



MONTHLY TECH NEWS

CX122 FEB 2017  
\$7.50 AU

**+ ENTECH:**  
All the exhibitor listings

**+ Rosehill Gardens:**  
AV over IP

**+ The SDVoE**  
Alliance

**+ A day  
in the life of:  
Sydney Theatre Co**

**> NEWS:**

- Software guru buys into Jands
- Huge Adamson rig for Sydney
- ENTECH tours in February

**> ROADSKILLS:**

- Crowded House
- Flume

**> REGULARS:**

- BIZ TALK: Going for Broke
- Listen Here: Setting the tone
- Duncan Fry: LA Story

**> GEARBOX:**

- JBL PRX 812 powered speaker/wedge
- Audix Performance Series Wireless
- Roland V-1SDI compact HD video mixing
- ETC Colorscape lighting control



**ADAMSON S-SERIES**

HEARING IS BELIEVING AT **ENTECH**  
ROADSHOW

COME AND HEAR WHY HILLSONG CHOSE ADAMSON ABOVE ALL OTHERS **Emi**  
Audio

# NEW PRODUCTS FROM

# **inDESIGN**

## INSTALL SERIES



### **MP30**

The inDESIGN MP30 - 30 watt, all-in-one mixer amplifier is designed for small to medium installations where multiple playback sources are required. The inbuilt FM tuner & USB/SD MP3 player allow easy playback of your favourite FM station or music stored on a USB or SD card. In addition, the inbuilt Bluetooth receiver allows the streaming of music from your phone, tablet or computer.

### **BM4**

The inDESIGN BM4 4-channel strip mixer is a versatile rack mount mixer designed to cater for install applications including conference rooms, corporate boardrooms, churches, restaurants, plus much more!

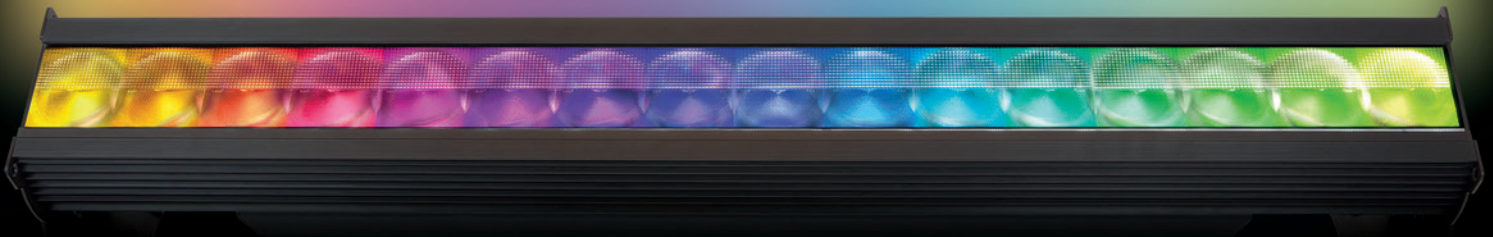
### **iD-CDFM**

The iD-CDFM is a multi-format audio player for any application requiring reliable audio playback. The inDESIGN iD-CDFM is a versatile audio player featuring CD player (CD-R/RW and MP3), USB/SD input (MP3 and WMA) and FM tuner with infra-red remote control.

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Presents:

# ENTTECH

## ROADSHOW 2017

**Sydney  
Tuesday  
7 Feb**

Royal Randwick  
Convention  
Centre

**Brisbane  
Thursday  
9 Feb**

Brisbane  
Convention and  
Exhibition Centre

**Melbourne  
Tuesday  
14 Feb**

Melbourne Park  
Function Centre

**Adelaide  
Thursday  
16 Feb**

Adelaide  
Convention Centre

**Perth  
Tuesday  
21 Feb**

Crown  
Burswood

### Program:

- Show opens at **11am**
- Safety Resource Guide WORKSHOP at **midday**
- Prize draw **1pm**
- Huge AUDIO demo at **2.00pm**
- Prize draw **3pm**
- Huge LIGHTING demo at **3.30pm**
- Road Crew Association open meeting **4pm**
- Happy hour **4.30pm**
- Cable rolling CONTEST **4.45pm**
- HUGE Prize draw **5pm**
- Quiz: Australia's smartest TECH **5.30pm**
- Show closes **6pm**



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2 x PAR5X12 +  
WIFI800 Fog  
Machine + FLG1  
Fog Liquid  
Event Lighting



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speakers  
**RRP \$2598**  
per pair  
LINK Audio



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price **\$2,750.00**  
ex GST  
LSC



Ape Labs Light  
Can 4-Pack  
**RRP \$1270**  
per pack  
TLC Global



Bose  
PowerShare  
PS602P  
amplifiers  
**RRP \$2459**  
BOSE

## Here's how to win:

1. Pre-register from December 1, 2016 at [www.cxevents.com.au](http://www.cxevents.com.au)
2. Attend ENTECH ROADSHOW as a visitor, meeting attendance criteria
3. Be present when we draw the prize
4. If your name is called, step forwards within 30 seconds and claim one available prize.  
There are 5 prizes as listed available at each city.

### More Conditions:

- a. Once you win one prize, you cannot win more in other cities.
- b. Pre-registration will close up to 48 hours prior to each ENTECH date.
- c. Walk up registration does not enter you into the draw.
- d. Exhibitor staff cannot win a prize and should not be registered as a visitor.
- e. Prize is supplied as new, as is, by our exhibitors.
- f. We cannot freight or deliver the prize, it must be taken from the show.
- g. You must produce photo ID which matches the name drawn and your visitor badge name.
- h. You have a choice of available, un-won prizes from the prizes listed.
- i. You cannot choose un-won prizes from other cities.
- j. There is no cash equivalent.
- k. Values of prizes shown is list price including GST.
- l. Competition is run by Juliusmedia Group Pty Ltd, 61 Alleyne street Chatswood NSW 2067.

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# ENTTECH

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BY JULIUS GRAFTON

# Software guru buys big slice of Jands

# R

ichard White left Jands in 1985 after leading development of the Aurora lighting console. His previous company Rock Industries was acquired by Jands in 1982

along with its staple range of Par cans, winchups and trussing.

Richard is an engineer who knew software was the future, but with the CPUs of the day the Aurora didn't have enough processing power. Whilst not a commercial success at the time, Jands continued to become a world leader in computerized lighting control.

When Jands director and significant shareholder Eric Robinson died in late 2015, his estate sought to sell the shareholding. Richard White has purchased a large portion of those shares, with some asset reorganization within the company giving the balance of control to the Mulholland family. (The other Jands entity JPJ Audio was sold to Clair Global in late 2015, with Australian shareholder Bruce Johnston staying on the share register).

In the intervening years Richard White established WiseTech Global which is heading to A\$150 million turnover in FY17 with very rapid growth. It employs a large number of programmers and tech specialists at its HQ close to Jands near Sydney airport. Last year WiseTech

Global was valued at over \$1 billion when its shares were floated on the ASX, since then the market capitalization has grown to around \$1.6 billion.

"Software is the new hardware", Richard told CX as we toured the long rows of desks, each person sitting in front of 2 x 40" UHD monitors and connected to a server dungeon that has two generators on standby. We walk past the gym, café, and media room which is soundproofed so the company band can jam anytime.

He has a boyish charm and an affable manner which partially masks a ratchet smart mind, the product of parents who were engineers and event managers. He worked at their wedding reception venue as a teenager, and learned fast the value of service and innovation. Recently he bought the venue - historical Victoria House at Bexley - back again. There are signs of sentimentality here.

Richard has his roots in rock, playing in local Sydney bands and started a guitar repair business with Rock Repairs in the 1970s'. He maintains a 'moderately substantial collection of guitars', including Princes 'cloud' guitar (number 4).

But he doesn't have time to play in a band, as WiseTech will grow by as much as 50%. This year it expects an EBITDA profit of A\$50m, which is remarkable.

## WHY BUY INTO JANDS?

"It's a great business that has been very successful for a very long time. And I know the business and trust the guys".

Richard was at pains to stress that his priority is WiseTech Global, and he will only assist Jands where they have need, and he is not a knight on a white horse. "I only bring an outside point of view, and to see what is possible."

One thing that is on the horizon is a property development of the two Jands sites at Kent Road Mascot which could become a high-class technology park - something Richard knows about since WiseTech's current premises sprawl over several buildings nearby. "If it's right for WiseTech, and for Jands and if the boards agree, we and many other Australian tech companies could move in to a built-for-purpose tech estate", he muses.

WiseTech made its name with CargoWise One, a system that executes all aspects of international freight movements and is used by global firms like TOLL, DSV and DHL. The customer retention rate is close to 99%. On all these numbers, the share price has climbed from around \$3.90 to over \$5.50.

So why float as a public company? Richard says it is the fastest way to build trust through transparency, and as an engineer of growth, he reasoned the extra funds for research along with the extra business doors that would open were mutually compatible.

There are pockets of brilliance all over the floor at WiseTech, from enormously focused math genius boffins to prototype telematics

trucking firms. Their system has modules that weigh axle loads, report tyre pressure, and connect to engine data to report when, where and what the rig is doing.

One big thing at WiseTech is the PAVE system; which stands for Productivity Acceleration Visualization Engine. Displayed on strategic monitors across the floor,

it presents as a colourful set of columns and cells, each of which is a team, and each of which shows progress on tasks. Some underlying screens have bewildering graphs and more, but essentially it helps everyone know what everyone else is doing.

Or not.

## CORRECTION

In our Event Lighting PAR 12 x 12 review that featured in the CX121 December issue we incorrectly stated that '...they've sold at least 500 of them'. That should have read; '... they've sold over 5,000 of them'. CX apologises for this oversight.

# Eighth Day Sound buys 140 Adamson E Series for Sydney

**E**ighth Day Sound, an early and influential member of Adamson Systems Engineering's global network, has further expanded its inventory with a substantial investment in Adamson E-Series and S-Series products for their Australian base in Sydney.

Eighth Day provides sound reinforcement for top tours and festivals around the world. Subsequently, the company has invested heavily in Adamson products in recent years to keep up with the global demand for high-performance audio systems.

"Having Adamson available globally has been a part of our strategy since day one," says Jack Boessneck, Executive VP with Eighth Day Sound. "With the acclaim it is garnering around the world, we have to be prepared to meet the growing demand."

Members of Eighth Day's Australian team travelled to the company's Ohio headquarters in December 2016 where they and dozens of their colleagues completed Adamson's brand new Applied Certification Program, which will formally launch in February 2017.

Eighth Day's new complement of Adamson loudspeakers includes over 140 E-Series and S-Series cabinets and

subwoofers. "The E-Series is a powerful addition to our system offerings in Australia," comments Damo Pryor, General Manager, Eighth Day Australia. "These products are a standard in the European festival circuit and are now exploding in North America. We're proud to have been the first company to bring the complete range to the Australian market."

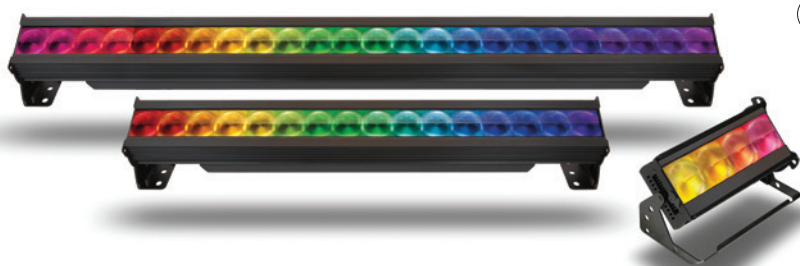
"I had the chance to work with E-Series products for the first time this year in a stadium application in the U.S. The PA threw for days, and we did the entire stadium without delays," adds Eighth Day's Lead System Tech, Tristan Johnson. "The new E119, designed with input from our team, had a shocking amount of power. I can't wait to roll it out in Australia and show people what it's capable of."

"We've had the chance to work with Eighth Day Sound globally for several years now" concludes James Oliver, Adamson's Director of Marketing and Sales. "Their commitment to standardize their equipment offering with unmatched service across the globe makes them an industry leader. We're looking forward to exposing the Australian market to an alternative product currently only available with Eighth Day Sound."



## CHROMA-Q COLOR FORCE II

The Color Force II range of battens include the Color Force II 12, Color Force II 48, and Color Force II 72, which house 4, 16, and 24 LED engines respectively. Featuring extremely smooth, uniform output, homogenised RGBA colour mixing and pixel control to 76mm increments, the units produce a high CRI of 92. The range uses theatrical grade dimming housed in a rugged extruded aluminium body with built-in power supply, touchscreen user interface, and the option of internal LumenRadio.



01

Australian Distributor: Jands  
www.jands.com.au or (02) 9582 0909

## CLAY PAKY SHARBAR



02

The SharBar is an advanced moving LED bar with features that transform it into a brand new multi-beam effect light. It is equipped with a motorised optical zoom capable of a minimum beam angle of only 2°. The SharBar is able to produce six very narrow, dense light beams, shooting parallel rays of light into the air. The optical unit coupled to each LED consists of a motorised system with double mirror. This means each beam of light may be directed independently of the others, thus adding a further degree of freedom to the bar besides the tilt. Each of the six light beams can move or be locked within a 60° (+/-30°) cone.

Australian Distributor:  
Show Technology  
www.showtech.com.au  
or (02) 9748 1122

## ELATION

03

### FUZE WASH Z350

The FUZE WASH Z350 is a single source par moving head luminaire featuring a 350W Quad Colour RGBW COB LED, 12° to 53° motorized zoom, pan and tilt, RGBW colour mixing, variable dimming curve and strobe effects, DMX and RDM (remote device management) protocol support, DMX and power in/out connections, LCD menu display with 7 button control panel, multiple unit power linking, flicker free operation for TV and FILM, and a multi-voltage universal auto switching power supply (110-240v).



### ELATION DTW BLINDER 700 IP

The IP65 rated DTW Blinder 700 IP features 4 high powered 175W 2-in-1 Warm White/ Amber COB LEDs, a wide 78° beam angle, full color temperature range control plus independent Dim-to-Warm channel control (1,800K - 3,200K), easily attachable 25° narrow beam filters (included), pixel control, manual adjustable pan focus, variable dimming curve modes, strobe effects, flicker free operation for TV and Film, RDM (Remote Device Management), IP rated DMX and power in/out connections, LCD menu display with 4 touch button control panel, integrated yoke and side mounting brackets, and a multi-voltage universal auto switching power supply (100-250v).



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## EVENT LIGHTING TRUSS

Event Lighting is now offering TUV rated Euro and Global compatible box truss in 1,2 and 3 metre lengths. Built with a sturdy 3mm wall thickness and offering 50mm vertical braces for more rigging options. Conical couplers with spigot and pin sets allow for fast and efficient construction, while end caps and base plates are available for free standing applications.

Australian Distributor:  
Event Lighting  
[www.event-lighting.com.au](http://www.event-lighting.com.au)  
or (02) 9897 3077



## EPSON EB-L25000U



Designed for dynamic, high-impact live productions, Epson's flagship laser projector, the EB-L25000U, offers the best and brightest performance of the Epson installation projectors. Ideal for rental, staging, and other large-

venue applications, this projector combines a laser light engine with inorganic components for extraordinary brightness and reliable, 24/7 operation — up to 20,000 hours virtually maintenance-free. Premium features include 25,000 lumens of colour brightness and 25,000 lumens of white brightness, 4K-Ready lenses, native WUXGA resolution with 4K Enhancement Technology, sealed optical engine, 3G-SDI and HDBaseT connectivity. Installers can choose from eight optional lenses with powered lens shift and lens memory (sold separately).

Australian Distributor: Epson Australia  
[www.epson.com.au](http://www.epson.com.au) or 1300 361 054



## MEVO BY LIVESTREAM

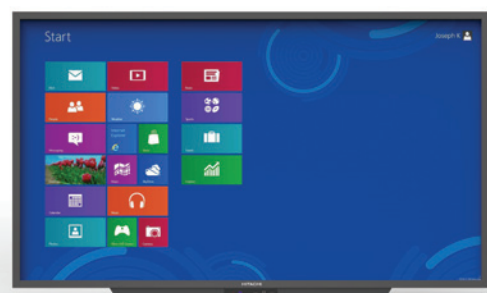
The Mevo Camera can record HD video directly to its MicroSD card, controlled via iPhone. The Mevo can stream straight to Facebook Live or Livestream, or be sent into switching software as a remote camera. It includes facial recognition and tracking, movement tracking, live editing, and live multi-cam production (zoom, pan, tilt, switch). Its wide 150 degree lens, Sony 4K Sensor, and built-in stereo mic provide all the power of a crew in a single unit, with optional iPhone or iPad audio input.

Australian Distributor: Corsair Solutions  
[www.corsairsolutions.com.au](http://www.corsairsolutions.com.au) or (03) 9005 9861

## HITACHI HILF65101 AND HILU86101

The new Hitachi Interactive HILF65101 (65") and HILU86101 (86") flat panel displays have been designed for a variety of uses from boardrooms, classrooms, lecture theatres, foyers, and consultation rooms. They feature up to 10 points of touch (simultaneous), bright LED anti-glare screens, wide viewing angles and stereo speakers. They are both Windows and Mac compatible. Also included is a LAN port for control, OPS slot, magnetic stylus pens, and front HDMI and USB inputs.

Australian Distributor:  
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## LUMENS PS752

Lumens has improved on the successful PS751 and is releasing the new PS752 Desktop Document Camera. The PS752 now has 20x zoom capability and a Full HD 1080p output with 30fps image sensor that supports HDMI input/output and is compatible with most high-definition audio and video equipment. It also has an internal memory for up to 240 images and is expandable with a USB flash drive (up to 4TB). With a one-touch audio/video recording function, presentations are recorded without the need for a PC.



Australian distributor: Amber Technology  
[www.ambertech.com.au](http://www.ambertech.com.au) or (02) 9998 7600

## PANASONIC PT-RQ32K

The new PT-RQ32K 3-Chip DLP Laser Phosphor projector is designed for rental and staging applications. The projector outputs 27,000 lumens in 4K+ resolution, and offers high-brightness projection for large venues, particularly for mapping and at outdoor events. The long-lasting continuous maintenance-free operation significantly lowers cost of ownership, and the range is compatible with existing Panasonic lenses for 3-Chip DLP projectors, allowing operators to share lenses between projectors in their inventories.

Australian Distributor: Panasonic Australia  
[www.panasonic.com/au/](http://www.panasonic.com/au/)  
 or 132 600



## RADIAL MPRESS

The mPress is a multi-channel Press Box that combines a high-octane active drive circuit with a host of transformer-isolated floor boxes (Exo-Pods). The modular approach allows the system technician to distribute Exo-Pods throughout the press gallery while assuring each member of the press receives a clean, hum-free signal. The mPress is 100% analogue,



featuring a modular press box with up to 448 outputs, and active drive with transformer isolation to eliminate noise.

Australian distributor: Amber Technology  
[www.ambertech.com.au](http://www.ambertech.com.au) or (02) 9998 7600

## OPTOMA GB200

The Optoma GB200 image blending processor is a powerful and intuitive image blending and warping processor that provides the ability to merge overlapping edges of two or more projected images, creating a seamless single image. Each processor is equipped with two channels that are positioned inline between the input source (PC) and the projector. Together with included auto blending software, it significantly reduces the complexity and configuration time required to edge blend multiple projectors.

Australian distributor: Amber Technology  
[www.ambertech.com.au](http://www.ambertech.com.au) or (02) 9998 7600

## SHOWPRO LED PAR QUAD 12QX IP65

The ShowPro LED PAR QUAD 12QX IP65 is an outdoor-rated quad-colour (4-in-one) RGBW LED washlight designed for professional touring and production. Features include a W-DMX receiver on-board, selectable PWM frequencies for flicker-free output, a double mounting bracket that allows the fixture to be floor-mounted, four selectable dimming curve modes and patented structural design, delivering superior passive cooling.



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[www.showtech.com.au](http://www.showtech.com.au) | [www.martin.com](http://www.martin.com)

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# A day in the life at Sydney Theatre Co

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Production department is a theatre factory

By Julius Grafton



Picture above: Hon Boey  
All other pix by Bob King

**Sydney Theatre Company** is a diverse organization tasked to make theatre. Its iconic The Wharf HQ is where shows are developed, workshopped, planned, rehearsed and performed.

L

ast year they did 665 performances in Sydney, and most of these used sets built at The Wharf, with costumes and props made there as well. The Wharf is, indeed, a theatre factory.

Back in 1983, the NSW State Government approved \$3.5 million dollars to overhaul the 60-year old ironbark timber wharf warehouse as a new home for Sydney Theatre Co. It was originally built to load cargo onto ships tied up alongside, the advent of containerisation saw it abandoned in the seventies.

The company also performs across the road at the Roslyn Packer Theatre (built new in 2004 with 896 seats) and at the Drama Theatre (544 seats) in the Sydney Opera House.

They did another 102 performances out in the regions and interstate, and also kicked off a 13 week run of *The Present* at the Barrymore Theatre on Broadway (NYC). It opened this January.

To deliver all this with high production values they have a 40 strong production staff, led by Jono Perry. His direct reports are Chris Mercer, Kate Chapman and John Colvin (Production Managers); Georgia Gilbert (Head of Stage Management); Barry Searle (Technical Manager); John Preston aka JP (Workshop Manager); Scott Fisher (Costume Manager) and Jack Preston (Production Administrator).



Each morning Barry Searle (above left) and JP (right) meet over coffee at the bar at the end of the Wharf. (Jono pictured centre). JP is the company's longest standing employee, he's been here since before day one and appropriately the 10 years' service award is named after him. Apparently the architects originally planned to put the two Wharf Theatres at the street end, with the workshops down the harbor end. They flipped it, so that the audience walk down the wharf to get to the show and the iconic bar with its stunning vista. It's a great spot for coffee.

CX spent a day at STC to see how the team deal with the workflow. What a workflow it is: a show is developed well ahead of programming, which itself requires that next years season is locked in by the previous May. Some of the work we saw on December 8 will be staged in 2017, some is for the 2018 season.

The  
Production  
payroll  
usually sits  
at around  
75 people  
each week...



The company typically operates 52 weeks a year; although they did go dark for the Christmas week last year (2016) by design. It is permanently busy, with many moving parts.

“We have to start working on a production at least five months out”, says Jono. “I have to keep the builds flowing, I work very closely with Rachael Azzopardi (Director, Programming and Artistic Operations).”

Production is a high cost for a company, including sets, costumes, staging, audio, lighting and crew. With the set

building, plus props and costume making for a dozen shows, along with pre-production, you have an easy formula for cost overruns if you don't stay on top of it.

“We avoid too many bump-ins at one time, we continually shuffle the schedule once we have the shape of the shows. Although invariably you double up a few times a year.”

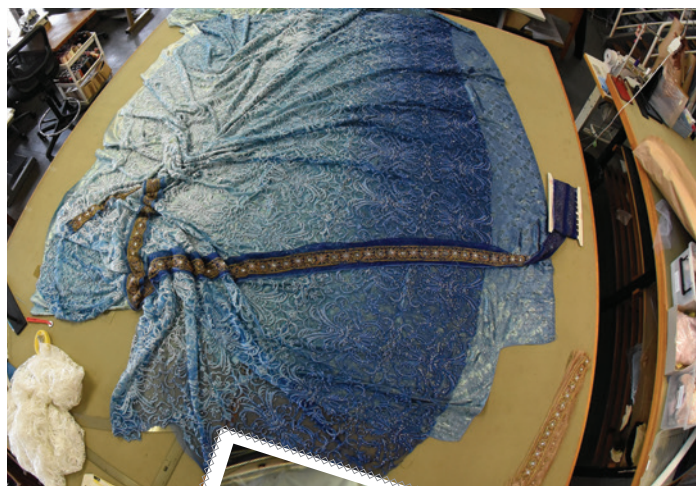
The Production payroll usually sits at around 75 people each week, including the 40 full time equivalents.

## ONE BUSY DAY

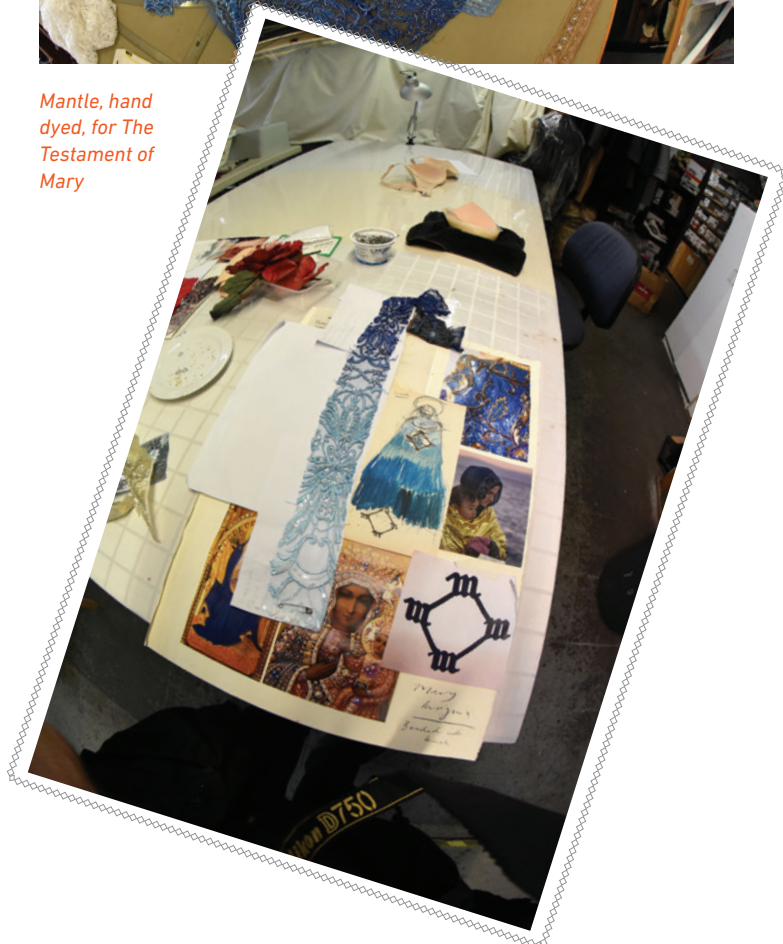
CX toured the Sydney operations of the company on December 8th. Starting at the café, we walked past rehearsals for *The Testament of Mary* underway in the Big rehearsal room, which is nestled between Wharf 1 (320 seats) and Wharf 2 (200 seats).

From there we saw the costume department, which was making costumes for *The Testament of Mary* (running now in Wharf 1 until Feb 25) and prepping for *Chimerica*, which opens at the end of February across the road at the Roslyn Packer Theatre.

We were shown *The Testament of Mary* main costume designed by Elizabeth Gadsby (the blue “coat”) known as the mantle – which was all dyed in house. Today the trimming and embroidery was being done by costumiers Mary Anne Lawler and Ruth Tickle.



*Mantle, hand dyed, for The Testament of Mary*



“We avoid too many bump-ins at one time, we continually shuffle the schedule once we have the shape of the shows”



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Down nearer the street end of the Wharf, The Testament of Mary set was being assembled in the workshop by carpenters Mark Rowley, Andrew Craig, Mitch Apoifis and Deputy Head of Construction Boaz Shemesh. "Tech World" was busy prepping for The Testament of Mary with Paddy in the pre vis suite and Ben in the studio.

We dropped in on a design meeting where Jono discussed set lx pracs for Talk (opens April 3 at the Sydney Opera House Drama Theatre) with LD Trent Suidgeest, Kate Chapman, Jack Preston and Workshop Manager JP.

Then we walked over to the Archives office. The company decided some time ago to properly catalogue and store its records, programs, scripts, posters and plans. Everything is filed on a database by type, name and date.

Today Jono is checking Archival plans for rigging details in the Drama Theatre for Away, and he wants to see the

points that were installed in the Drama Theatre ceiling for a season called St Joan back in 1995. He wants to cross check, for some fussy reason, and pours over the old plan.

We walk past pre Show checks in Wharf 1 for The Wharf Revue, meeting briefly with Sound/AV op Jason Jones and LX Op Cameron Menzies.

Then it is across the road for pre Show checks at the Ros Packer Theatre for Speed The Plow (which is about to run a matinee) with Head Mech Steve Mason and Head LX Andrew Tompkins. There is a dedicated tech team of seven crew at this theatre, led by Kevin Sigley.

A kilometer away and around Circular Quay is the Opera House, where we drop into the Drama Theatre to check on measurements for the Away rigging points and preparations for A Flea in Her Ear.

It's a busy day.



*Boaz Shemesh, Mark Rowley, Andrew Craig*



*Lighting meeting for Talk. Right: Trent Suidgeest LD, Jack Preston, Kate Chapman PM, JP workshop manager with Jono.*



*Ben Lightowers - Head of sound, in the studio  
His personal Midas Herritage 3000 ex Sydney Opera House concert hall*



*Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin pre vis for The Testament of Mary*

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Plan of St Joan 1995 Drama Theatre looking for rigging info



Jason Jones, sound and AV op, The Wharf Revue

## ALWAYS BUSY

“How busy is busy?” Jono quips. “Operating over 52 weeks a year I have to keep the team motivated and busy. When I’m not charging the salaries to shows, I’m charging their time to operations. It’s all about finding the balance and producing great theatre.”

Theatre runs on ideas, talent, and money. “The company used to talk in hours and dollars – but I only talk in dollars, it allows us to focus better. I just change the conversation, ‘don’t say 800 hours, say \$50,000’. It allows better ownership and oversight”.



Jono Perry



"I have to scrutinize every production dollar, in today's world there is a need to make us more efficient and maximize every cent! All the managers and I get weekly production updates from accounts, on where money is spent. I have inherited a really good system. We have to deliver on budgets that were signed off a year ahead, and forecast where we land. So you need to trust the decisions that you made and tweak."

Jono came to the company from Brisbane Festival. "The thing I learnt best for the festival is how things work together. Then something I learnt here very quickly is that it is always busy."

Among the many moving parts are decisions like containerizing shows, allocating storage, and long term planning. "We will have the conversation at executive level – do we containerize the show and hold on to the set? We built 11 shows this year, which ones will have another life?"

"Sydney Theatre Company has always been known for our production values, really good craftsmen work in the company. People who care a lot about what they do, the industry and their workmanship. One of (former co-artistic directors) Andrew Upton and Cate Blanchett's legacy, is the greening policy. We only use sustainable forest timber, we recycle what we can, and there are 21 different waste and recycling streams that come off the wharf!"

At the end of the year, the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct project kicks off. Another of the iconic wharves, Pier 2/3 right next door, will become new home for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Bell Shakespeare Company, the Australian Theatre for Young People, along with a refurb for Bangarra Dance Theatre and Sydney Dance Company downstairs at Pier 4/5.

Although unrelated, The Wharf will also get a makeover. The plan is the workshop roof will be raised to 9m from 6m. There will be a new costume workshop, new rehearsal rooms, and the Wharf theatres will be refurbished.

It's an exciting precinct.

As Jono rushes off, he closes with this:

**"The core business here is making theatre, we have to get it right or the company doesn't exist."**

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# Crowded House

Twenty years after their landmark last concert, the **band and crew** unite to deliver four **unforgettable** nights. Cat Strom was there

Pictures by Troy Constable



On November 24, 1996, Crowded House said Farewell to the World with a celebrated concert held on the steps of the iconic Sydney Opera House. Fast forward almost 20 years to the day, and they returned to that iconic space to celebrate their induction into the

ARIA Hall Of Fame at the 2016 ARIA Awards.

The shows were not only about the music but also bringing together the Crowded House family including crew who have been with the band over the years. Consequently Kerry Furlong was mixing audio and Paul 'Arlo' Guthrie returned from the US to design and operate the lighting.

"It was also an excuse to have a bit of a high school reunion and relive some of the glory days!" laughed Arlo.

As the show was not going on tour, Arlo had the opportunity to design a custom lighting rig specifically for the Orbit stage. In the past, the challenge had always been to fit shows designed for arenas into such a stage.

As in the past, the stage backdrop was designed by Noel Crombie from Split Enz who went for a triple-layered approach this time: a cut-out forward piece in the exact shape of the dome, a scrim net piece behind that and then a cyc at the back.

"The stage is all front or side lit with the backdrop used for projection," added Arlo. "It gives us plenty to play with which is pretty awesome."

The main challenges for Arlo were weight limitations and the shape of the stage, as well as the desire to produce something very special and memorable.

"Sometimes when you have those confines it makes it easier," commented Arlo. "This was definitely not one of those shows you design and it goes straight up. There was a lot of going backwards and forwards. With Crowded House, you have to be able to see the band as they are all interesting and doing cool stuff. Beyond that, I aim to have the lighting amplify their songs. The set really jumps out and you've only got to throw some lights at it to look amazing. It has so many dimensions and there are a couple of songs where we really trip it out."

Arlo reports that running a Crowded House show is very freeform as the band often go off on a tangent.

"You have to stay on your toes and can't have the show too locked in," he said. "We had a master set list of 33 songs and they all have to be ready to go as the band might jump into a song at any time. I didn't want to busk the show so I still programmed every single song."

A key element to the lighting design were the Ayrton MagicPanels onto the back of which Tony Davis (Chameleon were the lighting supplier) glued some mirrors. They are particularly effective



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The **audio design** was based around the **new DA requirements**

**Martin MAC AirFX** on the floor for beam **washing**



when reflecting light beams around the stage.

"I wanted to reuse some of the elements I had used for the band over the years and that included the Vari-lite VLM moving mirrors I used about a hundred years ago," explained Arlo. "There was a vicious rumour circulating that PRG in Dandenong still had a couple of buckets of them lying around but they didn't! So we came up with the Ayrton concept which is pretty cool and something different."

Sunstrips and drops of GLP impression X4's fill a void whilst X4 Bar20's are located on the floor at the back of the stage. Arlo is a big fan of GLP products describing them as a good workhorse and saying the X4 zooms well, is quick, has great colours and weighs very little.

"It's a fancy, glorified Par Can and the X4 Bars have a look to them which I like," he said. "I can use them as a very flat beam of light coming up from the back or use them to light the backdrop and give that extra dimension."

Martin MAC101 fixtures are used out in the audience framing the video towers. Martin MAC AirFX are positioned on the floor for beam washing whilst Clay Paky Scenius are hung in the roof.

"The Scenius are really good but a lot of these lights look the same to me now which is all fine," remarked Arlo. "I'm glad of the fact that the Scenius move nicely and are doing a great job with the shutters and the colour changing."

Originally Arlo wanted four truss spots and would have preferred them all to be PRG GroundControl™ Followspots but only two were available. He wound up with two Bad Boys with operators in the trusses (local followspot control mode) and two Bad Boy Ground Control units being operated remotely from the upstage floor.

"I've used the PRG GroundControl™ Followspots system on the last four tours that I have designed and it's really great," added Arlo. "No one has to climb, they look awesome and you've got all the control from the console with a manual pan and tilt so it still looks like a spotlight."

As Arlo owns a couple of MA Lighting MA2 consoles back home in the US, it was no surprise to see him at the helm of one in Sydney. He also had a PRG Mbox Media Server for video playback to the projector and an Mbox Mini to pixel map some of the lights.

JPJ Audio designed and installed an L-Acoustics K1 and K2 system based around the new DA requirements for the Sydney Opera House Forecourt which resulted in success.

The design was handled by Mats Frankle, Brad Adamson and Wyn Milsom who sent Kerry Furlong L-Acoustics Soundvision files of the layout and

Kerry said it looked spot on.

"Those guys know what they're doing and have a much better clue of that sort of thing than me," he said. "They've done a fantastic job. This L-Acoustics set up is the ideal size for the show and JPJ have angled everything perfectly to keep the rich folk happy. The show review in The Guardian said that we didn't have noise restrictions, which is obviously a complete lie, but if that's the perception they had then that's great."

Kerry admitted to being daunted by playing such a prestigious venue but said as long as the audience can hear Neil singing clearly, everyone is happy.

"Neil's vocal is first and foremost when mixing for Crowded House," explained Kerry. "I try to capture the dynamics that their songs have to move the audience, basically I'm helping to translate their songs live."

Kerry mixed on a DiGiCo SD10, as did monitor engineer Paul Jeffery, describing it as a really nice sounding console that doesn't need plug-ins or outboard gear.

"There aren't many consoles where you can have the whole band on one layer, there's always a compromise, and that's important," added Kerry. "I use a basic short ambient for the drums, a plate I





send everything through to get a bit of lushness, Halls for the more atmospheric songs, and a lot of slap delay on Neil's vocal for certain phrases. For the more trippy stuff I have ping pong delays which I love. I have about six effects but really it's all quite raw. There's a lot of natural reverb here anyway so I don't need to use many effects. I don't use a lot of dynamics but I compress the bass and compress Neil's vocals, other than that I just let it all breathe and do its thing."

Neil hates IEM's with a passion so there are plenty of wedges onstage, but no drum subs, and his guitar can be blisteringly loud coming out of his amplifier.

Microphones were stock standard with Shure Beta 58A's on vocals although Kerry revealed that they had tried the new KSM8 microphones.

"On paper they looked great but it lasted about four words out of Neil's mouth!" he said.

"Everything is so flat nowadays, nothing seems to have character and to a certain degree, it's the same with line arrays. There's no punch. We swapped back to the 58A and all of a sudden there was a presence and punch in it.

"I have Earthworks overheads which have a hi-fi sizzling sound but that's about as much as I like to go with that kind of sound. We have Royers on guitar amps for warmth but otherwise it's pretty much the same as it has been for over 20 years. If it isn't broken, don't try to fix it."

JPJ's Dean Mizzi with FOH engineer Kerry Furlong

//  
Neil hates  
IEM's with  
a passion.  
//



Noise control  
courtesy of The  
PA People



Paul 'Arlo'  
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# Flume

Homegrown record producer, musician and performer **Flume** toured Australia late last year after a highly successful 90-date world tour. At the helm of a grandMA2 console, **Lighting Designer Stu Dingley** created a blistering, eye ball scorching show that nearly induced a seizure in an old fart like me.



By Cat Strom

Pictures by Troy Constable



Stu worked closely with Jonathan Zawada, Creative Director for the show and also alongside Scenic and Production Designer Rob Sinclair. Central to the stage is a transparent, Perspex DJ riser alongside three flown scenic elements overhead. The majority of the performances on this campaign are festival shows, so the production had to be scalable and modular in design.

"All the sections of the overhead scenery and DJ riser are built in 4ft sections of aluminum pipe," explained Stu. "Within each section, a 4ft channel is extruded on all sides and fitted with a malleable RGB LED product. Each strip is individually addressed directly onto the product by first soldering onto a handheld remote, then re-attaching to the looms inside the structure.

"The DJ riser uses a slightly different product, proprietary to Light Initiative in the UK. Each section is fitted with generic RGB LED tape and connected

to a rack of processors off stage. The secretive system works out, not only the amount of pixels but also their position to allow for full mapping capabilities. The processors also have built in macros and effects, similar to a media server, to create all sorts of visually coherent animations. As we are using two different types of products in the show, we found the common ground was to program using each 4ft section and save any macro stuff in the desk for a handful of special moments in the show. This gave continuity over all the scenic elements. We did the bulk of the programming from a selection of layout views directly from the MA2. We did consider mapping all the surfaces to the media servers, but the resolution would have been so low, it didn't actually warrant doing."

Behind the scenic elements at the back of the stage is a 7.5m, 12m x 7m meter wide screen. Two Hippotizer V4 Amber media servers run the shows visuals, which it sends to the main wall and also to two 50cm x 50cm panels in the DJ riser to create a hologram effect through the layers of Perspex.

Once the scenic elements had been designed, Dingley picked lighting that he thought would compliment the music. The floor package is all on pre-rig truss so it can easily and quickly be wheeled into place. It is split into three tiers, utilizing a selection of Sharpys, Atomics, Vipers and Solaris Flares. The overhead rig contained similar products with the addition of 36 x Sharpy Wash fixtures.

"Flume's music is complicated to define," commented Stu. "It doesn't fit conveniently into EDM. There are many nuances and timbres in the soundscape and the 90-minute show journeys through a range of genres. We essentially decided to split the rig into two halves. Upstage, we use a wall of Vipers along the back and at 45 degrees closing off the stage around him; these are the real workhorse and theatrical tools in



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**Stu** was keen to praise local providers, **Chameleon Touring Systems** and **Big Picture**, saying they provided a truly **exceptional service** and were an **absolute pleasure** to work with.

the rig. Gobos, colour mixing etc. Then downstage we have a complete juxtaposition with three trusses packed tight with Sharpys and Flares. This gave us the power to throw a wall of colour and energy into the crowd for the bangers."

For this Australian run, it was decided to implement lasers into the show for the first time. Stu was quick to point out that he wanted to approach this from a fresh angle as the effect of endlessly blitzing the audience with beams is nothing new!

"After presenting a few fly-throughs in WYSIWYG, we settled on creating an 'M' shape on the stage utilizing 22 Laser Blades from ER Productions. The shape followed the angles of the set pointing directly upwards. Although we did have a few problems with them staying in place, they did create some 'Wow' camera moments in the breakdowns when we revealed them. They are colour mixing too."

Stu has a whopping 58 songs programmed into his MA2, all timecoded and all about four or five minutes long, resulting in thousands of cues. Prior to the tour he spent a week WYSIWYG programming in Los Angeles.

"We used this time to get the bulk of the programming into the desk and pick some looks and colours while the audio guys worked tirelessly wrangling timecode into the Ableton project," he commented. "We

then relocated to a large hanger in San Bernardino for full production rehearsals over the next month. We had the content team onsite too, rendering visuals under the careful direction of Jonathan Zawada.

"We chose to use timecode as the synchronization method, partly because the video content is very narrative driven but also because it allows us to create layers of lighting to accentuate all the anomalies in the music, which are often too complex and random for manual triggering. It was, however, vitally important to create a system which allowed Harley (Flume) to have full control over the show and to be able to jump between sections of audio at a moments notice and have all the

production elements follow seamlessly."

His playback tool of choice is Ableton Live. We hid chunks of timecode in the back-end of his showfiles, well away from his performance screen so as to allow him the freedom to loop sections, experiment and really have fun on stage."

Stu was keen to praise local providers, Chameleon Touring Systems and Big Picture, saying they provided a truly exceptional service and were an absolute pleasure to work with.



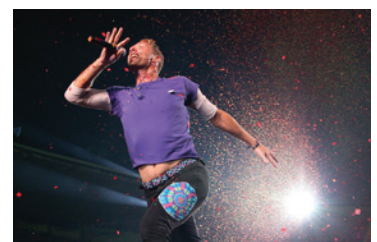
Lighting Designer Stu Dingley

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**FLUME PRODUCTION CREDITS:** Chris Connor - Tour Director / Justin Basch - Tour Manager / Alex Grant - Production Manager / Joel Eriksson - Production Director / Jonathan Zawada - Creative Director / Stu Dingley - Lighting Designer / Rob Sinclair - Set / Production Designer / Chris Ruppel - Lighting Crew Chief / Kiel Heerding - Video Crew Chief / Fraser Walker - FOH / Rob Zuchowski - Monitor Engineer / Matt Hooker - Laser Tech / Luke Larson - Stage Manager / Lead Carpenter / Killian Walter - Set Carpenter / Nerdmatics (Fred Carlton, Chris Legaspi, Chris Formanek) - Ableton system design / Alexis Lowes - Production Coordinator / Cori Wein - Tour Assistant / Mando Orozco - Tour Security

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By Julius Grafton

# Going for broke

## How expansion can kill a company

**T**he 1980's were fertile years for my business which involved hiring, selling and installing sound and lights. We went from working partners at home to 40 staff across two premises

near Taylor Square in bustling East Sydney. The latter part of the journey was very stressful – because we were under capitalized.

Over the first few years we just reapplied revenue to buy more equipment. Then the deregulation of the banks in the mid 80's led to an explosion of lending. Always needing more money to expand, we pressed every button we could find. Our bank stacked more into the overdraft. Our lease broker kept offering more deals.

Leasing equipment was great because almost all the payments were tax deductible. Buying gear was less great because the money we used was by definition business profits. No matter that we were re-investing them, they were profits, and by definition taxable. Sure we were then claiming depreciation, but this was at a rate of 20%. The other 80% of the cost of goods was the problem.

There was also an annoying thing called wholesale sales tax which meant anything we bought and then applied to our own stock had to be taxed at 15%. We sometimes forgot to reclassify 'sales stock' into 'hire stock'. But that's another story.

Company tax is a tail that wags the whole dog, because you get to June 30, close off the books, and start to put it all together for the accountant. This can stretch well into the new year, and the eventual return often doesn't get lodged until April – ten months after the end of the financial year.

If you'd made a motza in summer, ruled off the books in winter (June 30), and put the return in during April, it was as much

as 15 months after the profits had been spent on new equipment and expanding the company. What happens next is what can undo a 'good' company.

The tax assessment arrives, due and payable within 21 days, along with a provisional tax statement that requires an equal set of payments through the year. Often for your debut bout of paying company tax, you get to pay double. This is because the tax office just doesn't trust you.

The effect can be devastating. Let's do some sums. In 1985 the top company tax rate was 46%. Wow, today it is 28% and scheduled to reduce.

Anyway imagine you'd made \$100,000 in 1985. Being simplistic and not allowing for depreciation or other deductions, the tax would be \$46,000 and the provisional tax (payable in four quarterly bites) would be ANOTHER \$46,000. Sure you are, in effect, pre-paying the next years company tax. And yes, if your trading is poor you can vary the amount. But you need to be correct, because the tax machine will punish you if you tell lies.

With a much lower tax rate today, the impact is not as severe. But I remember how this hurt us, and how our cash flow became a day to day worry. Every Thursday our bookkeeper would trudge down to the bank branch with a cash cheque for around \$10,000 to withdraw the payroll, which was paid in cash later that day. The average wage

back then was around \$300 per week.

A while later I learnt Multiplan, the pre-cursor to Excel, and built a rudimentary cash flow spreadsheet. I fast realized that cash flow and profit were wildly different animals. You could be cash flow 'positive' while losing money, and more often cash flow 'negative' but with an accruing profit - and an eventual tax bill.

Our cohort were almost as financially illiterate as we were – a common gripe when you asked 'how's biz?' would be 'I am not making any profit'. Pressed for details and it would always emerge that what they MEANT was that cash flow was a problem, and that they had NO IDEA what their underlying profit was!

The other pressures of that era were inflation rates (routinely 10% per year!) and interest rates – which rose to 17% for a mortgage in 1989. Can you believe that? The exchange rates also took us on a trip, from 95c to 55c across 1985 – 1989.

It meant you could have crazy things happening, if you bought equipment in – say 1984 – at something like 95c US, and two years later that thing cost MUCH more because of both inflation AND the lower rate. Like a Mitsubishi Pajero I bought in 1984 and sold at the end of the lease in 1987 - for MORE than I paid!

Which brings us to now, and a mate told me over Christmas that he will double the size of his contracting company this year. 'Awesome' I yelled, totally happy for him and his wife.

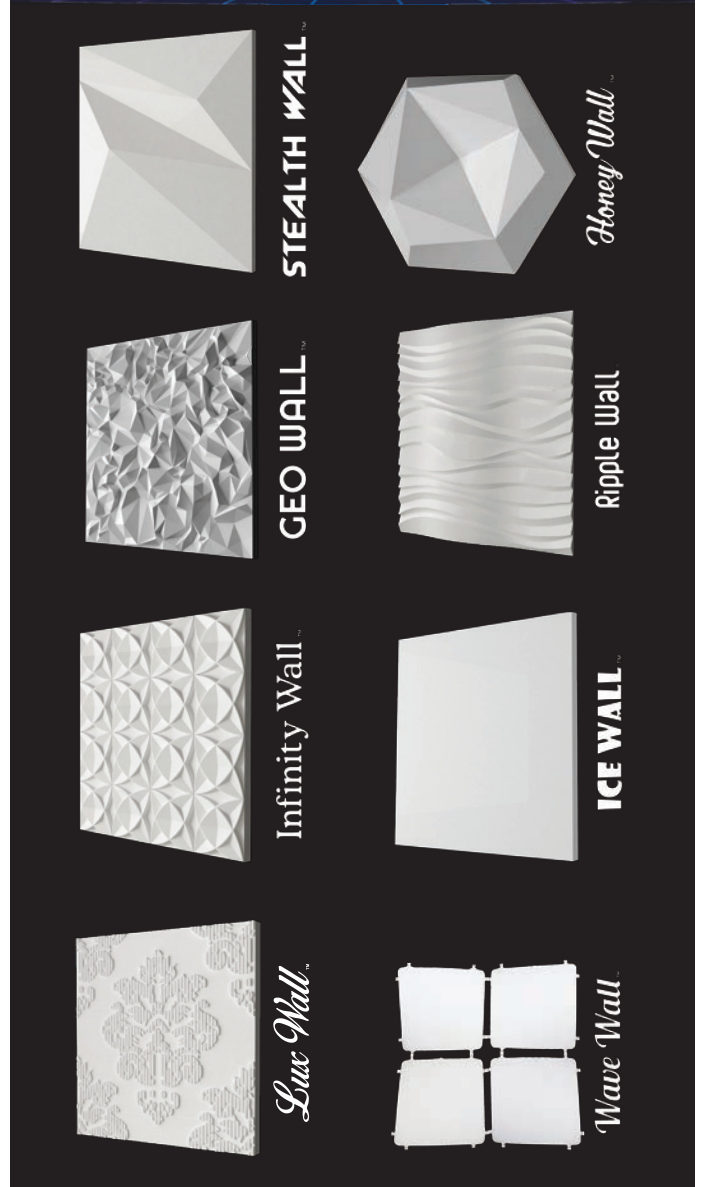
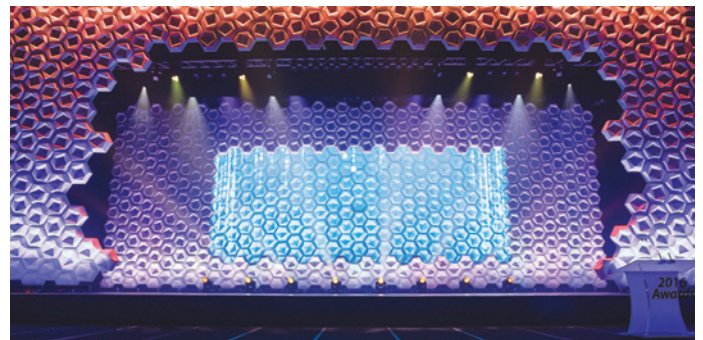
'Do you have enough capital to do this?' I asked, and his answer was that he hoped he did.

Here's the issue. He turned over 1.2 million and hopes to grow to 2.4 million in short order – because he can. They do great work. Their clients are government departments and enormous multinational building conglomerates. So there is little risk of payment default, but big risk of payment delays.

To do double the work, they need double the team and double the tools, and you pay for these as you go. If you are being paid 3 – 5 months later, you bridge that gap with capital. Simple math says an extra \$1.2 million of work probably needs \$400,000 in capital just to bridge the gap between starting work and getting paid. And that's before anything goes wrong.

The other risk of expansion is inefficiency – with 40 staff at Graftons and Australian Monitor in 1986, we were not producing anywhere near what we would per head, in the old days with a small team. The turnover was \$1 million (1986 money) yet when we had four of us in 1983, we were generating \$150,000. If that were the benchmark, 40 people should have generated \$1.5 million.

So go for it – chase more business!  
Work hard! But please do listen to that annoying accountant, and do it as early as possible, not after the horse has bolted.



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## ROSEHILL GARDENS

## AV over IP for the Sport of Kings

**R**osehill Gardens in Sydney's west has been serving the horse racing community since 1885. There's been one or two changes in the way a race day is run since then, the latest of which includes the installation of a vast Exterity IPTV system and QSC Q-SYS distributed DSP and networked amplification. Jason Allen spoke to the punters and the players behind the redevelopment...

Run by the Australian Turf Club (ATC), Rosehill Gardens was slated for refurbishments back in 2014. The ATC's General Manager of AV and Broadcast, Ben Whatmore, joined the project in 2015. "I came on board a year and a half ago now," reported Ben. "The Rosehill Gardens development and the refurbishment of the J. R. Fleming grandstand had been scoped and was about to break ground. My initial thoughts were to deploy a web-based IPTV system, however at Randwick we're running around 600 screens off

an Exterity backbone. It made perfect sense to me to bring both of the systems into parity."

Consultant NDY created the scope of works and public tender documents, which were not prescriptive as to brand. "It was a D&C project where the client's requirements were outlined, and then it was the contractor's responsibility to build it into a working system," explained Jarred Bouffier, Sales Account Manager (NSW), for Pro AV Solutions, the integrator that would win the bid. "The primary focus of

the tender documents was the video upgrade. The ATC had requested an IPTV solution to encode all of their existing inputs, add some new ones, and broadcast them throughout the building. We had a few options in terms of an IPTV system. Working with Ben at the ATC, we decided that Exterity was the most robust and certainly the most

reliable. With a live broadcasting environment, reliability was one of the contributing factors. The low latency was also very important, because when the horse crosses the line, the vision that the punters are watching needs to be instantaneous."

## Out of the Gate

"We've been working very closely with Mike Allen, Collin Farquhar, and Richard Phillips, the principles of Exterity," added Ben Whatmore. "They've taken an interest in in both of our major venues and have been instrumental in helping us drive and develop all these new features. Rosehill Gardens run over 700 screens, and they all have an Exterity box behind them, so it's a significant deployment. We've had success after success by deploying a dedicated set top box behind each screen rather than relying on the smarts of the screen itself to do the heavy lifting. Given our race day requirements, which are all about low latency, the immediacy of channel change and immediacy of programme, it's worked really well."

"The inputs are a mix of MATV, Foxtel, bookie's feeds, local HDMI sources consisting of media players, SDI and

VGA inputs, and fibre connections converted to SDI," outlined Jarred.

"The OB feed is the live broadcast feed from around the track which is encoded through low-latency SDI, full-HD encoders.

When we started the project, it specified around 650 end points, and we ended up with 709. We've left a patch with about 8 spare inputs at the head end. It's a combined head end; all the input sources come in at the lower ground broadcast room."



Jarred Bouffier

## Race Call

While the video system was the star of the show, the redevelopment also scoped a bit of love for the existing audio system. But Jarred and Pro AV went above and beyond. "It was primarily a video upgrade, but ATC had also asked for a refurbishment of the speakers," Jarred elaborated. "As a value-add, we designed a network audio system to go throughout the building. Their existing DSP was over 10 years old, and we determined that if we unplugged it or changed it, it would probably shut down. To replace it we designed a Q-SYS networked DSP system."

The new Q-SYS system has at its heart a Q-Sys Core 1100 DSP, with 14 CXD4.3Q and 6 CXD4.5Q DSP amplifiers connected via Q-LAN. "The decision to use Q-SYS was primarily due to the flexibility of that system," Jarred

continued.

"It was far cheaper to do it with DSP amplifiers networked over the building, even though the individual pieces of hardware were more expensive than the equivalent. It's worked out to be a much cheaper and versatile solution. There are 96 different channels of audio throughout the building, routing to 132 zones. It's fully flexible so they can configure it anyway they like."



Testing, testing

## Under Starter's Orders



Control of the video and audio system by the client needed to be simple and portable. "We've put in an AMX 700 NI controller, paired with an iPad which runs on the client network," said Jarred. "We programmed in graphics of all the floor plans, so the client can walk around the building, touch the section of the floor plan that they're in, and select the audio. There's also a head-end PC which has access to the web interface which controls the Exterity system.

If it's race day, there's a one-touch start and it will configure every screen to exactly the channel it needs to display. There's other scenes that do things like bring up a media player on every screen at the touch of a button. It's just very flexible and very simple for the client. There's also 12 private suites which each have three screens running the Exterity feed, with AMX controllers in each

one."

With the J.R. Fleming stand's area of over 20,000 square meters, copper cabling was out of the question. Fibre was run to two points on all five levels, with Cat cabling breaking out. Both the Exterity and the Q-SYS networks run on the fibre infrastructure, on separate VLANs. To complicate matters, while Pro AV Solutions were installing the new systems, Rosehill Gardens was still in operation. "Being a live environment, they didn't want to shut it down," stated Jarred.

"We had to work around the ATC's requirements to have race days up and running throughout. We had to leave the existing modulated system running while we completed

## Inside the J.R. Fleming Stand



the upgrade and built the IPTV system. One of the challenges was having the two systems running in parallel with each other."

## Photo Finish

Rosehill Gardens now boasts one of Australia's largest IPTV systems, a smoothly running audio back-end, and a happy General Manager of AV and Broadcast. "Pro AV Solutions picked up the ball and ran with it," affirmed the ATC's Ben Whatmore. "They underwent a journey of discovery that I think has put them in good stead. I've shown prospective clients of theirs Rosehill Gardens to show the benefits of the Exterity system. The service level, the transparency, and the integrity that Pro AV bought to the party was really outstanding."



Just 8 of the 709 endpoints



Winners Circle Bar



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Software Defined Video Over Ethernet

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# → The SDVoE Alliance

## SOFTWARE DEFINED VIDEO OVER ETHERNET

In January 2017, AptoVision, Aquantia, Christie Digital, Netgear, Sony and ZeeVee announced themselves as the founding members of the SDVoE Alliance, created to standardise the adoption of Ethernet to transport AV signals in professional AV environments, and to create an ecosystem around SDVoE technology that allows software to define AV applications. Jason Allen interviewed the president of the Alliance, Justin Kennington, who is also the Director of Strategic and Technical Marketing at AptoVision, about the need for standardisation, and the future of AV over IP.



“The AV industry has agreed that the transition away from traditional point-to-point switches to Ethernet switches as distribution is going to happen, but we’re in the Wild West right now,” Justin began.

“Everyone is trying to build some sort of solution, but everyone’s doing it a little bit differently. A lot of our customers are frustrated by that. What we wanted to do with the SDVoE Alliance is set the stage to drive our industry towards the only technology out there that is available on an off-the-shelf, OEM basis. Any manufacturer who wants to can access this technology, and it’s the only AV over IP solution on the market that actually can meet the performance needs of Pro AV. SDVoE technology is unique in being able to take advantage of these off-the-shelf, low-cost Ethernet switches, and still deliver the performance that our market expects.”

With the AV market still moving slower than expected towards complete transition to AV over IP, what does Justin think the roadblocks are? “I think there’s been a few things holding us back, in particular the cost of bandwidth, and the technology to solve the fundamental problem of how to move a synchronous signal like video across an asynchronous data network,” he explained.

“What we offer with SDVoE technology is the solution to the last piece of the puzzle. We have mechanisms to recover video clock signals even after they’ve passed through a network, but what we needed was sufficient bandwidth. We’re finally at a tipping point where the availability of Ethernet speed has outpaced the video that we want to deal

with. If you look back 20 years ago, a 640 by 480 VGA signal was a few hundred MB in a 10 MB Ethernet world. 10 years ago I needed 720p or 1080i, but we’re now talking about a gigabit and a half, and gigabit Ethernet was the standard. These days I need something around 10 GB to move 4K content, but that’s OK, because 10GB Ethernet switches are not only available, but we’ve hit the point in their Moore’s Law lifespan where their cost is falling dramatically. You can go on Amazon.com and buy a Netgear 10GB switch for \$90 a port, retail, with free shipping. Now that the IT industry can provide the speed that we need, we can ride their price coattails.”






### EARLY ADOPTERS

What will the adoption of the SDVoE paradigm mean to the day-to-day workflow of the AV professional? “What we’ve done with SDVoE is created what I call a ‘full stack solution,’” Justin illustrated. “If you adopt SDVoE technology, you’re adopting all of the parts and pieces; from how to install cable infrastructure, which is of course defined for Ethernet, all the way up through the transport layers, almost to the application layer. What we provide with SDVoE is a programming API, so development can really

be focused at the application layer. This means that software developers, product manufacturers, and system integrators can use this platform to write AV applications. This means approaching traditional AV use cases in new, more flexible, and cost-effective ways. It may also mean approaching more niche, specialised applications that just weren't cost effective before."

SDVoE equipment is already reality and deployed in the field. "The AptoVision technology that drives SDVoE has been adopted by 25 manufacturers in 35 products that are shipping and are available now," confirmed Justin. "You can expect to see most or all of those manufacturers coming out as members of the SDVoE Alliance. Infocomm estimate that about \$8 billion a year is spent on video switching and distribution, and most of that is those big matrices, end-points, and extenders. What I would like the SDVoE product manufacturers to do is take some huge chunk of that business and move it to the 10 gigabit network."

## Opportunities in the new ecosystem

			
<b>Hardware</b>	Processing node	Standard Ethernet switch	Processing node
<b>Middleware</b>	Distributed control and configuration	Basic Ethernet switch configuration	Distributed control and configuration
<b>Software</b>	Unified API control of content, device management and user interfaces		

Differentiation, value and investment are pushed out to distributed endpoints and unified software (dark blue). This platform-centric approach means investments are smaller, and can be focused directly on the user experience.

## DIGITAL DISRUPTION

With disruption ahead in AV manufacturing, how does Justin see SDVoE adoption being played out? "I expect that what we'll see first is adoption by the smaller and medium sized players who have less to lose and much more to gain," he predicted. "I think we'll also go through a period where there is pushback from the big manufacturers. Once IP is established as the transport, what will happen is there'll be one or two winners as a software platform on top of that transport."

"I am imagining a world five years from now where SDVoE developers have created applications for end users that I can't conceive of right now. I just want to give them a platform to express their creativity and to go after those opportunities we don't even understand yet. Our success as AV professionals will be in making what we do look more like IT equipment, then use that as a key selling point. There are some compelling arguments one can make around having a single network

infrastructure, a single thing to maintain and manage, rather than a data network and an AV network."




With huge players like Netgear and Sony among the Alliance's founding members, there's significant muscle behind the SDVoE push. "I knew that if this were an alliance of a few AptoVision customers just trying to sell boxes it would not be received effectively," Justin stated.

"What we were trying to do is create a software and hardware platform supported by a product ecosystem. That means we have in the founding membership; a technology provider (AptoVision), a chip manufacturer, a switch manufacturer, a traditional manufacturer of single distribution boxes, and a display company. "

"We wanted to cover all of those bases so we have a diverse perspective. Training is going to be a key component of what the SDVoE Alliance does. We're launching our first training courses during ISE this year. Initially, a lot of our training will be focused on the AV community, teaching the AV industry about what SDVoE means, how to design and build these networks, and how to start to think about software defined video as a software defined function. Long term, we want to reach out to the IT community and train them in AV."

"That's where having founding members who are from that community is going to be a big benefit to us. What they see in the AV world is an untapped market."

## Old ecosystem: centralized value

			
<b>Hardware</b>	HDBT extender	Proprietary matrix switch	HDBT extender
<b>Middleware</b>	Little to none "dumb device"	Complex system controller firmware	Little to none "dumb device"
<b>Software</b>	None	Tools to setup system and switch	None

Differentiation, value and investment are focused on proprietary, centralized matrix switches (dark blue). These investments have zero direct impact on user experience, and represent a huge barrier to new players.



**LISTEN HERE  
SETTING THE TONE**

By Andy  
**Stewart**

Playback

Ever thought about who'll be listening to the next project you're working on? Ever considered what playback system they're likely to be using? Are they going to be audiophiles with outlandishly expensive hi-fi components, retro vinyl hipsters with clapped out '70s turntables, MP3 wielding iPhones, iTunes, earbud YouTubers, dance party ravers with a mighty car stereo, or what? Maybe they'll be plain old music lovers with a good stereo in their lounge room. Do those people even exist any more?

In reality, the likelihood is that your listeners will be all of these people, and they will be listening to your tracks on systems that vary enormously in size and quality. As a mix engineer, while it pays to be able to predict who your listening audience is likely to be – what volume they typically like to play things at, and what sort of stereo system they're more likely to own – in 2017, who could honestly say? It's virtually impossible nowadays to predict who will wind up listening to your next masterpiece, let alone what format (or formats) they'll choose to play it on. As an engineer and producer, it's becoming tougher and tougher to cater to the vastly disparate, ever-expanding array of playback setups out there. Or is it? Getting the music we produce to sound good across the board is still the greatest challenge we face, but have things really changed that much?

**VERSION COUNTRY**  
Curiously, some engineers are now considering the idea of releasing several 'versions' of their products simultaneously – a mix and master for CD, one for vinyl perhaps, and at least one other for the MP3 earbud/laptop speaker/YouTube brigade – though debate currently rages quietly in the background on the merits of this approach. While it isn't necessarily new per se – CD releases of original vinyl have often been remixed and remastered, even old '80s and '90s CDs were given a bit of a kick in the pants with new look-ahead limiters – this latest thinking is a reaction (or overreaction) to the vast array of listening options out there. Each 'version' would be theoretically designed to broadly cater to a variety of setups within a narrower category of listening formats, rather than expecting one master to sound great on literally everything. For instance, one set of dedicated mixes might be tonally contoured to sound more appealing on tiny laptop speakers, internet playback, and Bluetooth cubes etc, all of which manifestly lack even the most fundamental bass response. Another set of mix-masters might be EQ'd for CD release, and another for the vinyl cut. But does any of this make sense in the real world? Is a 'one-size-fits-all' approach really no longer the best way forward? Personally, I'm torn. The argument that a 'one-size-fits-all' tone is unviable in 2017 has some merit, but perhaps mostly only in theory. For example, EQ'ing a song for YouTube listeners and laptop speakers, which might involve rebalancing the bottom end to cater for that format's general lack of bass response, might seem to make intuitive sense to an

engineer. But what happens the moment that same listener plugs half-decent headphones into this setup, or WiFi's the computer's audio output to a large home stereo? Suddenly that lack of bass you've so wisely compensated for is back with a vengeance!

No, I still reckon balance is king and multiple releases are a red herring based on a misreading of the facts. Second-guessing formats, old or new, is a recipe for disaster. Although it could be argued that there are enough multi-media outlets through which you could theoretically deliver each of these specifically mixed and mastered options, the reality is that there is no way of controlling where any of these 'versions' might end up, which renders them pointless, and in some cases potentially damaging to a system.

## FORMATOMANIA

But there's no denying it, audio replay systems are more diverse now than they have ever been... by a long margin. I couldn't list them all within the confines of this magazine even if I tried.

There are people listening to your music everywhere: in every nook and cranny of society and on every conceivable system the world has ever invented or known.

In 2017 - assuming you've catered for this option - someone is listening to your new album on vinyl through an old stereo setup that may or may not sound amazing (who can say?). Others are stumbling across your music while driving with the window down in their old Ford Telstar on ABC AM radio, or FM radio in their Tesla, or maybe over a P.A. at the cricket. Others still will watch your track on YouTube and Facebook, or maybe they'll Bandcamp it. They might have downloaded it off iTunes at 128kbps and be listening on a pair of Audio-Technica headphones, or via the iPhone's mono speaker or Bluetoothed onto a mono cube, convinced it's still stereo. They might be listening on their laptop, or the opposite extreme: getting hammered by a Funktion-One P.A. in a nightclub. They might be listening off CD in their home studio, or on the telly while they're doing the dishes.

But despite all this modern diversity, one fact remains that every engineer has always had to confront: trying to cater to all these listening formats individually is folly. The solution to the problem is not to try and second-guess the different systems out there and customise several versions of your next release to counteract their shortcomings. That's flawed thinking, destined to fail. Where would you draw the line, and more importantly, how would you control who played what version on which system?

The fact is, you can't. All you can hope to do is create a well-balanced product that sounds fantastic on the systems at your disposal, and let the world replay your work on whatever they've got. The reality is that your mixes should sound thin on a thin-sounding system, and fat on a kick-ass system. That's what balance is all about: producing a product that works on every system in the world, letting each and every one of them interpret your music within the confines of their own electronic capacity.

People don't expect your music to sound big and fat through their tiny speakers... and an engineer's job isn't to try and defy physics to make that happen. Otherwise the next thing that occurs is that this 'version' you've

created for tiny speakers will be played through a big system - people have more than one setup don't forget - whereupon your song will sound like utter garbage before potentially blowing that system sky high.

## NATURE'S BALANCE

It's crucially important to be aware of the listening habits of your potential audience, and to understand how technology is influencing the way we all listen to and consume new (and old) music. But it's flawed logic to think that because things are changing there's suddenly a need for multiple versions of your music. There really isn't. And if you convince yourself otherwise you're going to get tangled like a turtle in a net.

You can't possibly predict where your music will be played or what those systems will sound like. All you can control is the product in front of you during the production process. After that it's scattered by the wind, and your control over it is lost.

The key is to know the speakers you work with intimately, and mix to their nature. By that I mean, you have to learn how they work, and develop a keen ear for what pushes your speakers outside their limitations. For example, you don't want to push your Auratones so far that the bass in your track is pumping through them - Auratones don't 'pump' do they? It's not in their 'nature' to pump. Nor do you want your mix to sound thin and tinny through Event Opals either. Knowing their nature, as I do, I would expect any mix playing through Opals to sound solid and powerful. Similarly, my Genelec 8260s should play back any mix I make with detail and impressive bass extension. If I'm working on a mix, and through those the music sounds thin, I can know with great confidence that there is something wrong, because it's not in an 8260's nature to sound tinny - no way José.

## BALANCE IT ONCE

While you're producing something for commercial release this year, don't let the music fashionistas sipping lattes at your local coffee shop convince you that this year is somehow exceptional, and that everything we've learnt about audio should somehow be cast aside. There's a flawed logic floating around at the moment that would have us believe we can have our cake and eat it too - make little speakers sound big, and big speakers sound the same. It's a con.

The reality is that nothing has changed, any more than to say that everything always does. Know your speakers well, and the problems those cake-eating fashionistas are talking about will dissolve like raw sugar in hot coffee.

**A**ndy Stewart owns and operates The Mill in the hills of Bass Coast in Victoria. He's happy to respond to any pleas for recording or mixing help... contact him at: [andy@themillstudio.com.au](mailto:andy@themillstudio.com.au)



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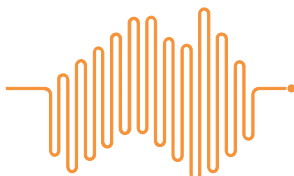
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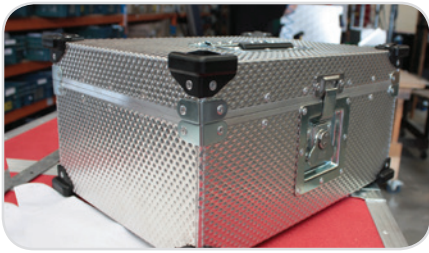
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PreSonus StudioLive SL32 is a 40 input digital console/recorder with motorized faders.



- ▶ **Worx Audio XL1**  
The XL1 is a 2 x 8" LF + 3" HF line array loudspeaker with 160 degree horizontal x 10 degree vertical directivity.



- ▶ **Worx Audio XL2**  
The XL2 is a 4 x 8" LF + 2 x 3" HF line array loudspeaker with 160 degree horizontal x 20 degree vertical directivity.

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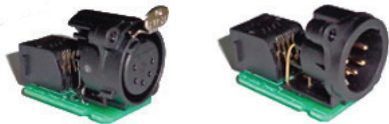
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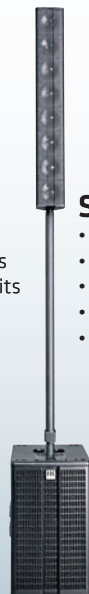
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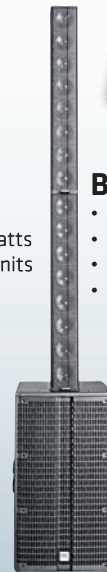
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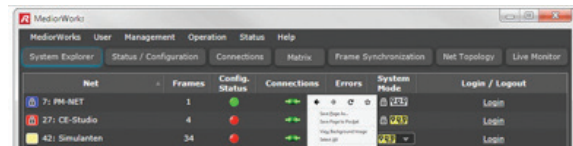


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## Australian Entertainment Safety Resource Guide

▶ **Australian Entertainment Safety Resource Guide**

The core principle of the Australian Entertainment Safety Resource Guide will be to explain the process so that people can understand why things are done in certain ways rather than just 'tick & flick'. It will be less of 'How to do this' and more 'This is what you should know' guide.



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▶ **GLP GT-1**

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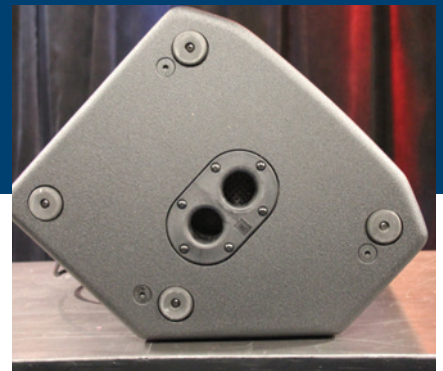
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# JBL PRX 812

## COMMODORE WITH FOUR?\*



► By Julius Grafton

**T**here's almost a bewildering range of product in the JBL pro catalogue these days, so we were self assured that the PRX 812 we unpacked here at HQ is obviously above the EON range. EON as you may know is the knock-about 'plastic' line of JBL, for those who don't get the subtleties of 'wood' verses 'plastic'.

This one is a 12" and high frequency two way self powered wedge or main PA product, with one handle (boo) and two witches hats so you can stick it on a stand with one of two angles of pointing. Is that proper grammar? You plug in the juice, hook up the audio, and make it be as loud as it lets you.

The first observation we (Jimmy and I) arrived at is that the form factor of this box is somewhat compromised in the 'fold-back wedge' mode. That's because there is insufficient angle - if plonked on the floor it will shoot sound more shallow than we would want, unless we were short people. We are variously average in height (me) and slightly tall (Jimmy, Dutch blood I guess).

For us, the noise was down under our head and shoulders. You would have to chock the thing up to use it near-field, which is what stage monitors are all about.

In use it does all the things -

plug a mic, plug an instrument, plug a line from your auxiliary send, and it will amplify away. But woah - what is this 'hairedresser' EQ that we detect on firing up this demo unit? Clearly someone has been poking away at the electronic guts and doing things the designer doesn't want.

Because we never read the manual, we dive for the APP and log on to the thing. The 'APP' for this one is not as wonderful as the EON APP, because it (EON) will run on phone or iPad whereas the PRX is limited to iPad only. And it is not particularly elegant.

But only because of the APP we discover the previous tester or user of this particular box has set up a ridiculous EQ, which we exterminate and revert to glorious flat. Of course when we read the manual, we realize holding down the monitor button for 5 seconds will also nuke the silly.

Anyway, it is what it is, to coin our phrase. It has the JBL cachet of a known premium brand, more than average performance, and a keen price point. Recommended for weekend warriors.

**Brand:** JBL

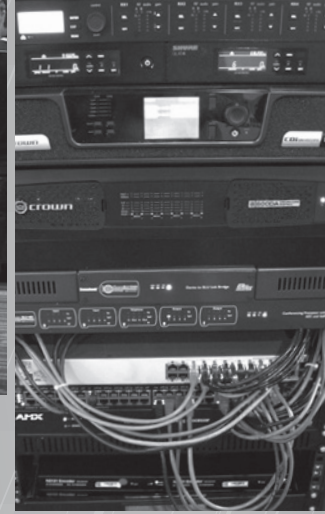
**Model:** PRX 812

**RRP:** \$1,599 inc gst

**Product Info:** <http://www.jblpro.com/>

**Distributor:** [www.jands.com.au](http://www.jands.com.au)

\*If you are old you'll remember they made a Commodore (car) with a smaller (cut price) engine. It delivered the goods by looking the same but slower.



CX NETWORK PRESENTS

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► By Jason Allen

## AUDIX PERFORMANCE SERIES WIRELESS

**A**udix's new Performance Series Wireless mic systems aim to provide professional performance and features to the technician, and simple, automated set-up and operation to the non-technical user. This is a big ask, but Audix have managed to do it. In comparison to some other systems I've encountered, Audix have kept the back-end 'tweakability' we need as professionals, which is usually the first thing to go when a company seeks to make something more 'user-friendly'.

The Performance Series is made up of the 40 series and 60 series -32MHz wide and 64MHz wide transmitters respectively, with 91 and 137 metre operating ranges, running in the 522 MHz - 554 MHz or 554 MHz - 586 MHz spectrum. Both series have the option of single or dual channel receivers, handheld or bodypack transmitters, and a range of mic options including multiple capsules for the handheld, and lavalier, headworn and instrument mics for the bodypack. A full complement of antenna systems and rack mounting kits are available as extras.

We were provided with a 40 Series R41 single channel receiver and H60 handheld transmitter fitted with an OM5 capsule. The OM Series of dynamic vocal mics have a 30 year track-record, and the OM5 sits in the middle of the price and quality range,

with two cheaper models below it and two more expensive above. There's also the option to fit the H60 with the VX5 condenser.

Setting up and syncing was intuitive and extremely easy. After fitting the batteries and connecting the receiver (XLR or TRS outs), we held down the 'Up' and 'Down' buttons on the front panel to scan the RF environment for a clean channel, which it found in around 10 seconds. While we still had the handheld open from putting in the AAs, we then pointed its infrared window at the receiver's, pressed 'Sync', and it did exactly that. The R41 has 106 preset channels, and you can use up to 16 systems simultaneously.

I was pleasantly surprised and intrigued by the OM5, as I had not used one on stage before this review. With the sound and response of other very well-known dynamic mics seared into our collective brains, the OM5 has the weight of expectations to overcome, and has to offer something a little different. Its response is a tight hypercardioid, with excellent rejection at the back. To my ear, it's got more 'air' than its most famous competitors, and is much more natural and honest from 100Hz to 200Hz. While these characteristics are very much geared towards singers, the OM5 is also good for speech, but I wouldn't recommend it for those with little to no microphone technique. Though the OM5 can take an extremely high SPL of 144dB, you can

**Brand:** Audix  
**Model:** AP41 OM5  
**RRP:** \$1,187 inc GST  
**Product Info:** [www.audixusa.com](http://www.audixusa.com)  
**Distributor:** [www.pavt.com.au](http://www.pavt.com.au)



## RADIO MIC PERFORMANCE, MANAGED



adjust the default gain setting by unscrewing the capsule and flicking a dipswitch from 0dB to -6 or -12.

Back at the receiver, a simple-to-navigate menu gets you into all of the under-the-hood features you'll need to maximize your set-up. The vital T-Lock page disables the power and mute buttons on the H60, which is one of the first things you're going to do before handing it to a performer (this capability is built-in to the bodypack). You can also lock the receiver from another page, which is perfect for installs. You can customise the LCD's default settings to show either Frequency or Channel, and either Level or Squelch. While the automated scan and sync feature is excellent, you can also change group, channel, and frequency settings manually.

The Audix Performance Series is well worth checking out if you're in the market for wireless, and an admirable alternative to the two big names that dominate the sector. While I'd say the OM5 kit is the best pick for singers, there's a big range of options in terms of mics and capsules to fit your application.



# ROLAND V-1SDI

By Jimmy **Den-Ouden**

## COMPACT HD VIDEO MIXING

# HD

was once horrendously difficult (just ask the first crew to do an HD OB in Australia), but now it's just another signal type. Many times across the pages of CX I've observed that video tech has become better, smaller and vastly more affordable. The V-1SDI is perhaps one of the most elegant examples of how true this statement holds. It's the smallest, most affordable, practical HD video mixer I've yet to lay hands on. Maybe there's something cheaper and smaller and better out there, but if there is I have yet to meet it.

The thing I've always liked about Roland gear is that it just gets on with the job. I was a big fan (and an early adopter) of their V-Mixer for this reason. Five years on mine is still reliably making me money. It works every time I plug it in. The V-1SDI is much the same. Plug in your signals, turn it on, and switch video. That's what it does.

The V-1SDI is a four source device, capable of switching signals at up to full 1080p resolution. I love the industrial design of it – two cut rows of nice big tactile illuminated buttons and a t-bar slider make it immediately apparent which controls are the most important ones on the panel. At 313mm long, you could fit this whole mixer comfortably into a Pelican case and probably jam a laptop in there

### MULTI VIEWER



too. It would still pass as hand luggage on a plane. An external DC power supply helps to keep this unit super compact.

I'm not a fan of the connectors on the ends of the unit, but I guess they had to put them somewhere and without making the V-1SDI physically bigger, the end panels was the only viable option. The connectors are for things like RS-232 and headphones, so they'd be less commonly used than the video connectors anyway. The end panel is also the location of the format select switch. You can't mount this mixer recessed into a desk, but nor I think would you be likely to – that style of unit caters to a different market. There's no Kensington lock slot either, so you'll want to keep an eye on the V-1SDI to make sure nobody absconds with it!

## In, out, shake it all about

Inputs 1 & 2 are dedicated SDI inputs, while input 3 has SDI and HDMI input capability. Input 4 is a dedicated HDMI input with additional scaling capabilities. This allows the unit to mix full HD camera sources with video or graphics from a computer or other source at different resolutions. Additionally, interlaced and progressive

signals may be freely combined.

The main program and preview outputs are delivered as SDI via BNC connectors, and an additional preview output is available on HDMI. A choice of three signals may be routed to the preview outputs – PGM, multi view preview, or full frame preview. Sources on the multi-view output can be named, which is great if your director can't remember the cammo's names.

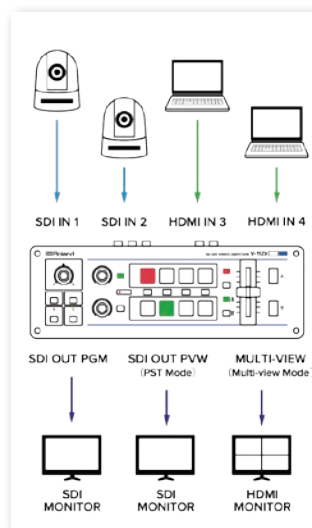
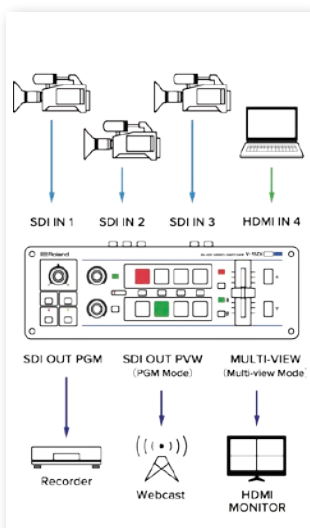
Additional to basic switching, fading and wipe effects, the V-1SDI provides PiP, Split, and quad compositing effects. A down stream keyer (DSK) supports both luminance and chroma keys.

What's less apparent from looking at the front panel of the V-1SDI is that it also includes a comprehensive audio mixer. Signals may be derived from any of the video inputs, as well as a stereo line input and a mono mic input. EQ and up to 500ms delay may be applied to each input, with HPF gate and compression also available on the mic input. Audio signals can then be mixed freely before being output to a master EQ & leveling stage. You can even apply reverb. The only caveat here is that the audio functions are not directly accessible via the V-1SDI control panel. Truth be told,



**Brand:** Roland  
**Model:** V-1SDI  
**RRP:** \$2,699 inc gst  
**Product Info:** [proav.roland.com](http://proav.roland.com)  
**Distributor:** [www.rolandcorp.com.au](http://www.rolandcorp.com.au)

## EXAMPLES



the audio mixer was a bonus I wasn't even expecting. While the unit can be setup via the preview output using an on-screen menu, it's easier to just plug a laptop in via USB and run the V-1SDI RCS software. Mac and PC versions are available, and the software provides an enhanced virtual representation of the unit including a full audio mixer. The software is easy to navigate and once we installed it, the V-1SDI instantly came online when we plugged in the USB cable. Super easy.

Lastly it's worth mentioning the product literature. In case you run out of ideas on how to deploy the V-1SDI there are several examples on the Roland website, along with a detailed specification and user manual. I think this is what they call a game changer...



# ETC COLORSOURCE

## LIGHTING CONTROL FOR EVERYONE

► By Jimmy Den-Ouden

I think it's safe to say the ETC brand is probably most commonly seen in theatrical applications. The name is after all an acronym for Electronic Theatre Controls. Many of their products are defacto standards in theatrical lighting production – just consider the Source Four. So it's interesting to me to see the release of a product that clearly has so many applications outside just theatre.

The ColorSource 20 is one of a range of four new, compact lighting consoles. 20 refers to the number of fixture or playback faders. There is also a 40 fader model, and HDMI equipped versions of both which offer additional video functionality. But for now we're going to focus on the ColorSource 20, since that's the one we had in house.

An impressive little piece of design, the ColorSource 20 not only looks good, but feels incredibly solid. The unit weighs a little over 3kg, so it won't slide all over the desk as you push the faders. The 20 faders and multicolour indicator buttons allow you to control 2 banks of 20 multi parameter fixtures. So that can be 40 dimmers, colour changing fixtures, moving heads, strobes, or a combination of these.

Three permanent buttons on the left side of the 7"

touch screen allow you to switch the faders between the two banks of fixtures, or make them into playback faders. 10 pages are available, allowing for 200 playbacks. In addition to this, a 999 cue list is also available.

Four configurable faders above the touch screen can be used for various purposes, including as playbacks or a cross fader. Below the screen five of the soft keys can be configured, while the sixth is always a "home" button.

Patching the console is quite easy, and made even more so by the fact that RDM devices can be automatically recognized. An "identify" function allows each fixture to be flashed and assigned to a fader. Each fixture is represented on the touch screen, and the arrangement can be modified to reflect physical positioning. I like the multi-touch zoom feature too. If you get lost along the way, there's an inbuilt help function that explains how the various features work.

Generating a lighting look is as simple as pushing up the faders for the fixtures you want to use. Pushing faders up selects the fixtures by default, but individual fixtures can be selected on the touch screen. Available fixture parameters will appear on the screen, and you can then adjust them as required.

**Brand:** ETC

**Model:** ColorSource 20

**RRP:** \$6,355 inc gst

**Product Info:** [www.etconnect.com](http://www.etconnect.com)

**Distributor:** [www.jands.com.au](http://www.jands.com.au)



States can be recorded as cues within a list, or as playbacks assigned to faders. When you have multiple colours assigned to one or more fixtures on two playbacks, pushing both corresponding faders up at once results in the colours of each look being mixed.

I think perhaps the best part about the ColorSource 20 is that it's so very intuitive at a basic level, yet simultaneously capable of very advanced operations. I plugged in the demo unit and managed to patch fixtures, generate looks, then record and playback states all without looking up any instructions or even referring to the included help.

For many users this will be more than enough functionality, but for those who want to do much more advanced operation there's definitely the scope to do so. It's well worth doing some reading to get the most out of the console.

You certainly can't argue with the build quality of the ColorSource 20 (or indeed ETC gear in general) - it feels rock solid. The capability is all there, and opens up deployment opportunities in schools, houses of worship, community theatres, and plenty of corporate applications where the small footprint will be a real bonus. I think this console is absolutely brilliant.

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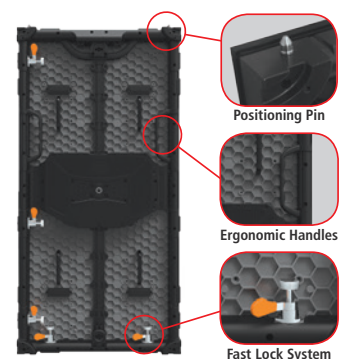


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<sup>1</sup>Passion, Pride, Pitfalls Dec 2014



# LA STORY

## A TRAVELLER'S TALE



**In the early 70s I was on the last leg of a world sightseeing trip.** I'd been to Barcelona to see my mother, and in a bar we'd become friendly with a guy from LA who had a couple of record shops.

"We must catch up when you get to LA," he said " - call me and we'll go around some of the wholesalers and rustle up some bargains for you."

His name is lost in the mists of time, but instead of Mr X we'll use some artistic licence and call him John.

When I finally arrived in LA by Greyhound bus, I found a taxi and told the driver to take me to a cheap hotel.

"Hollywood or Downtown, buddy?"

Hmm. "Which is cheaper?"

He pondered this for a moment, then said, "Probably downtown. I'll take you to the Clark Hotel. I take a lotta people there and they all seem to come out alive!"

I must have looked horrified, because he laughed and said "Nah, just kidding ya. It's a really good hotel and only \$20 a night."

As we drove through the streets of downtown, though, I kept seeing signs for much cheaper hotels - \$2 a night, \$3 a night. \$5 a night.

"What's wrong with those ones?" I asked. "They look cheap enough."

"What? Those places? I couldn't leave you at any of them," he replied. "They're real flea pits. The sort of places where

you have to put a leg of the bed in each shoe while you're sleeping, so no-one steals them!"

"Don't the doors lock?"

"Well, they give you a key, but doesn't mean the door locks, you know. Same key usually fits all the rooms - it's cheaper that way!"

We swung into the courtyard of a large older style hotel opposite a small park. Built during the days when downtown was the place to be.

"OK here we are - the Clark Hotel. Have fun buddy." He handed me a card. "Here's my number - call me if ya get lost!"

Straight after checking in, I went to my room, picked up the phone and called my old drinking buddy.

"Hi John - it's Duncan here."

"Who?" Uh oh.

"Duncan - I met you on holiday in Barcelona when I was visiting my mum."

"Oh yeah, the Australian guy in the record biz, right?"

"Yes - I've just arrived in LA, and you said to call you, so that's what I'm doing."

"Fantastic - have you got any plans for tonight?"

"Nothing so far - I'm staying at the Clark Hotel downtown."

"Whoa - downtown? You like to live on the edge, doncha? Tell you what, I'll grab a couple of buddies and we'll come by and pick you up, get something to eat, then we'll go and check out the store. See you at about 7, OK?"

At around seven I went down to the lobby and stood outside the hotel's big glass doors. Suddenly a dark blue very beaten up old Cadillac convertible screeched to a halt outside, and a guy who I guessed was John got out and stared at me.

"Are you Duncan?" he yelled.

I nodded "Yes, that's me."

"Ah thank Christ," he said "I gotta admit I was a bit pickled when we met in Spain. Your Mom could drink us all under the table, couldn't she, so I was hoping it was you standing there."

He shook my hand and slapped a hand on my back.

"C'mon, get in we're hungry."

He had a couple of friends with him, who shuffled around in the seats and made room for me. There was plenty of room in the back and as he accelerated away from the hotel I slid from side to side as the Caddy lurched its way around the streets. It was my first experience of a big American car and their soft floating suspension.

We pulled up outside a diner and went inside. It was obviously John's home away from home as everyone there seemed to know him, from the chef to the waitresses.

"Hey I gotta visitor from Australia here," he said, pointing at me, "so look after him as well as you look after me."

"No way," they all laughed, "we'll treat him much better!"

I ended up having a salad with lashings of Roquefort cheese dressing, a steak, a bucket of fried shrimp, a side of fries that would have choked a donkey, and a beer. It was delicious, and when I'd finished I would have been quite happy to just curl up in the corner and drift off to sleep. But no, there was more to come.

When we had all said our goodbyes to everyone in the diner, we started to walk down the street back to the car. Passing a basement pool hall, one of John's buddies said "Hey, how about grabbing some beers and shooting some pool?"

"Great idea!" they all chorused, and ran down the steps. Banging open the door, John yelled out "OK we're here to play some pool. Everybody make some room, alright?"

The room went silent. A sea of black faces stared at us. Shit we're all going to die, I thought.

I should point out that this was 1975, a few years before a similar scene in National Lampoon's Animal House (1978), when the college students go to see Otis Day and the Knights in a black club, with disastrous results!

Luckily this didn't happen to us. As soon as everyone realised that it was John, who was obviously well-known in the area, they all started laughing and poking him with pool cues. Beers all round soon got us a couple of tables and a few games. I lost every time!

"Right, let's go and see the store, Duncan, and you can see how we do things over here," said John as we piled back

into his old Cadillac. It turned out to be just a few blocks away down West Pico Boulevard.

"Hey what's happening here?" yelled John as we got closer. Two police cars were outside the shop, lights flashing, and the police were standing looking through the windows into the shop and laughing!

"Shit - there's someone in the store." said John.

Sure enough there was. It turned out that the shop's air conditioner which was above the door of the shop had been taken away for servicing, since you couldn't NOT have an air conditioner in a record store during an LA summer! In the resulting hole, a thin sheet of plywood had been temporarily nailed, and which now was knocked out. By climbing up on a garbage can, a young 16 year-old kid had managed to crawl through the hole and drop down into the shop.

However, once inside he realised the door was deadlocked and he couldn't get out. Nor could he climb up on the inside to get out of the hole. So he had stacked up vinyl albums on top of each other like steps, and was trying to climb up them, but being shrink wrapped and slippery they started sliding sideways as soon as he stepped on them. Which caused him to fall off onto the floor every time, much to the amusement of the onlookers!

When he finally stopped trying and just sat on the floor, John opened up the door with the keys and the police took him away, as well as a few copies of the latest albums.

"That'll make sure they keep an eye on the place," he laughed as they drove away.

Apparently the silent burglar alarm had alerted the security company, who had told the police, and they had been calling John at home, but of course he was out partying with yours truly. No cell phones back in 1975!

And true to his word, the next day he took me around some record wholesalers, where the low prices absolutely floored me! So much so that I filled a whole suitcase with albums to take home as my luggage, and also regularly shipped a 50 kilo carton back to Oz that I sold for at least 300% margin at Sunday markets!

**Ah, those were the good old days!**

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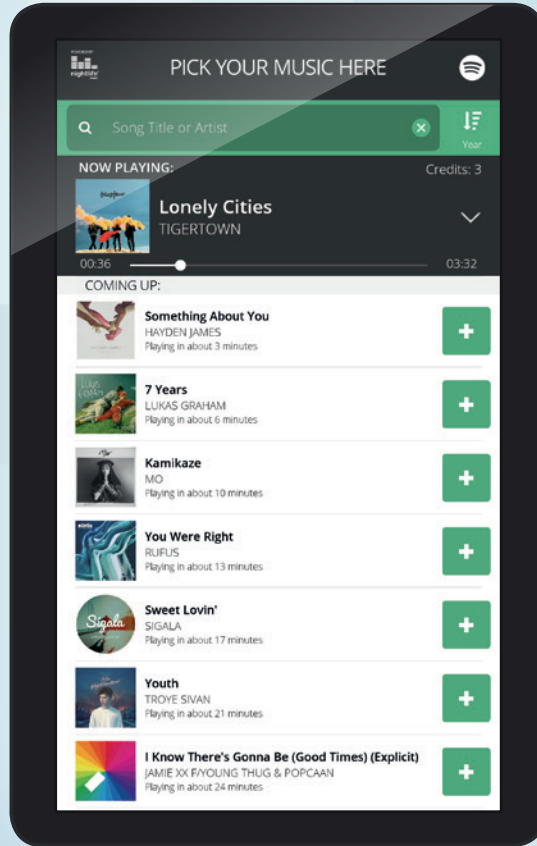
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