 20 interfaced simplex channels, giving coverage all around the stadium and up to 2Km outside it.

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The show flew by in spectacular style.

endowed with electrical juices.


Eight 200 KVA sets were brought in from Caterpillar at Abu Dhabi which were all run as stand alones for the performer winches, one positioned at the base of each tower.

PITCH CLEARANCE

As soon as the show came down the pitch clearance team – co-ordinated by Dean Jewell – swung into action, peeling back the protective covers over the pitch and clearing the debris which ranged from horse poo to pyro fall

out to props on the running track. All this was achieved in an impressive 7 minutes .. ready for the first match of the tournament to kick off.

HAPPY ENDINGS!

This show flew by in spectacular style, a dynamic collage of eye-candy, action and excitement combining ideas, colour, culture and seat-edge anticipation of what might come next. It very much set the tone for the Gulf Cup and has already become a major talking point in the region. 

- There is one bottle shop in Abu Dhabi. The crew favored Vodka.
- After the show, the ground was littered with empty orange juice containers and pastry wrappers – no beer, no pies!
- Ian Baldwin flew back to Doha to sort out a small shipping issue, and ended up there for five days, with no baggage.
- The 'guest workers' in Abu Dhabi were nicknamed the Blue Men, due to their overalls.
- The 200 tonne crane only just fitted through the venue tunnel.
- An engineer demanded another 1,100 tonnes of ballast for the ESS towers, on top of the 600 tonnes already applied. The crew used open topped shipping containers and a massive front end loader to fill them with sand.
- Things just happen in a country like this – the Prince's evac helicopter landed unannounced at the stadium, narrowly missing the tower guy lines.
- Because things can just happen, the event could be put together in 42 days. Permits and red tape were not an issue.
- Equipment got stuck in Doha – it was very hard to get out. Norwest Productions had a call at 7am to replicate the FOH racks from Sydney and get them on a flight the same day. They made it happen.
- Friday was Holy Day, so local crew needed extra incentives to work.
- The crane contractor decided to delay the loadout, so the crew drove around town and hot hired construction cranes using cash.
- It was winter, the temperatures ranged from 23 to 29 degrees. It actually rained on show day.

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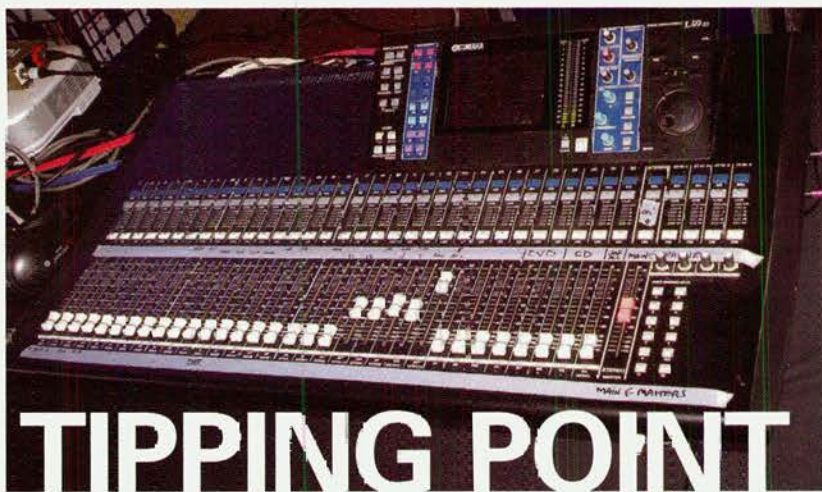
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TIPPING POINT

Yamaha cross over to digital at analogue prices - LS9 digital mixer faces torture test.

By JULIUS GRAFTON

I took the Yamaha LS9 out for a four show kids camp gig in outer Sydney where lots of inputs needed to be massaged with lower sound levels than usual. Because the audience were kids.

Beforehand I got given a choice of consoles by Nick McFie from Production Technologies, who were the audio contractor. It was nice to have a choice. He rolled up one nice summer morning with James Pritchett who also runs Auswide Productions - they were helping each other out. Nick supplies PA systems, as does James, and James has a very nice 8 tonne truck as well.

This gig day we set up a fairly straight-forward KV2 PA stack each side plus four sends (into 6 wedges) of Nexo PS15. These are the true combo tool of compact speakers - a 15" and horn box which can be used on end as a small PA or on their sides as a kick-butt wedge.

Nick supplied all the extra parts that go into a PA, including some Countryman headsets and Shure handheld wireless microphones. Set and ready to go, I had dispensed with any external equalization because the KV2 and the Nexo FS15's all sounded just fine without tinkering. Plus my sound levels would not approach 75% of possible output, so no EQ was needed.

The good thing about being mature is being able to say no. I say no EQ, and people say 'OK'.

ENTER THE LS9

The 32 channel version of this new compact live sound digital mixing console sells at \$14.5k - and the 16 channel version at just \$3 grand. This is truly analogue price levels, given that these consoles are pitched into the professional markets. The 32 was sized sufficiently small so that I could just pick it up. Try doing that with 32 channels of analogue.

On the back were 32 inputs, and 16 omni outputs, and they are all 3 pin XLR connectors. Nick fixed the output assignments in advance via programming, and stuck a USB key in so the output assignment was downloaded. Later on I found the menu to do this on the console, and figure it'd take about 15 minutes of searching and learning to do it from scratch. Not a problem, especially given that the default settings are useable.

We used Omni outputs 15 and 13 for main PA left and right; and Omni 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the four wedge sends. I discovered Mix number 14 went to one of the two internal effects engines, it was internally patched. I was guessing Omni 14 also carried Mix 14, so if I wanted to patch up an external effector, Omni 14 would be the output for that send.

Using a conventional multicore, the stage inputs were patched up to the back of the LS9 and I was off and running.

LS9 is basic in that there are 32 input faders plus one red output fader. You can select a channel so it is shown on the only just large enough screen, PFL a channel so it turns up on the headphones and also on the twin output LED ramps, and switch the channel off. Startlingly you can also switch off the main

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output. By intelligent design, the on/off switch has a light to show on.

There are four stereo input rotary controls which don't have corresponding inputs on the back of the console. Like everything digital there is always a story behind things, in this case the stereo inputs can control the returns (the outputs) of the internal reverb type effectors, and/or you can put an optional card into one of the slots out back to receive inputs that may be routed to these rotary controls.

Up top is the control module or binnacle with the little screen, selection buttons, and bare minimum rotary encoders to make things work.

IN USE

I started to compare the facilities on this compact console (measures under 900mm wide x 500mm deep) with my current favorite analogue console, the Soundcraft MH4. It measures about 2.2 metres wide and weighs 115kg.

LS9 is under 20kg and delivers 16 busses – MH4 has 16 auxiliary sends. OK, before you hang up on me, this isn't a comparison between two very different platforms but gee, they do a very similar mission.

On the Soundcraft I'm used to a very particular English EQ section, and on the LS9 I found a very flexible digital EQ section that exceeded the former with extra features. No, it didn't quite sound as sweet as the MH4, but we are talking a fraction of the retail price here.

Of course Yamaha have organized their range so that this entry level live digital console is missing some features that you get on the MH4, and that you get on upstream Yamaha digital consoles like the (confusingly named) M7CL. Namely, subgroups or VCA groups.

LS9 wants you to handle every channel independently, which is do-able most of the time, and you can assign channels to another layer called the Custom Fader Layer. It means you could have a second fader layout which may be organized differently to the main layer – channels 1 to 32.

Talking of layers, there is a second layer which allows control over another 32 inputs if you've got optional input cards and interfaces. In theory you can mix a 64 input show! Most likely you decided to forego the internal inputs (the 32 inputs on the back of the console) and set up a Cat 5 link to remote inputs which turn up on Layer 2. I don't think it'd be sensationally easy to keep on top of 64 inputs on 2 layers, but people can do this – AND you can then put the 32 really important channels onto the aforementioned Custom Fader Layer.

The third of four layers is the all important monitor level, where you can set up Sends On Fader mode. This lets you 'send' any/all of the 32 channels to your selected output, where that output is an auxiliary (stage monitor or effect) send; or a Matrix output.

STAGE MONITORS

When first shown the LS9 I was shy. I wanted to drive it like I always drive, from the right hand seat, with my elbow on the window sill. So for each channel, if I needed a little stage monitors, I would select the channel to bring it to the control binnacle, then punch the Mix button for the relevant auxiliary send (imagine mix 2 is the centre wedges) and then I had a little rotary fader available with which to tweak the send.

After a while, I got fed up with pressing buttons and tried the Monitor layer. To make it work, I just double punched the relevant send or Mix button. So suppose I am wanting to sort out my centre wedges (mix 2). I double hit the mix 2 button and every one of the 16 Mix button lights start to

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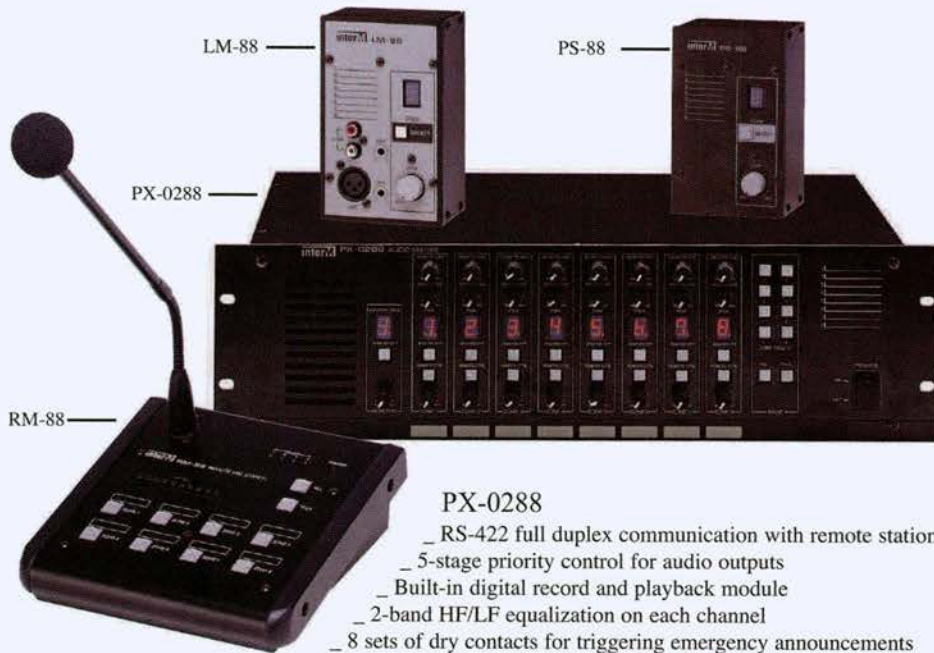
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interM



Screen is small, but it works!

flash, with Mix 2 alternating to show that yes, we are now dealing with Mix 2.

Yamaha has just given me a big heads-up that I am in SOF mode, or Sends On Fader. Now all my channel faders are controlling what is sent to mix 2. They have snapped to the last preset, because each time you select a Layer, the faders will snap to position.

It really gets easy, and there's no reason the planet why an LS9 can't be a 16 send stage monitor console.

CONCLUDED

Once your head is around hunting and pecking and looking at a little screen, life is sweet. I used the compressor limiter on each input channel, and also on the outputs, to squash my sound pretty hard.

The internal racks have spaces for 8 things. A thing can be an effects unit, and there are four effectors available. If you do use four, then the other four spaces can be filled with EQ units. Use less effects, and use more EQ's. The EQ devices are third octave units, and if you decide that a 15 band EQ will do the job, then each EQ can be split into two. Frankly, I never, ever enjoyed using 15 band EQ's since the 'Q' is too wide. But the offer is there.

You can time delay outputs or matrix outputs, extremely handy for delay zones.

There are scene recall and mute memory functions, I didn't go there.

The USB key can be recorded onto, or you can play back MP3 audio files off your key. This can remove the need for an external CD player/recorder, making LS9 a truly 'one thing' solution at the front of house! Churches will love being able to record the message onto a stick.

There's plenty more, including the ability to restrict access via users who carry different USB sticks. This could mean that novice users are limited to just using faders – unable to make EQ changes and suchlike.

Finally, the LS9 16 channel version comes with 8 Omnis – otherwise it has the same feature set, in a one rack wide chassis.

Now that Yamaha have segmented their live sound mixers into top end (FM1D), touring pro (PM5D), mid market (M7CL) and bottom end (LS9), all that remains is to tidy up the weird and confusing names each of these has!

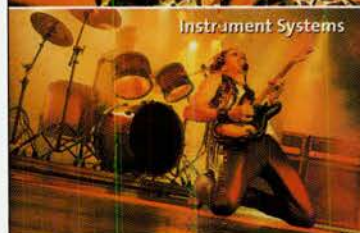
Oh, and what do I think of the LS9? I like it



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I WAS A ROADIE

SEX, DRUGS, ROLL'N'ROLL AND TRUCKS.

On the road with Gary Glitter

By JULIUS GRAFTON

Gary Glitter is today better known as inmate Paul Gadd and is doing hard time in a Vietnamese jail for child sexual abuse. But in the early 80's he was on the revival trail and became the first significant overseas act for a local promoter, who scheduled a run of the east coast of Australia. Glitter had been a major act in the early 1970's, and remained a kind of glam rock icon, earning great money, until he overstepped the mark and

became a convicted pedophile in the late 1990's. This story doesn't condone what he has done, and he has seen the inside of courts and jails in the UK, Cambodia and Vietnam. My production company won the contract to supply sound, lighting, staging, crewing and trucking to the tour. We were happy to do it. My crew featured a young and enthusiastic Jon Pope who this day is a seasoned tour manager on the world stage; three other guys (Yoda on lites, Pete on monitors and Key on beer) and myself on front of house.

Day one was a production rehearsal at the Manly Vale Hotel, and the band arrived very jellagged and very unhappy at the arrangements thus far. The backline, which we had collected from several rental shops, was not to their liking, nor was Key, the backline tech. After some considerable messing about, we had the CS70 synth working. Yamaha didn't sell too many of these analogue monsters, and we were fast working out why. The Marshal, the bass rig, and the double drum kit were all moved around to

On stage at Selinas, captured by Bob King.



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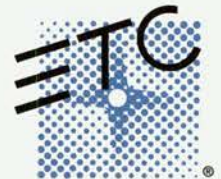
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Mr Glitter, your sound engineer is here. Julius Grafton ready to go. Check out the jacket... and the hair!

suit the whims of the band, with the drummer on a riser stage right the keys on a riser stage left.

Gary and his tour manager arrived, the TM walked in with bouffant hair and Gary had a brunette stage wig in place. The TM immediately hit it off with me by yelling incomprehensible cockney stuff in relation to some stairs. It appeared we had not been informed that Gary needed a flight of four stairs downstage centre, from which to do an entrance.

Eventually on this long, difficult day, we had hired some stairs, made the stage work the right way, and done a rehearsal. The band were all the same – English (of course) pop stars (arguable) and difficult. The most amusing was an old guy, who looked like someone's missing uncle. Transpired he played bass sax, and he rejected my Senhieser 441 microphone, the best thing I had, in favour of an old Shure 5E5SD which he shoved down the bell. Strangely it sounded great.

When he put on his stage suit, slicked back his hair, and applied the sunglasses, this old guy looked the

real deal. Yoda the lighting guy made the show look fantastic, really you could not go wrong with lights or front of house sound – it was a treat. I mixed the tour, and loved what I could do with a stack of concert W bins and That Gary Glitter Sound! I've never since had a kick drum and a floor tom sounding so big. The shows were sell outs, and very exciting. Glitter was the master of the pose, a true showman.

The band sound was awesome – that bass sax, the analogue synth, and a thing called The Star Guitar which was star shaped with some kind of distortion circuit onboard and played by Gerry Shephard. If you hear any of the old Glitter tracks, you'll know what I mean. The drummer had the hardest floor tom hit ever.

For his part Gary wanted some vocal doubling at about 150 milliseconds, and miles more foldback than we could generate. We had a 4560 bin and a horn each side of stage – a lot of firepower – and still he wasn't happy. I told the crew that nothing would make him happy and to grin and bear it.

KIDNAPPED

I think it was a few gigs later when Gary Glitter junior went missing. The lad had been plucked out of private school in the UK and hauled along with his notorious dad. He was given to us as our follow spot operator, and then didn't arrive for the show at Selinas. The TM had called through, requiring we pull a spot op out of thin air, we had done it, and now the TM was having a deep and meaningful with op. "He said to be ready to go to black if the wig falls off", the op reported later.

Behind the scenes there was concern about junior, who had been hijacked by some groupies and had not surfaced since. A search party went to the Manzil Room to collect intelligence, and didn't return. On this topic we were impressed and in joyful shock and awe at the caliber of groupies attending to this tour. They were thick on the ground, and very happy. Gary appeared to be very busy with them.

But the quiet achiever on the road was the old sax player. Let's call him Brian. He was sitting having a relaxing beer while the Hoodoo Guru's did the support act thing one night. Keg and I sat down for a chat and Brian asked if we wanted to look at his snapshots. Thinking they would

be of kids and home I said yes, and he happily pulled a sheaf of Polaroid shots out of his pocket.

He adjusted his glasses and flipped the first picture over, smiling. Shot one was a girl we had noted the previous gig, only in this photo she was minus the tight leather mini and fishnets. Matter of fact, she was minus anything at all except bright pink lippy, and she was atop a pool table. Certain billiards accoutrements were being modeled in a manner the maker never imagined.

The Polaroid collection triggered recent memories of the best, most beautiful babes at each of the previous gigs, and in every case old Brian was the star or co-star in a series of debauched pictures that would not pass through customs. Sometimes the drummer was there too, but wow – what an operator. Maybe it was the bass sax?

This tour was groupie city. Go figure.

Meantime the drug consumption was running high, some local support staff appeared to be facilitating whatever the visitors wanted, and behavior was variable. I guess I could say this about every second tour, then and now. I saw a rap artist and posse at play recently and had a flashback to this tour.

Our foldback issues had become acute, moreso since Gary required a bouncer be positioned each side of stage, and the boneheads tended to stand in front of the sidefill, arms crossed, looking mean and getting fast deafer.

A RIOT

When we rolled up to Macquarie Uni for a gig in the student union bar we knew we had a problem, since the four flipping stairs were too high on the stage, or the ceiling was too low. Choose one. Sure enough when the TM arrived with his act, he called the gig off, referencing the contract which clearly stated minimum stage size and height clearance. We marveled at the contract – it had all sorts of provisions in there, things we hadn't known about, and things we were not doing. Riders that The Gary wasn't getting. The promoter was spinning away, mouth flapping, 'blat blah blah' noises coming out.

Now I knew we had a problem because the place was jam packed and no one was telling the students the show was over. The 'Gurus were grinding away, and the time came for

the changeover, which looked like being a load out. The yelling and threats and carry on backstage between the promoter, the uni rep and the TM had resulted in the brilliant decision to put the Glitter Band on the stage, minus Messer Glitter, who had decamped with the TM in the general direction of Kings Cross.

This all went down very badly, and we basically hung on and hoped for the best while the G band was

refuel. We were late for two load in's, so two soundchecks did not happen. This was not well received.

It was hit and miss with one of those gigs since the truck breakdown happened at 2.30am in Albury, and we needed to wait outside Hertz until daytime to get another – then get down the Hume to the gig in Melbourne.

Getting the money from the promoter on this tour wasn't easy either, I wouldn't start the tour until

“I think it was a few gigs later when Gary Glitter junior went missing. The lad had been plucked out of private school in the UK and hauled along with his notorious dad.”

bottled off the stage. It was a small scale riot, medium scale if you include a uniformed security guard plus his Alsatian on a leash being dangled off the balcony by his ankles. Poor mutt nearly choked. The load out featured more broken glass than any gig I've ever done.

Thereafter our arrival for loadin usually featured a delay while the hastily hired local carpenters finished improvising stage extensions. We were impressed at how the TM was holding the promoter to the contract, and agog at how much the extra stage work was costing. The worst of it was in Wagga, where the stage extension was built on milk crates. The TM rolled up and torture tested it by jumping really hard all over, like on an imaginary pogo stick. He had a confused, tortured look on his face. We put it down to the drugs.

One of the Melbourne gigs the temporary stage floor gave way and the bass player badly twisted his leg. Of course it was Keg's fault, because he was the closest chump.

So many stupid things were happening on this tour, and some of them were my fault. That's if you include the truck breaking down; or running out of fuel. Both of the above were not my direct, personal fault, but any production problem came back to me, because I was charging one lump sum for the whole package. Plus the running out of fuel situation was just insanity on the part of the driver, who had been told by me to

the promoter banked the first weeks money in my accountant's trust fund, and getting subsequent money provided a challenge. He can't be named, since he still promotes some smalltime tours and is still alive, but wow – he was, umm, a challenge. The best of this was a mysterious hold up outside a gig, where two guys with hand guns bailed up the promoter and took all the cash. No one saw it, of course.

I guess the postscript was the last show of the tour, where at the end the TM and the Gary were left waiting in the dressing room, since the Fairlane, the promoter and the driver had vaporized. With the money. They were forced to make other arrangements, and get back to the Sebel in the crew car.

But I'd already bailed out, cancelling my involvement in the last leg of the tour. I'd simply had enough – enough of the craziness, enough of the promoter, enough of the TM, enough of the Glitter entourage, and enough of the whole mad, drugged, sex crazed insanity. I gave notice, helped the promoter find another crew and production, then helped those guys by doing a truck crossover of rented backline and bits.

There are some things you do for money, and there are some things you do for fun. I could mix fun and money together with work, and I still do. But there are times to cut and run, when your principles are compromised.

CX

INSIDE THE BIG DAY OUT

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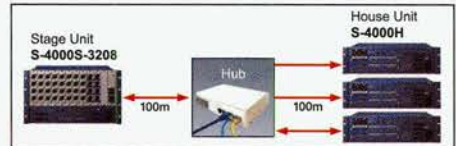


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Jeff Gray and Matt Doherty looking relaxed amid the bustle.



Note the high resolution on the left screen.

By JULIUS GRAFTON

Site Manager Merv McCasker has 17 Big Day's Out, and that is just at the Sydney venue. He gets the keys from the Showground people on January 15, and hands the site back on the 31st. All this for a one day festival, which occupies virtually the whole Showground and which in many respects is similar in logistical scale to the Sydney Easter Show.

Preparing the Sydney site is part of the yearly ritual for the festival, which tours from Auckland on the east island, all the way to Perth which is six time zones west. Across this six show run, sites are prepared and managed, and a touring contingent of hundreds swarm through the cities.

Most people know that Big Day Out is the premiere music festival in Australia, but less understood is the exceptional value that is given back to the audience by the promoters, Ken West and Vivian Lees. For the price of one concert somewhere else, the punters get around 12 hours, eight stages, and 75 acts. There are side shows, weird features like the monster chicken, and enough food and beverage stalls to more than satisfy almost anyone.

"The site costs are around 12 million, and the talent 10 to 12 mil", Production Manager Matt Doherty told me. Those site costs are assiduously managed by the likes of Merv in Sydney, and the other various site teams in each city. Merv has a solid handle on what things cost, from his years doing sites for BDO and other festivals. When he isn't managing sites he is at home in the rain forest somewhere up the north coast, outside of mobile phone range.

If Merv's previous career as a horse breaker is incongruous with life in the music biz, then advance guy Nils Bendix takes the cake. His formal qualification is rigger, which took him to an oil rig off Angola during the down season last year. At BDO he works ahead of the touring production, leaving on show day to go to the next site to make sure that any changes he sees at the show can be fitted onto the next site plan.

"Things change", Merv told me several days before Sydney. We were in the catering area, an undercroft which had, according to Merv's very long schedule, been power washed of bird droppings and leaves before



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the caterer set up. Merv bought me lunch, but only after conferring with an assistant about the number of lunch vouchers left. It was tasty – choice of a beef or chicken pie, long green beans with mushrooms, and potato bake. There was a salad and fruit bar, plus bread rolls, and lots of cold water.

Merv was preparing for the arrival on site of promoter Ken West from the previous show on the Gold Coast. "He has the punter in mind, he is almost connected with the audience", Merv explains, telling how things will probably be moved about on his site plan once Ken arrives. "He has a mental picture of what he wants".

The crew missed their flight out of Coolangatta due to a truck smash on the freeway, so the eta on site in Sydney was moved down a few hours. Later that evening the first of 20 trucks from the Gold Coast would arrive, and the serious site fun would start.

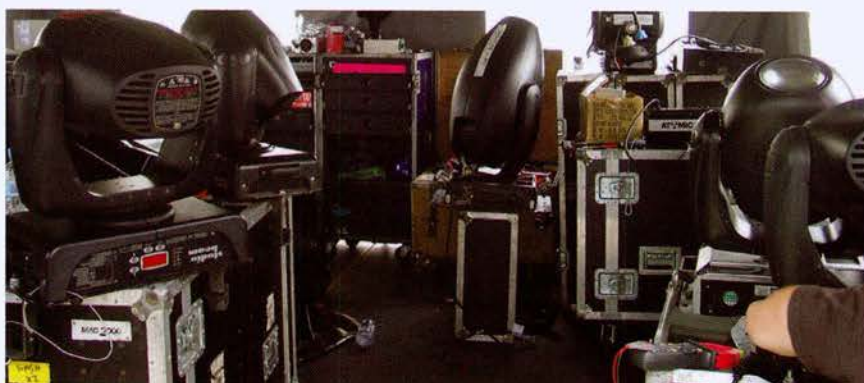
"I need to get the generators in first" says Nils, "then build a second stage ramp". He is showing me the

main stages in the show ring, which at this point are scaffold platforms with PA towers. When the trucks arrive, the distinctive domed stage roofs will be added by Butlers Hire, who purchased the stages from Matt Doherty thus ending what he called "the biggest conflict of interest in the music industry!" Butlers have bought additional stages, consolidating their position in the market.

Next day is production day, with the show to start the day after. There are multiple site inductions for everyone coming in – I've been

inducted; I'm wearing a safety vest; every vehicle on site is driving with hazard lights showing.

Merv had reminded his crew in my presence the first day I was there about safety. It had nothing to do with me, he had spotted a TV crew outside, and they were trying to collect background imagery of the setup to accompany a temporary beat up about a supposed ban on punters wearing the flag. Merv didn't want them to seize on any momentary lapse of procedure, which is easy to do when you have the luxury of an



The elephant's graveyard.

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Backstage - the Killers fine array of axes in readiness.



A warning to us all to stay away from pharmaceuticals.



Enough said!



Security and crowd interaction.

edit suite and a bunch of footage. The media had been banished to the street, and were hungry for something. They went way empty handed. Incidentally, the Sydney BDO featured a flag or a flag tattoo on at least half of the 55,000 punters

- Delivery of Kerosene; 1 x 200 litre drum
- Love Police on site
- Delivery of Toilet Trucks
- Night lighting for main stage build

Around about page 25 of Merv's Sydney site schedule, it is Sydney Show Day. The site office opens at 5.30am, and 100 bags of ice are delivered at 8. Every meticulous line on the schedule has a responsible party name and a mobile phone number, so if the 45 NSW Police that the BDO has hired, costing \$87.50 per hour, don't arrive on time at 10am, someone can call Roger on his mobile.

The actual show day has around 3,000 people working or volunteering, and Merv needed to make sure they arrived and departed and did what they were supposed to do. There were NSW Ambulance, St Johns and a private paramedic service on site. Police Fire, Ambulance and emergency services personnel occupied a control room near the front gate. But the real control room was backstage.....

Show Management centered on a site office where the key crowd areas were being monitored using a new wireless closed circuit TV and recording system which enabled National Security Co-ordinator Jeff Gray to call the shots with his small army of enforcers.

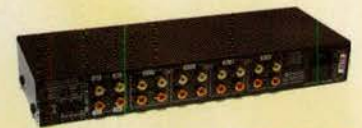
The show monitoring system came from the UK, and comprises several racks of PCs which store imagery from 12 wireless broadband cameras located around the

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TECHNOLOGY DISTRIBUTORS



BDO veteran site manager Merv McCasker and Nils Bendix are all smiles.



This year's BDO successfully introduces the 'D Barrier system'.

festival site.

These cameras have full telemetry control and can zoom down with surprising resolution. The operator can see what is happening and if there is an incident, the camera feeds are all stored.

Jeff Gray and Matt Doherty are able to make judgement calls from the show site office, and communicate with all crew and staff over the radio network.

Ground central at EDO shifts from the main entrance once the body of crowd arrive, to the main arena where a new 'D Barrier' system was successfully used for the first time this year. It separates stage A and B from the rear of the show ring, a fence behind the front of house area keeps fans back and a measured number of people can enter the premium viewing space directly in front of each stage.

To get in there, the punters need to queue at an entry point behind FOH that is screened off so they can't see the stage. Green (go) and red (stop) LEDs indicate whether the entrance is open. There is no longer a human barrier of security, rather there is an impersonal gate which is impervious to argument or bluster.

It worked really well – when the red stop lights were on and the gate shut, the punters turned away and massed further back in the show ring, they still saw and heard the show, but waited till there were adequate people exited from the pressure cooker in front of the stage.

There was an atmosphere of

“There was an atmosphere of intense concentration in the show control room, which is the only place from where the show can be stopped. The external emergency services people were more focused on their own services – in the case of NSW Police this includes things like drug dogs and undercover operations.”

intense concentration in the show control room, which is the only place from where the show can be stopped. The external emergency services people were more focused on their own services – in the case of NSW Police this includes things like drug dogs and undercover operations. The 45 Police that the BDO pays for were uniformed and stationed mainly where needed. BDO have some influence over the deployment, and there is a degree of harmony between organizers and the thin blue line.

Backstage things were trucking along, with Jands and Bytcraft supplying production for the main



Peace and love from the happy gate girl.

stage, a historical arrangement that BDO are happy about. The other stages are generally offered to local production firms in each stage, with the exception of the Boiler Room, which is touring.

This comes into sharp focus in Adelaide, which is a smaller event, and where half the Boiler Room lights have already been split off in Melbourne for the long haul west to Perth. The run over to Perth is the riskiest from a Production point of view, since losing a couple of trucks might stop the Perth show.

"It's like anything in the music biz, you just pull things out of your arse when the shit hits the fan" says Matt Doherty, referring to the inventiveness of the professional production manager.

BDO have several layers of production crew, Nick Marson is in charge of backline and side shows, Mark 'Troggy' Svendsen does trucks and labour, Kate Stewart is in charge of travel and crew, and Howard Freeman accounts and admin. Dugald McAndrew is the main stage manager.

Thereafter there is a small army of touring production team members, plus crew from Jands, Bytecraft and Chameleon on the road.

It's all run with military precision.

In the future, Matt Doherty foretells that punters will have an RFID chip embedded in their show ticket with their identification, which will authorize them to purchase alcohol, and in effect be like an event card which is bank backed so that a preset spend can be loaded. This would presumably disable the bogey of promoters, which is the scalper and the ticket sold on E-Bay.

Festival event promoters in the UK talk about this technology eventually being tied to a future mobile phone or PDA device where the ticket, the ID, the show spend account and maybe even the show audio is clustered. This way a punter could listen to the show through in-ear monitors.....

BDO is without doubt the signature festival event in the region, and it is fantastic to see how committed the owners are to safety, and to returning value to the punters.



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A GOUGE TOO FAR

I'm mad as hell and not going to take it



By **DUNCAN FRY**

That's it – I've had enough. I'm tired of paying through the nose for things. No more Mr Nice Guy (Were you ever, Dunk? Ed); now I'm a cranky old grogan on a mission to stop putting up with being metaphorically boned by the system. (Puts on Afro wig, sticks fist in the air and shouts "We're gonna stick it to the man!")

It all started a couple of months ago when I received my Visa card bill. Printed at the bottom was a message saying 'Oh, by the way, from the next billing period your interest rate will be changing to 17.90%.' Or weasel words to that effect.

I couldn't believe what I was reading. Virtually 18% per annum interest on a card that had always been paid on time, never had any problems, at a time when the current personal loan rate was 7%! No wonder I kept getting letters begging me to increase my spending limit.

I hadn't really ever paid too much attention to the interest rate on the card. There was never much owing on it, but the size of that interest rate made me choke as I sipped on my moccacino. I always thought such usurious rates were the domain of

loan sharks and shonky used car dealers, not legitimate businesses. In fact, before the banks were deregulated some years ago, if anyone had been caught charging such a rate, they would have been charged with usury, and hopefully marched outside and strung up from the nearest power pole as a warning to others!

So, I rang the bank, and after finally getting to talk to a human being (I think!) I said to her "Oi – my credit card interest rate's a bit high" "Just a moment sir, I'll have a look" she replied. "Hmm, yes, that is quite a high rate isn't it?"

"Well, can you do anything about lowering it?"

"Let me see; no, I'm afraid not." And that was that. I was waiting for her to say "Computer says no...cough, cough" but I was connected to Little Bangalore, not Little Britain.

When the going gets tough, the tough get Googling. Climbing aboard the Net, I did a quick search for cheap credit cards in Australia. Just as St George slayed the dragon, so his bank came to my aid and slayed the 'which bank' with a MasterCard having an interest rate of only 8.99%, half the rate of my

previous card.

While I was trawling around, I had a look at the credit card rates in the US and the UK. In the US they ranged from 7.9% to 18% and more, so we're in the same ballpark. In the UK, though, they ranged from 14.6% up to a whopping 29.9%, and, although I couldn't believe it, there was even one card with a staggering 39.9% interest per annum. Yikes! Even Fat Tony and the boys from Springfield would have second thoughts on that one. What else do we pay too much for? Here are a few just at random.

Books. Because we're part of the old British Empire carve-up of the publishing world, the UK arms of the international publishers control our book prices. These guys invented creative accounting and high pricing, and the local publishers have also sucked heavily on that teat. RRP of a paperback here is around \$18 - \$20 Australian which is pretty close to the UK price. Compare that to \$7.99 US for the same title. Factor in the exchange rate difference and the US price comes to around \$10 Australian. Even with GST the local paperback is easily 50% more expensive, and that's at retail prices.

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Issuer	Typical APR Variable	Reward Scheme	Max Interest Free Days
	39.9% APR	No	56

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	15.9% APR	Yes	50
	16.9% APR	No	45
	16.9% APR	Yes	55
	16.9% APR	No	56
	29.9% APR	No	51
	29.9% APR	No	56

When you consider that you have to try very hard indeed to pay anything remotely near retail price for a book in the US, the difference in price is even greater. Everybody discounts over there; hardly anyone does here.

Internet. What the local telecoms laughingly call broadband is really just fast dialup speed. The price that we pay for it would get you the kind of speed that most of us only dream of in other countries. South East Asia, Europe, USA, UK, even Canada (eh?), they all have blazingly fast true broadband, at the price we pay for our crippled service.

Video-on-demand just isn't going to happen here until we catch up with the connection speed of the rest of the civilised world. And, with Telstra and Nine owning a big chunk of Foxtel, we're not going to see it anytime soon.

And speaking of **Foxtel** – why is it so expensive for even a basic cable service? It cost less money a few years ago, at a time when the Aussie dollar was valued at three fifths of sweet F.A. Now our dollar is finally worth something, the price should have gone down; instead it's nearly doubled. Go figure.

And just in case the **airlines** thought they were going to escape my wrath (Mouton Rothschild – the grapes of Roth) no way, they're gonna cop it and good.

We used to have a two airline system here that was supposed to ensure competition between each

other. So much competition, in fact, that any given fare on one airline was identical to the last cent to the other. Before we had any low priced budget airlines (quite literally two weeks before) my auntie passed away in Queensland. Of course, the airlines love passengers in that kind of situation – I had to fly on a given date, and so they could pick a figure out of the air. It didn't matter what the figure was – I'd have to pay it, because what other option did I have?

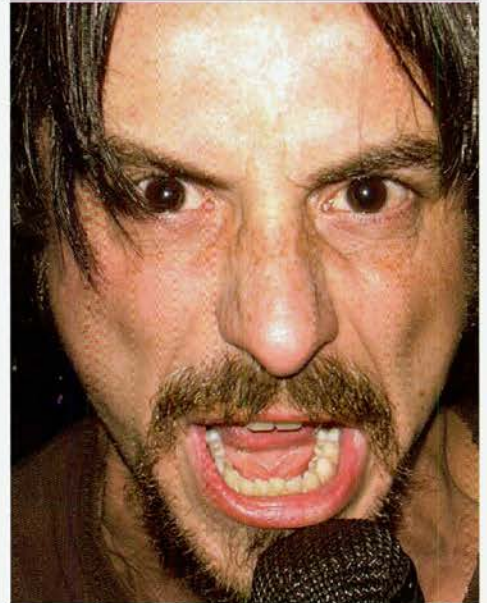
In one of those rare coincidences that happen sometimes, they both plucked the same figure out of the air! Fancy that. Who'd a thought it? \$957.50 for a return fare so that I could go to her funeral. So much for competition!

Now we have two allegedly different airlines, and allegedly lower prices, as long as you're happy to fly somewhere that you don't want to go to, at the time that is most inconvenient for you. Otherwise it's business as usual.

So what can we do? Well, for a start, we can all go over to the window, open it and yell out "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore..." Oh, wait, that's the Network movie. Never mind - let's go and do it anyway until something better comes along. ✕

Want to share your favourite bit of price gouging? Email me – dunk@dunkworld.com, and I'll include it next time. See ya.

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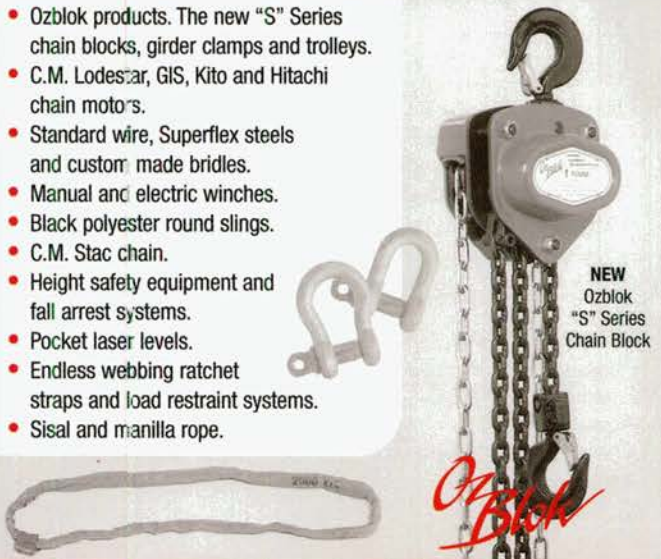
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