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LIVE AT KARDINIA PARK

FOO FIGHTERS

The international border comes down
Vale Taylor Hawkins

SKY SONG

World First for
Adelaide Fringe

THE AUDIO ISSUE

- / WOMADELAIDE
- / SYDNEY AND ADELAIDE FESTIVALS
- / BINAURAL AUDIO
- / INSTALLATIONS: RETAIL, WORSHIP, HOSPITALITY AND THEATRE

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THE GRAND RE-OPENING

GROUP TECHNOLOGIES NEW TRAINING AND DEMO FACILITY



Danny Swan (Radio Parts), Damian Moore (CBA), Joe Ciotta (Radio Parts)



Don Goldstein (Turramurra Music), Anthony Touma (GT), Mat Stevens (Turramurra Music)



Ken Herrin (JB HiFi), Sandy Rutledge, Graeme Howlett (JB HiFi)



Cam Leitch (Soundbay), Andre Hine (Soundbay), Tali Sing (Soundbay), Toby Stenberg



Andrew Hicks (Prime AV), Mark Hanson (Hanson And Associates) and Michael Rutledge



MC Andrew Peters (Andrew Peters VO)



Rob Bird (BSG), Artie Jones (Factory Sound), Tony Boon (PA Services)



Stuart Morris (Pink Noise), Paul Martin (Texas Audio), Wil Burston (W Consulting)



Tali Sing (Soundbay), Gary Drain (GT), Andre Hine (Soundbay)

With a huge and typically well-catered bash on Feb 23 at their HQ in Pascoe Vale, Melbourne, Group Technologies raised the curtain on their lavish new permanent Training and Demo spaces.

Unique in the Australian audio landscape, the five dedicated areas are a labour of love, performed with all GT hands on deck through Melbourne's gruelling lockdowns. Even senior management got on the tools, which I witnessed with my own eyes during visits when it was under construction (between lockdowns, of course).

The opening party was so much more than an unveiling. The last industry event I attended before we were plunged into the pandemic was Group Technologies 2020 'GTX' event in Brunswick, with international reps present from RCF, Austrian Audio, and DiGiCo. Two weeks later it was Black Friday. Four weeks later, our entire industry, including this publication, faced an existential crisis.

Being reunited with the audio community, including people from interstate that we hadn't seen for two years, was both cathartic and therapeutic. War stories were swapped. Some I spoke with felt almost embarrassed that business had actually been good to them through the pandemic, which is absolutely to be celebrated, not hidden. Most shared the

same experience; devastation, followed by innovation, and survival. Everyone was saying how much business was picking up and felt rusty as they got back behind a mixing desk for the first round of live gigs.

Group Technologies' transformation is symbolic of an industry that is rebuilding bigger and better than it was before. With their large stable of live production customers, GT were arguably one of the hardest hit suppliers in the industry, but their strong commercial installation portfolio kept them going through the pandemic. They have now come back with a bang, showcasing what is now the finest purpose-built audio showroom, customer relations centre, education space, and big PA listening room in the country. These are

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The Showroom



The Mix Zone

spaces where retailers can come to learn how to improve their sales, consultants can bring end-users to see and hear solutions, and audio engineers can brush up on the latest tech.

All of the spaces are now open for business and ready for bookings. Here's the run down on what's available:

The Showroom

A vibrant space that greets you with a comprehensive catalogue of Cordial cables, Nexo and Quest commercial products, and more.

The Mix Zone

Whether it be consoles, in-ears, or DSP processors, this learning space is purpose-built for training on DiGiCo, KLANG and NST Audio hardware. These areas also feature fully functional networked audio rooms to demonstrate the capabilities of these systems.



The Studio



The Commercial Room

The Studio

A dedicated studio space aimed at replicating the work environment of engineering professionals. With the ability to fine-tune not only the acoustics but the lighting and monitoring setup, this space has become a nexus for their studio-centric brands like Austrian Audio, PSI Audio, DiGiCo and more.

The Commercial Room

The evolution of GT's 'classic' listening space, the commercial room has been transformed into a multipurpose demonstration area with a focus on architectural, venue and installation audio. Featured technologies here include offerings from the NEXO ID and P+ as well as Quest MX Series.



The Live Space

The Live Space

GT's biggest space is filled with a comprehensive display of RCF powered loudspeakers. The room also features NEXO and RCF line arrays, Quest live cabinets, DiGiCo consoles, an integrated DiGiCo 4REA4 system and much, much, more. Unlike any other permanent demonstration room in Australia, GT's live sound space is perfect for test driving a huge range of live sound and large touring system options.

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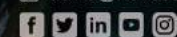
This represents a totally new solution for managing large high-end applications such as fine-pitch LED installation, studio broadcasting, tours, corporate events, virtual production and E-sports.



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BSG's Rob Bird, Nigel Line, and James Young

BRISBANE SOUND GROUP AND ADAMSON

Own Less, Do More

Brisbane Sound Group have reinvigorated their PA inventory with an eye to the 2022 recovery, diving into Adamson's self-powered and scalable CS Series in a big way. Already in the warehouse are 16 elements of CS10 line array, 12 CS119 subwoofers, four CS10p and four CS7p point source cabinets, with more stock likely joining soon.

"It's part of a general inventory refresh, with an eye to brand alignment with what we're doing in sales and installation," says Rob Bird, Pro Audio, ICT & Technical Resources at BSG. "It's also about making our inventory as efficient as possible. One of the things we like about the CS environment is that there's just one model of subwoofer, regardless of whether you're 12 deep on a concert stage or one per side as a stick PA. They're powerful while easy to move around, and powered so there's no amp racks to lug. It simplifies cabling infrastructure and system design because it's just about power and signal. Those four boxes will cover any job we have."

BSG's new CS line array has already been out earning its keep. "I've already taken out the CS10s on a couple of events," relates James Young, Production Manager at BSG. "The first was out in Middlemount in central QLD for a mining company event. They turned their town hall into a ballroom, and we flew four CS10 and two CS119 a side. The rig was so compact, but with so much grunt. Even flown, I didn't feel I lost anything not having my subs on the ground."

James thought he might have overdone it on the powerful rig at first. "The client came walking up to me after the first song and I

thought I was going to get told off for being too loud," admits James. "But she said 'That was epic and it sounds amazing – leave it there!' We had Casey Barnes and his band, then a cover band. I mixed for 2 ½ hours straight at a decent volume entire time. I got back to hotel room and... no hiss in my ears. I did not feel fatigued. The level was there and in-your-face the whole time, but I have really noticed the lack of fatigue. That's the hallmark of an excellent system."

The CS10s then went out for a week of Christmas shows at the acoustically notorious Southbank Piazza, which James generously describes as "a giant concrete bowl." Around a giant LED Christmas tree, eight CS10s a side, four CS119s and front fill brought the holiday cheers. "I was really happy with the sound and levels," says James. "The clarity is just there, particularly in the vocals; you push them up and they just sit. That thing I notice most is the lack of EQ. At Southbank Piazza, it's normally absolutely carved up, but Rob tuned it and



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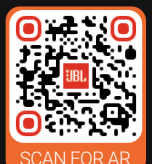
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SCAN FOR AR

didn't have to do much. We ran for a week and it sounded great in a really challenging environment."

"We ran a full simulation in Adamson's Blueprint software in our proposal for the gig," elaborates Rob. "We've traditionally covered Southbank Piazza with mains and flown outfills, but the CS10's width means we could do away with them. It was a cleaner look with just a single hang either side. There was a zone on the floor that we knew the array wouldn't reach, so we put in the CS7p infills to cover that. When we rigged the PA, it covered where Blueprint said it would. There were no surprises, which as a system guy is what you want."

A secret weapon in the sonic arsenal is the CS10s impressive rear rejection. "The pattern control is so good!" raves James. "The client kept asking me if the boxes were cardioid. I kept saying 'No' but they kept questioning me, 'Are you sure?' We had to put a monitor speaker at back of house so the cast could hear their cues, which we've never had to do before because there's normally so much slapback and sound echoing off the rear. That level of pattern control in a venue as bad as that means you're only fighting what's out the front, instead of problems coming from all sides."

It's not just the big line array that gets to hog the limelight. "We're going to use the CS10ps a lot," predicts Rob. "Small park festivals for communities, school and church events. Two subs and two top boxes with decent coverage; that's going to be a rig that will go out constantly. The rear rejection will be great, as on most of those gigs you're got your back up against a fence, and it will keep the neighbours and council happy. Our biggest problem will be convincing clients that boxes the size of a CS10p will do what they need, which they certainly do!"

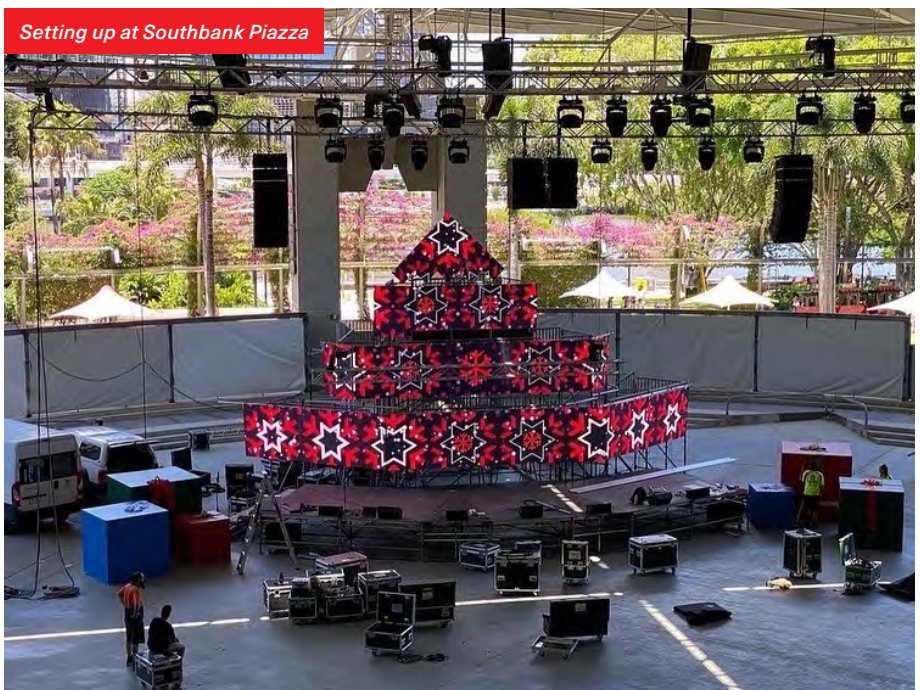
BSG are also seeing their production lead translate into regular sales. "A CS10p and CS119 rig is small enough for one person to set up, and can cover up to 600 people," outlines Rob. "We've moved a couple of systems of that spec for exactly that reason. It's power-to-weight, size, and quality of sound."

"What I like is that we can keep buying the same four boxes and cover everything from a DJ in a backyard to 10,000 people at Riverstage," observes James. "We can own less and do more."

BSG's Adamson investment is supported by Adamson distributor CMI Music & Audio, represented on the ground in Brisbane by Brian Vayler. "I've known Brian for 20 years, and the support he offers is fantastic," says Rob. "He's great on keeping us up-to-date with software and training, and if I send him a Blueprint plot, he'll always have some great input."

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CALREC PARTNERS WITH D2N TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Calrec, one of the world's leading designers and suppliers of broadcast audio mixing consoles and equipment, have reached an agreement with D2N Technology Solutions to be their exclusive technology partner and distributor in Australia.

Calrec's regional sales manager, Robert Davidson, explained, "With D2N the reasons for partnership were clear; they understand the importance of customer communication, service and support which Calrec also values highly. In addition, their enterprising sales and marketing strategies have impressed because they, like us, understand that even a specialist industry like broadcast needs a proactive approach considering the rapidly changing technology landscape. The core values of D2N's business very much align with Calrec's."

Calrec's range of broadcast mixing consoles, remote production and audio networking solutions, its understanding of AoIP and IP infrastructures and its work with third-party integration means Calrec is at the centre of changing broadcast requirements, all facts not lost on Jason Owen.

"Put simply, Calrec is one of the world's leading mixing console brands. Their presence is truly global with customers in every market across the world and their engineering quality is excellent. Audio mixers today do a lot more than just take signals in and send them back out. Now companies like Calrec must cater for local and remote sources, virtualised product and integrate seamlessly into IP workflows. Innovation and change are facts of life in a business like this and Calrec handle those better than anyone else."

D2N are now selling and supporting Calrec's entire range of mixers and IO devices, something Jason Owen sees as an enormous plus for the Australian market. "Our ability to understand and support our customers is a



Jason Owen

real strength for us. We share that 'show must go on' mindset with Calrec and that is exactly what Calrec's customer base expects. We also have excellent connections with the vendors that have synergy with Calrec so, when it comes to solutions, we can deliver a far more comprehensive package than most."

For more information on Calrec products and solutions in Australia contact Jason Owen at D2N on +61 2 9837 6748 or at jason.owen@d2n.com.au

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Printworks Club, London with d&b V-Series

Photo: Luke Dizon

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d&b has long endeavoured to reshape what's possible with sound. Now, in the club space, this endeavour finds yet another new direction. The practicalities of the d&b System reality combine industry-leading end-to-end support with software innovations like ArrayProcessing and NoizCalc, which make d&b systems work better and harder, for longer. So, the head's commercial sense can comfortably join the heart's creative vision. More than a sound system.

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CMI EXPAND INTO SYDNEY

There's always a bit of posture around industry releases but the vibe at the new CMI Sydney facility was all sunshine and optimism mid-March. They revealed their new Showroom, Experience and Training Centre, having purchased the site recently. Until now CMI did all warehousing, product demos, and training out of Melbourne, routinely flying dealers down to product launches.

Managing Director Peter Trojkovic revealed he may move to Sydney to rev up sales of their portfolio, which includes the JBL, Adamson, and Fohhn loudspeaker brands, all of which were demoed at the launch. Peter reports that while CMI has always had Sydney-based sales staff, adding on a facility such as this can only boost business.

"The Sydney move came out of the company's NSW position in the Pro audio market not being as strong as other states, and my personal frustration of not being able to travel and wanting to get my teeth into a new project," says Peter. "We also doubled down on our marketing efforts, increasing output, and invested in CRM for sales planning and pipeline to help the team increase speed to market. Lastly, we increased orders with most suppliers."

CMI report a significant upswing in business now that the pandemic has eased, with rental and production firms, along with venues and places of worship, restarting acquisitions. They say the Adamson order book is very healthy, while the JBL Pro lines are growing in acceptance due to the recent introduction of new products. So how did CMI travel through the pandemic?

"The retail customer business grew substantially due to online and lockdown purchases, and a slowed supply chain from our competitors," Peter said. "Our forward order plans helped us to secure inventory and we spot-bought goods from markets that slowed or stopped. We also saw a lot of new best-in-class technology products come in, especially from JBL Professional. The market was instantly accepting and placed strong orders."



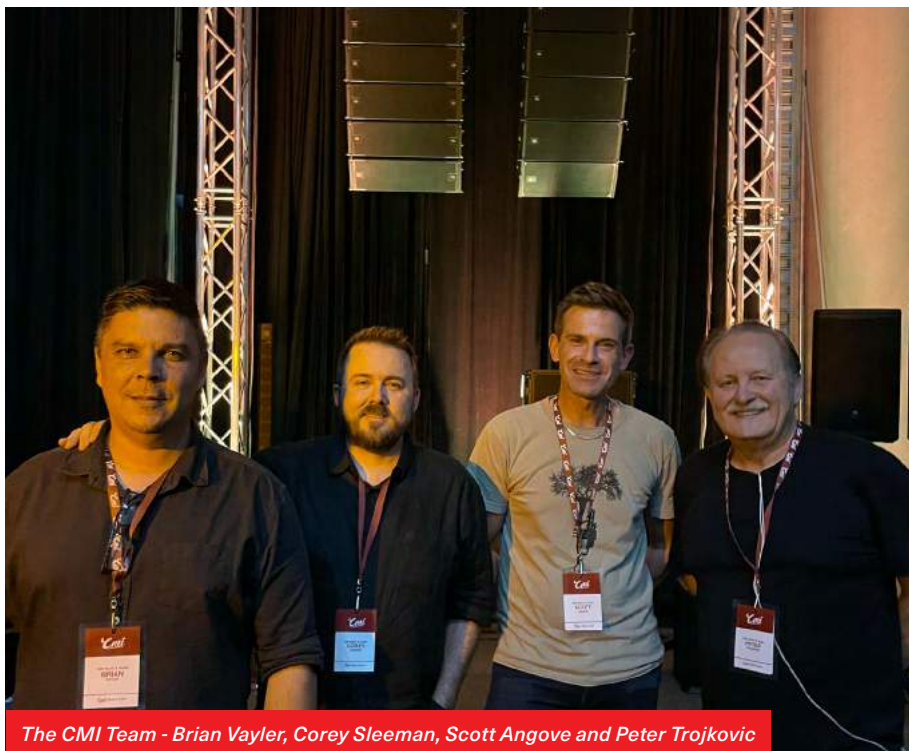
Anna Aubusson, Lauren Addison, Aleksandra Deren (Corporate Technology Services)



CMI's Scott Angove



Danny Zamor (Blacktown Workers Club) and Corey Sleeman (CMI)



The CMI Team - Brian Vayler, Corey Sleeman, Scott Angove and Peter Trojkovic

"CMI not only retained all staff but also increased substantially in the second year of the pandemic," continued Peter. "We are still looking to grow our team. Staff wellbeing was probably the biggest concern throughout the pandemic. We saw cracks in people's personalites as the lockdowns wore on. We were making video calls fortnightly, and in some cases weekly, to speak with staff about their personal situation and how we could assist them. The interesting thing was just how nearly all the staff could not wait to get back to the office. So much so, that we started to bring some people back before restrictions allowed because the interest of the individual was more important."

"Right before the start of the pandemic, we had already decided to change up our customer communication, especially in MI," explained Peter. "We implanted some key strategies

that worked well in a lockdown environment. This paid huge dividends and we instantly saw an improvement in customer relations. We put additional resources to service our consumer and e-commerce division. The trend to online accelerated growth. We improved the marketing footprint and focused on communication in all directions. The company's sales, brand management, and marketing structure look very different now. We're more focused, and the team are really engaged with the changes, and have a huge say in how we go to market with customers. The morale and team collaboration is probably at an all-time high, which is amazing considering we were locked down for so long."

"The future has never looked so positive. With our retail business growing so much, we are planning to increase our sales representatives. The Pro audio market is growing at a very



CMI's Brian Vayler

healthy rate, and foresee adding additional technical sales people in key markets before the end of the year," Peter concluded.

ACME ENLIGHTENS AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



Enlighten Festival once again lit up Canberra from 4 to 20 March. The annual outdoor art and cultural festival shines a light on the dynamic and creative energy of Canberra, bringing together a program of amazing events and entertainment, transforming the city and its surrounds into a spectacular display of art, music, food and entertainment.

Canberra's own Elite Event Technology were appointed to creatively illuminate several unique sites across the city. One of them was a building within The Australian National University (ANU) campus.

"We used 48 Acme Tour Pixel Bar IP65-rated fixtures to illuminate the façade of this building



The lighting sequences were pre-programmed on a Chamsys MagicQ MQ80 console and then run on an Acme DMX Recorder.

Lit up in blue and yellow to show it's support of the Ukrainian people.
Photo Credit: Jamie Kidston, The Australian National University.



within ANU, highlighting the architecture and creating festive vibes within the University Precinct," says Darren Russell, MD of Elite Event Technology.

"The Acme Tour Pixel Bar is a perfect fixture for temporary façade illumination. Its punchy, reliable and weatherproof, which comes in very handy in Canberra," continues Darren. "As with many prestige illumination projects

we do around the city and beyond, when you light up a building of one of the world's leading universities, you need to make sure you choose reliable technology that will deliver a superb result, no matter the weather conditions or circumstances."

The lighting sequences were pre-programmed on a Chamsys MagicQ MQ80 console and then run on an Acme DMX Recorder. "For some of

the evenings, we had also programmed the Ukrainian flag colours in recognition of the University's support of the Ukrainian people, and the current dire situation over there," concludes Darren.

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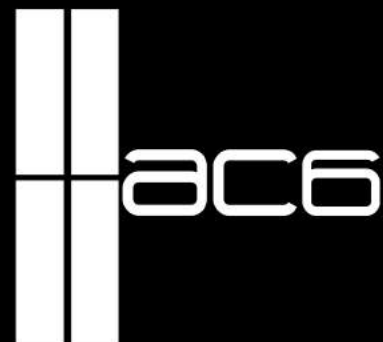
AC6 brings the highly sought-after ADAPTive tool kit to a column loudspeaker. In the same fashion as Anya and Anna speaker enclosures, AC6 offers all of the benefits of ADAPTive performance in a pillar enclosure.

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AV NEWS

Ashly Audio SP-8.1P

The new SP-8.1P subwoofers are designed with a dynamic 8-inch woofer with ferrite magnet, front loaded into a bass-reflex and a 0.6" reinforced plywood enclosure. It can handle up to 150W at 8 Ohms, with a sensitivity of 95dB (1W@1m) and a frequency response of 43Hz-180Hz (-10dB). For maximum effect, pair the subwoofer with Ashly's nXp 400 or higher or Péma 4125, 4250, 8125, 8250 amplifiers. The subwoofer line is available with a textured paint finish in both black or white.

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New Zealand: *NAS nz.nas.solutions or (09) 414 4220*



ETC Cyberlight LED

The Cyberlight LED is a moving mirror fixture with high-speed pan/tilt movement. The 470W Bright White LED engine and the high-quality optical system delivers 12,750 field lumens with 90+ CRI for superior colour rendering capabilities. A full complement of features are included on Cyberlight LED for creative design possibilities, including colour mixing plus colour wheel, dual rotating pattern wheels, zoom, focus, iris, prism, and diffusion.

ETC Apex

With three sizes to choose from – the Eos Apex 5, 10, and 20 – this latest release ushers in the next generation of ETC's flagship controls line. The massive multitouch displays offer generous screen real estate for Magic Sheets, Direct Selects, and Augment3d models, and feature eye-strain-reducing 4K resolution. New-to-the-industry technologies provide programmers access to their most-used tools, right on the face panel. The familiar Eos Family programming keypad has been enhanced with a touchscreen that thumps with haptic feedback when you press your soft keys or mapped content. Eos Apex also introduces customizable Target Keys for your Direct Selects, which boast individual OLED displays that can be customized with images, icons and text. The encoder area from the Eos Ti console has been expanded to include eight mini-encoders and a navigation dial to easily switch between parameters. The five, ten and twenty motorised Playbacks on each Apex console (respectively) now boast an additional, separately mappable scroll wheel for on-the-fly programming. With more buttons, encoders and Playbacks than ever before, Eos Apex makes fast, hands-on programming a breeze – all while maintaining the familiar, sophisticated look and feel that users of the family love.

Australia: *Jands jands.com.au or (02) 9582 0909. New Zealand:* *Jands NZ jands.co.nz or 021 674 601*



ENTTEC DIN Pixie

The DIN Pixie is a robust and reliable installation-grade DMX-to-SPI pixel converter and standalone player designed to make control of LED pixels easy. Control two Universes of DMX (256 RGBW, 340 RGB or 1024 White 8-Bit LEDs) from the DIN Pixie. Use its DMX inputs, stream to it from a computer plugged in using USB, or set it to play a one Universe standalone show you've created and saved to internal memory.



ENTTEC Pixelator Mini

The Pixelator Mini is an installation-grade Ethernet pixel converter designed to make control of LED pixel dots and strips simple. In total, the Pixelator Mini can convert up to 8,192 channels (2,730 RGB pixels) across its 8 PLink outputs (2 Universes per port) with perfect synchronisation across each. The Pixelator Mini acts as the head end of ENTTEC's PLink control system. The PLink data it generates can be sent up to 300m using standard CAT6 cabling to plug into ENTTEC's compact power injection modules and LED dimmers.



ENTTEC Storm 8

ENTTEC's Storm 8 is a compact, eight Universe installation-grade Ethernet to DMX gateway designed to make controlling DMX lights over Ethernet simple. Convert sACN or ArtNet to DMX easily. Power the Storm 8 using either the DC PSU included in the box, or Power over Ethernet (PoE). Install it using one of the four mounting options, then configure and update it from anywhere on your network using its intuitive web interface. Its convenient 8 RJ45 DMX outputs make cabling familiar to installers and offers ultimate flexibility if you ever want to expand your infrastructure in future.

Australia: ENTTEC enttec.com.au or (03) 9763 5755
New Zealand: Kenderdine Electrical kelps.co.nz or (09) 302 4100



PROLIGHTS EclProfile CT+IP

The EclProfile CT+IP is a tuneable white and full colour IP LED ellipsoidal designed for outdoor use. It uses the same 6-colour LED source as its indoor version, but with a 30% higher lumen output, as it's equipped with a bigger power supply and heat sink. The fixture takes any of the standard lenses and accessories of the EclProfile range. Its custom LED array and the powerful on-board colour control creates bright and high-quality whites up to 97 CRI, keeping consistent colour output and ensuring total control of the light. The feature set includes theatrical functions such as tungsten emulation, LEE colour presets, and virtual CTO, and studio functions including green and magenta tuning on white presets.

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Finally, after countless false starts, abandoned gigs and COVID scares, last month Kutcha Edwards' band (of which I'm a member) played some gigs in front of other humans; thousands of them in fact! From WOMAD to Port Fairy Folk Festival, this is the story of our micro tour that actually happened!

I've been anticipating the gigs at WOMAD and Port Fairy for months now, but I was never entirely sure they'd go ahead. So many of our shows had been booked and cancelled this year (and last) that I'd become quite cynical of any prospect of ever playing the March tour dates that we supposedly had 'locked in.'

Everyone around me was excited, but whenever I was asked about WOMAD or Port Fairy I would mostly just shrug my shoulders and grunt. I just couldn't bring myself to get amped about them at all. I was assuming something would put a spanner in the works: band members getting sick, people having to isolate or the shows themselves getting cancelled. It was only in the last few weeks

(and after I'd fully recovered from COVID myself) that the prospect of playing the gigs loomed as a genuine possibility.

But then the unthinkable happened: no-one else got sick, the shows weren't cancelled, and tens of thousands of tickets were sold to punters all desperate to finally get out and see some music. Suddenly things felt very real. This train was rollin' – it was time to get onboard!

All Aboard – But Not With That!

After a bunch of rehearsals at The Mill in preparation (yet again) for the gigs, Day 1 of the micro tour finally dawned bright and sunny, and five of us piled into Marcus Satchell (the bass player's) van to head to Melbourne airport and check ourselves in for the flight to Adelaide. We were finally travelling... on a plane, no less.

We had more stuff than you could poke a stick at. I even had my old Wurley with us, although we didn't take that on the plane. It was coming with us to Port Fairy, so it stayed in the van when we headed to Adelaide.

Like so many of us in the audio industry, I hadn't been on a flight for ages, and checking in was all a bit shambolic. I had too much stuff, too many foreign objects in my bags (to the eyes of security at least) that I hadn't bothered to sift through, and we were in a rush to get to the flight.

In particular, my carry-on gig bag was full of all sorts of accumulated crap from earlier gigs: gaff and batteries, tuners and cables, plectrums, tambourines and who knows what else. This set off every alarm imaginable in the airport when I tried to go through security. They freaked out so badly I thought my tour was about to end just as it started.

After much ado about gaff and Allen keys (dangerous weapons apparently – which turned out later to be drum tuners), back I went to the Virgin check-in counter, dumped the bag into checked luggage, only to open my mouth, as it sailed down the conveyor belt, about whether batteries were allowed in checked luggage...

"There aren't batteries in there, are there?" said the Virgin stewardess, startled.

"Ah, yep, there are..." I mumbled, realising my stupid mistake.

Another mad scramble ensued to retrieve the bag... this saga went on for another 45 minutes. But in the end we made it to the flight. We were finally Adelaide bound.

WOMAD

When we arrived in Adelaide, we were quickly whisked away to the Hilton in a bus by one of the concert's many volunteer Artist Liaison crew. We checked into our rooms and from



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there wandered over to the WOMAD site, which was still under construction in the Botanic Gardens. The place seemed vast, and there were stages, stalls, crew and volunteers everywhere, working furiously to get things done before show day. I felt relieved not to be one of them.

The WOMAD stages are big, outdoor extravaganzas, and in an empty space sans punters their proportions seemed particularly enormous.

Wandering onto Stage 2 on the day of our show the weather was perfect, pretty hot in fact. Stage 2 faces due West (I quickly discovered) and during our soundcheck I reckon I lost about 3kgs as the sun beat relentlessly down on us.

By showtime, however, it had mercifully set, and as the crowd grew and the fruit bats headed out shopping, we hit the stage for the first time. Everything sounded great through the monitors thanks to Jim Monk, who ran things calmly and effortlessly. I was pretty anxious about the on-stage sound, having not played much for ages and my convoluted setup involving two acoustics, an omnichord, a Roland SPD-SX drum pad and a vocal mic. But Jim was a pleasure to work with, which made the gig infinitely more enjoyable and stress-

free for all of us. James Wilkinson mixed up a storm at FOH, and by all accounts he did a fantastic job.

When the show ended, we all breathed a huge sigh of relief. We'd survived the WOMAD gig unscathed, the crowd seemed to dig it; they were all waving their phones back and forth at one point towards the end of the set, which was a good sign (and quite mesmerising from our vantage point). All in all, the first gig was a success. The rest of the evening involved grabbing a bite backstage, listening to a couple of other bands and then packing up all the gear and heading back to the hotel for some well-earned shuteye.

Port Fairy Folky

The next day we had the reverse mad scramble back to Melbourne, via another saga with my bag, which I still hadn't bothered to sort through (because I'm an idiot).

But we got there eventually, retrieved our van from the long-term carpark and then road-tripped our way down to Port Fairy, listening to loud music and fighting over who's turn it was next to play a song via Marcus's Spotify account. It was like old times, very old times (apart from streaming music via an App.) I felt

like I was 19 again, which was slightly odd, but fun as well. It was amazing just to be travelling, anywhere, let alone with a band on a tour.

The Port Fairy Folk Festival was heaving when we arrived. There were untold thousands of people there, and the show was in full swing. The Shebeen was a dead-set zoo, especially though post-COVID eyes. I couldn't believe it when I walked in; thousands of people dancing, drinking and making a serious racket... and smiling too! (I know this because you could see their faces – no masks!) If this scene was anything to go by, the shows we were about to play were going to be feral!

As it turned out our shows weren't in The Shebeen after all, for which I was quite thankful; we're not exactly a party band. Our first gig on the Sunday arvo was in the far more sedate Pyipgil Gundidi tent, which sounded amazing when I first walked in and happened to catch another act mid set.

We were playing at Port Fairy twice over the weekend without our normal FOH engineer, James, but luckily for us, on the Sunday we somewhat miraculously found ourselves in the capable hands of Adam Rhodes at FOH (thanks again Adam). We had great support on stage too from the monitor engineer Adam Alderuccio and the rest of the crew from Monitor City, who ran the stage like clockwork. We played well, had a good time, and my overall impression of the gig was that it was a winner.

But the day was far from over for me. Late that night I mixed a gig myself in the by now half-crazed Shebeen tent, The Jazz Party, on a DIGICO SD10, which I wasn't familiar with. The band was awesome as usual, and Loretta Miller did what she does so well – sang like a bird in front of a vast, inebriated crowd. I was brilliantly assisted at FOH by Tom Moore from Monitor City, who was great to work with. He was friendly and incredibly knowledgeable on the SD10, unlike me! He set up the console in no time flat and was basically the difference between my show being a train wreck and a resounding success. Thanks to Tom it was the latter. Cheers Tom – you rock!

The next morning, bleary eyed and a bit the worse for wear from the night before, Kutcha and band played again, this time on the River Stage, at the ungodly hour of 10am. This stage was bigger than the others, at least it feels that way to play on, and manned by a different crew. Tom Watterson from Powa Production was our FOH guy here, and Trevor Cooper ran monitors. Both these guys were friendly and affable. Actually this was my consistent impression of the various crews for the entire tour, which made a massive difference to the experience of our final show.

With a generous amount of set-up time we got ourselves together and at 10.15am, with cameras rolling, cracked on with our set. Despite it being so early in the day, and with some of us having had very little sleep, here again things went well. The River tent was

packed and the crowd seemed as excited as the day before. Why they weren't all still tucked up in bed is anyone's guess, but hey, we were grateful for an attentive audience!

The crowd was raucous, in fact, all waving their arms in unison and generally going off. Humanity, doing what it does best - enjoying live music! From my vantage point looking out into the crowd (and given the crazy circumstances of last couple of years) it was quite a sight to behold.

At the end of the gig the director of the festival, Justin Rudge, gave a heartfelt speech to the audience about Kutcha, formally announcing him as the Artist of the Year for Port Fairy Folk Festival 2022. His prize? A fancy Maton guitar with a nice inlay on the fretboard to mark the occasion. It was well deserved, and Kutcha was chuffed... although in classic fashion he announced on the mic that he "didn't play guitar, only omnichord," at which point I held mine up to the crowd like show and tell, so they understood what the hell he was talking about.

It was a funny end to an amazing gig.

Outta There Like Lightning

Soon after the show most of the band was quickly back on the road, heading home to Melbourne and Gippsland with all the gear. I stuck around for another day with my family, who'd been travelling independently to the shows via their own tour de force around the South-East corner of Australia. We watched a couple more gigs together, had something to eat with Kutcha, but then suddenly the heavens opened, the rain pelted down and lightning struck far too close for comfort. We literally ran to the car, drenched from head to foot and glad to be alive!

We were out of there; or driven out of there, I couldn't tell quite which. There were no formal goodbyes to the Folk Festival management or friends we'd caught up with at the shows, which was a bit of an anti-climax, and there were no more gigs to play.

Just like that, the show was over.

After a spectacular drive back along the Great Ocean Road, stopping along the way here and there for a swim, another coffee and some fish and chips, we were finally home and glad to be sleeping in our own beds.

Waking up the next morning, it almost felt like our week-long tour had all been some elaborate, caffeine-induced dream...

But, no, it was real. We had actually played live again!

Who'd have thunk it...

Andy Stewart owns and operates [The Mill studio](http://www.themillstudio.com.au) in Victoria, a world-class production, mixing and mastering facility. He's happy to respond to any pleas for pro audio help... contact him at: andy@themill.net.au or visit: www.themillstudio.com.au



EXPO 2020 DRAWS TO A CLOSE



Voice of Youth. Photo Credit: Rachel Soh

Expo 2020 was meant to be a trade show on steroids. The first world fair to be held in the Middle East, it was expected to draw twenty five million visitors from around the world to the outskirts of Dubai. Lasting six months, measuring two square kilometres, it featured nearly two hundred countries under the theme ‘Connecting Minds, Creating the Future’. Three pavilions, divided into opportunity, sustainability and mobility, showcased ideas and innovations, with New Zealand set to participate in the sustainability precinct, and intending to impact other areas too.

The Motivation

Viewed as an opportunity to grow New Zealand’s trade with existing and new partners in the Gulf States and the Middle East, the decision to take part was made in April 2017. New Zealand Trade & Industry harked back to the Expo 2010 event in Shanghai and the subsequent benefits to trade with China, and confidently allocated NZ\$54m, ultimately climbing to NZ\$61m, a similar amount to France, and not a world away from the budgets of the UK (around \$NZ86m) and India (roughly \$NZ100m). The Expo began on 1st October, and finished on March 31st.

The New Zealand Pavilion – and Homegrown Tech

The New Zealand theme titled ‘Care for People and Place’ used the Whanganui River as a muse to convey the connection between natural resources and our relationship as people with one another, in New Zealand known as kaitiakitanga. The New Zealand

Government entered into a relationship agreement with Whanganui Iwi to collaborate on sharing the story, the first time New Zealand’s participation at a World Expo has been done in partnership with iwi Māori. The result did not claim that New Zealand is perfect or that all problems are solved (AKA the 100% New Zealand Pure tourism campaign), rather the idea was expressed that over time, through kaitiakitanga, or caring for people and place, we can protect our future generations.

The New Zealand purpose-built pavilion was designed by New Zealand architects Jasmay in collaboration with Whanganui iwi Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi and Mott MacDonald. The construction of the pavilion itself aimed to promote New Zealand business, with the use of Abodo New Zealand eco-timber having a striking impact in the pavilion’s restaurant and hosting venues, and Kaynemaile, a lightweight, New Zealand-made mesh material that is 100 percent recyclable and includes recycled materials in its composition, creating a dramatic façade.

The interior was dedicated to promoting New Zealand’s tech sector. Workshop-e, Wellington based experience design company collaborated with Creative Director Karl Johnstone, providing strategic support through his agency Haumi; Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui; and other creatives including Assembly Ltd, Perceptual Engineering and Satellite Media. They worked within the architectural fixtures to develop and deliver a powerful immersive, multi-sensory visitor experience intending to showcase New Zealand’s spirit of innovation and technical production across a diverse range of sectors.

The experience begins when visitors are welcomed into a cool space featuring textured walls made from sustainable New Zealand strong-wool by T&R Interiors. As the visitor continues, their body form interacts with and displaces projected particles, illustrating the impact of humans on the natural world. Next, a large rock from Mount Tongariro, selected from the source of the Whanganui River, is surrounded by falling water and imbued

Photo Credit: New Zealand at Expo 2020



Photo Credit: New Zealand at Expo 2020

with the river's mauri (life principle), its pulse emanating within and outside the building. In the final room, a multidimensional looping seven minute film is projected across sixty-five metres of wall and a suspended and animated cube, engaging visitors in the story of how New Zealand innovates to care for people and place.

Thanks to Auckland-based creative studio Waxeye, anyone around the globe can be wowed by the New Zealand virtual pavilion and an immersive online experience at

nzpavilionvirtualtour.co.nz. Website visitors can choose to follow the intuitive route through the rooms as if they were walking through the pavilion in Dubai, or adapt their online path by accessing the menu. Using WebGL, Waxeye developed a 3D pipeline to optimise and test performance for browsers throughout production to ensure a great online experience for the global audience.

Visitors to the virtual experience can also share their experience on social media, by taking

a picture of themselves in front of the virtual pavilion using an augmented reality add-on within the app.

New Zealand company Weta Workshop has also blown people's minds in 'Alif', the Mobility Pavilion, where three giant figures of historical explorers Al Bakri, Ibn Battuta and Ibn Majid, are rendered in large-scale, in photo-realistic detail by the special effects team.



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Live Entertainment

November saw 'Te Aratini' the first Festival of Indigenous and Tribal Ideas in the history of World Expos. New Zealand collaborated with other participating nations to deliver the event, including the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Canada, the United States, Malaysia, Paraguay, and Panama. The Kahurangi Māori Dance Theatre represented New Zealand with a unique blend of Māori song, dance and heritage including a haka to end the evening.

January delivered the New Zealand Pavilion's Cultural Calendar, the aim of which was to put the spotlight on the arts and creative sector, which (in a non-COVID year) contributes \$10.98 billion to GDP. Parris Goebel, a New Zealand-born creative whose talents span choreography, dance, music, directing and acting, was appointed creative director of the entertainment and cultural programme. As well as Six-60, Kimbra and Sol3Mio, Paris curated thirty talented young New Zealanders, for 'Voice of Youth – Wonderland'.

Finally combining art and live entertainment, a live street art exhibition showcased five artists who had not worked together previously, creating a twenty metre mural for the Expo with New Zealand DJ, Sir-Vere, encouraging passers-by to stop and enjoy the artists at work.

And...COVID

And then there was special guest COVID. Initially scheduled for 2020, the Expo was delayed a year, embroiling the NZ Expo team in the MIQ allocation sensitivities which have had such an impact on the live entertainment industry over the last two years.

To begin with around four hundred managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) hotel rooms were allocated for New Zealanders travelling to Expo 2020 – including business people, speakers and cultural performers. For a large-scale, six-month event, this was not a lot but was still slammed as being too generous, given a general shortage of MIQ spaces for New Zealanders wanting to return home.

Following the criticism, slots were reduced to three hundred and sixty three as some businesses opted to go virtual and efforts were made to hire Kiwi performers and tradespeople living overseas that would not need an MIQ spot. VIP delegations, normally part and parcel of such an event to boost New Zealand's profile, were also reigned in.

Border restrictions were also feared to have had a negative impact on tourism benefits but with the Expo just wrapping up and New Zealand's borders opening, it will be easier to convince the world that New Zealand is open for business and tourism.

The Outcome

As with any trade show, impact is difficult to measure, particularly in the early days. The Expo did achieve twenty million of the targeted twenty five million visits, although notably seventy percent were from the UAE and almost three million of these were children. Alicia Keys, the Black Eyed Peas, and other major billings including Pakistani singer Atif Aslam's concerts, and the 'free entry' to mark the UAE's 50th Jubilee drove attendance. Expo 2020's virtual platform, virtualexpodubai.com, has seen more than 110 million virtual visits. The New Zealand Pavilion had clocked up 800,000 visits by February, the last published figures. The virtual pavilion is linked to Google Analytics although no data has been released as to visitor numbers.

Speakers have represented New Zealand in person and virtually on panels and debates on issues ranging from Climate and Biodiversity, Space, Tolerance and Inclusivity, and Knowledge and Learning. Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta's visit and Te Aratini, the Festival of Indigenous and Tribal Ideas, were seen as highlights with potential in terms of establishing indigenous connections and advancing business interests.

Perhaps above all, for live entertainment and for the New Zealand tech companies involved, it was a window into the world during a time when not many were able to participate.



Street art installation. Photo Credit: New Zealand at Expo 2020



Six60. Photo Credit: New Zealand at Expo 2020



Kapa Haka performed at Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre. Photo Credit: New Zealand at Expo 2020



Photo Credit: New Zealand at Expo 2020

SKY SONG

Adelaide Fringe's signature event is a world first



The epic Sky Song, which ran at a winery in the rolling hills of McLaren Vale, SA through March, was the world's first feature-length drone art event. As an astonishing 72 metre wide outdoor holographic screen carried projections of First Nations stories, UK company Celestial's drones took to the sky to act as a flying extension to the projections, creating a continuous artistic canvas several stories tall.

Production provider Novatech got in a world first of their own, being the first company in the world to deploy ShowTex's Cielorama outdoor holographic screens, confirmed by ShowTex's Sven Peeters. "We supplied Novatech with four screens of 24m x 14m, set up three next to each other, creating a whopping 72m wide pano(Cielo)rama screen," reports Sven. "These screens can tension out to 15m high and up to 70 metres wide without joints. Novatech was one of the first users of this product and were very collaborative during the testing phase of

this setup. This is the first time Cielorama has been exposed to the elements for long periods successfully!"

Narrated by Archie Roach and featuring music and stories from Indigenous collaborators, Sky Song was a multimedia experience of ambitious breadth and depth. The artistic brief described Sky Song as "a cosmic journey exploring trauma, healing, and universal indigenous wisdom that connects all of mankind."

When Archie Roach's wavering voice sang Took The Children Away, many in the thousands-strong crowd wept. When the Paul Kelly with Kev Carmody version of From Little Things Big Things Grow started, the sound of the crowd gently joining in, almost in a whisper, made me tear up. Sky Song managed to be a crowd-pulling spectacle that transcended race, class, and politics, while being profoundly meaningful and technically innovative. That is rare territory indeed.

Sky Song was a collaboration between Adelaide Fringe, Celestial, Gluttony, Deadly Management, Archie Roach, Electric Fields, Iwiri Choir, Nancy Bates, Major Moogy Summer, Jack Buckskin of Kuma Kaaru, Ali Cobby Eckermann, Dusty Feet Mob, Mali Isabel, APY Arts Collective, Cactus Cactus Sound, Novatech, The Institute for Drone Technology, Nexstage, and Leconfield and Richard Hamilton Wines. It was supported by



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the South Australian Tourism Commission, and Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government initiative.

John Hopkins, Creative Director of Celestial, outlined the creative process that birthed Sky Song; “We got a soundtrack together first, including music and spoken word, and that in turn inspired the visuals. All visuals for the show were designed remotely at Celestial in the UK, working from concepts and material that had been discussed and developed with the First Nations collaborators.”

John Partridge, Production Designer for Celestial and lighting designer for Sky Song, explained how pre-vis for their drone art is handled; “We use 3D CGI software Blender

and 3D content platform Unity to animate and visualise the drone animations. The full production site is modelled to scale within Synchronorm Dependence 2 and then the drones are imported. This enables us to create a high-quality 3D visualisation of the entire show including lighting, projection, drones and haze.”

Part of the visual success of the show is that the imagery in the projections, which used the familiar dot art style of Indigenous Australia, are complemented by the drones, whose individual lights when flying are, obviously, dots. “We used that medium to project onto the screens and increase the canvas of the show,” confirms John. “The projections are made up from thousands of virtual drones, created in the same software.”



Brad Thompson, Novatech Production Support, on the Constellation rack



Johnathon Edwards, Novatech Production Support, grandMA operator



Sky Song's video and audio content was run from QLab, which simultaneously outputs timecode to the lighting and drone control hardware. The lighting was run from a grandMA3 full-size console, with LTC timecode triggering 300 pre-programmed cues. The drone launch software referenced the LTC timecode to give a desired launch time, but the launch itself was manually triggered. Each of the 360 drones flying during the show had a 700 lumen RGB LED chip on its belly.

"Novatech were truly humbled to be involved in what is a world first, collaborating with Celestial, Adelaide Fringe, and Gluttony to tell First Nations stories through creative technology like never before," said Novatech's Managing Director, Leko Novakovic. "The combination of drone art, lighting and projection on one of the largest holographic screens in Australia is truly spectacular. Our team has been working on this for months, so it's fantastic to see all our hard work come to fruition and receive positive feedback on such a special show."

"Sky Song has been created as a collaboration that involves creatives and technologists at the table collaborating together from the very start of the process," said Heather Croall, Director of the Adelaide Fringe Festival. "By adopting a co-design approach, we were able to all contribute, and a deeper project emerged as a result."

After 30 minutes of profound and visually ground-breaking truth and story-telling from the oldest continuous culture on Earth, Novatech's 32 Clay Paky Sharpy Plus shot beams of light into the evening sky to create an apex over the vast screen. They'd had four hazers running since before the show started, but we were outside, on a small hill near the coast, with a nice breeze. Somehow, the haze filled the air, and the beams went more than a hundred meters in the air, clear and defined. It shouldn't have been possible, and it signified power, dignity, and hope.



FOO FIGHTERS

RIP Taylor Hawkins



Photo Credit: Paul Rovere

Rock 'n' roll returns as Dave Grohl and Frontier Touring bring down the border

It was seemingly impossible. After two years of no international acts touring our shores, Foo Fighters announced a mere 10 days out from the gig that they would be gracing Kardinia Park with their presence; a venue that has never hosted a gig before. Surely this had been long planned. You can't pull together production on that scale that fast. To some extent, that was correct. Production had much more notice; 21 days. Again, impossible. Long-time Frontier Touring partners JPJ Audio took the call for sound, Big Picture for video, PRG for lights, and Clifton Productions for staging and infrastructure.

They built it, and they came; all 36,000 live music deprived souls. The gig was an outrageous success. When tickets went on sale a week out from the night, they sold out in hours, testament to the power of pent-up demand. Sadly, just three weeks later, Foo's beloved drummer Taylor Hawkins would pass away while on tour in Columbia.

Supported by local legends The Meanies, and Amyl and The Sniffers, this concert was the first outing for the Victorian State Government's Always Live initiative, which promises to be "a Victoria-wide celebration of

contemporary live music, the biggest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere." Upcoming gigs under the Always Live banner include Nick Cave & Warren Ellis with Courtney Barnett at Hanging Rock, Isiah Firebrace in Echuca, Tash Sultana as part of Ocean Sounds at Philip Island.

Audio

"It was very quick," understates Mats Frankl, Senior Account Manager at JPJ Audio. "We got the specs, and we just organised it very quickly. Luckily, availability of all the gear was good that week!"

With Kardinia Park an unknown quantity, the JPJ team got onsite and assessed the sonic environment. "At the pre-show meetings, we're interested in surfaces; glass, screens, structures. It's all about slapback, which is always an issue in stadia. Luckily, it was pretty good, with only a couple of active spots." JPJ mapped the venue in L-Acoustics' Soundvision software and managed to steer the energy off of the problem areas.

One of the big surprises apart from the short timeframe was the fact that the state suddenly has a new stadium sized concert venue. "Now Victoria has a third big outdoor arena, which is great!" enthuses Mats. "There's been a lot of work done at Kardinia Park since it was rebuilt, and hopefully this means we will see

more concerts there. It can be difficult to work around sport at the MCG and Marvel Stadium, so we'd be very happy to work at Kardinia again."

With the resumption of international touring, the gig was a huge psychological boost to the community, and even more significant to the live production sector. "All of our staff are just so happy to be out there working," grins Mats. "They love live sound and there's nothing more fun than having a big PA system to play with. We could do this show, it happened, and there was no COVID cancellation. It is absolutely huge for our industry. My staff was so happy and so was I."

AUDIO

FOH engineer: Bryan Worthen

Monitor Engineer: Ian Beveridge

FOH Console: Yamaha Rivage PM10

Monitor Console: Yamaha Rivage PM10

Main Left Right PA: L-Acoustics K1 with K2 underhang, L-Acoustics SB28 subwoofers

Side Hangs: L-Acoustics K2 and SB28

Infill: L-Acoustics KARA and ARCS

JPJ Audio System Engineer and Crew Chief: Tim Jones

Video

"I was made aware of the gig about three weeks out by our American contacts who were handling the international tour," says Joe Bonanno, CEO of Big Picture Australia and New Zealand. "At the same time, Frontier Touring contacted us. From contact to confirmation was a matter of 48 hours. There were four Americans coming out to handle video; a director, engineer, media server operator, and lead camera. We were to provide a shadow media server operator due to system complexity, as they were only bringing their media, to a one-off show with almost no rehearsal. We supplied a further six crew to complement theirs."

With staff from both Big Picture Sydney and fellow Melbourne NEP brand Creative Technology, it was a combined effort. "There was certainly no struggle in getting anyone to work on this!" reports Joe. "To be working on an international act again, through international partners, with an international crew was a real privilege. It was great to get the band back together and work alongside PRG and JPJ. We all really needed it. It's been a long time since we've had that feeling, and it reignited the flames."

Joe singles out staging and rigging provider Clifton Productions for particular praise. "I think Clifton Productions had the toughest gig in an industry suffering real human resource shortages," he surmises. "Outdoor gigs are complicated because of the construction of the stage, barriers, and lack of any permanent infrastructure that's normally in an arena. Clifton really put the pedal to the metal and got it done."

Joe is seeing the green shoots of the industry returning and is optimistic about the rest of the year. "We've got ourselves set for an extremely busy itinerary at the end of the year that will

VIDEO

Camera System

4K capable & based around Ross Ultrix FR5

3ME Ross Carbonite ULTRA with Touch Drive Panel

Riedel Artist 64 comms matrix

5 Manned Cameras

Panasonic UC4000 4k
(2x Fujinon XA99x Lens)

10 x PTZ - Panasonic HE130s with both FOH and Stage Control positions

6 x POVs - Marshall CV356

disguise system

2 x VX4

12 x 3GSDI inputs into the servers, a mix of direct camera feeds & switcher outputs

Notch effected outputs to upstage & IMAG screens

Signal Management

Three main areas of operation: upstage centre screen processing & media servers, off-stage left camera control, & FOH

Riedel MicroN managing all 3GSDI signal

transport.

Unifi Managed Switch network managing the base network connectivity

LED Screens

Side IMAG screens: ROE MC7 in Acast touring frames, with Brompton Processing, 24' x 18' each

Upstage screen: ROE CB8 in Touring Frames, with Brompton Processing, 48' x 28'

Rain: H2O

Video Crew

d3 Operator: Dale Rehbein

Engineer: Nick Bojdak

LED/Crew Chief: Justin Brown

LED Technician/Camera Operator: Dan Aulich

LED Technician/Camera Operator: Tom Hogan

LED Technician/Camera Operator: Simon Downs

LED Technician: Christopher Irvine

International Crew

Director: Josh Addams

present another range of challenges," he explains. "So let's call Foo Fighters a warm-up gig!"

Lighting

"It was just three weeks from the time we were told to the time we did the gig," recalls Fergal O'Sullivan, Senior Account Manager at PRG. "We got the call on a Friday, and two weeks later we were on site on a Tuesday. Because of

how PRG work, all our looms are permanent, which makes a massive difference as you can pull them off the shelf and two days later you're ready to go from a dimmer and cable perspective. There certainly was a bit of 'how the hell are we going to do this?' but once we got going it was fine."

Foo Fighters LD Dan Hadley is a global PRG client and came straight to the company with the spec. There were minor substitutions for



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LIGHTING

Lighting Designer: Dan Hadley
 61 x Martin MAC Quantum Wash
 41 x PRG Best Boy
 28 x Clay Paky Scenius Unico
 19 x GLP X4
 18 x GLP X4 Bar 20
 25 x GLP JDC
 6 x PRG Ground Control
 2 x Robert Juliat 4K Lancelot
 34 x Nitec Duet Blinder
 3 x grandMA3 full size

availability with a couple of fixtures swapped, but nothing significant.

Again, Clifton Productions come in for high praise from PRG. "Kardinia Park has never put on a show, so I was preparing myself mentally to walk into a nightmare," admits Fergal. "All we were hearing before we got there was 'building site, limited access' and so on. Normally it takes at least four days to build stages on this scale. We were prepared to be standing around waiting for floors to go down. However, when we got to site, there wasn't a Cliftons staff member in sight, because the whole thing was done!"

"It was just phenomenal," praises Fergal. "I was blown away, especially considering we haven't worked on these kind of gigs for two years. All the delay towers were up, the stage was 100%, the loading dock was ready to go, and Cliftons had built a track through the building site to the loading dock. Everyone had their A-Game on."

As for the punters and the rest of the crew, the return of a huge international act was an emotional moment. "The moment that gave me goosebumps was when Foo Fighters first came out," confides Fergal. "Dave Grohl just stood there for what felt like an eternity, and the crowd screamed at the highest level you could imagine for at least three minutes. It felt like a mass emotional release from the last two years, and Dave just stood there and let them go for it. He then walked out to the wings, came back, and just stood there again. It was phenomenal. I've toured all my life and never seen anything like it; a crowd going that nuts for that length of time before a note is even played."

Staging

The heroes of the hour, Clifton Productions, were responsible for supply and build of the stage, the FOH position, 20 metre delay towers, egress stair walkways from the venue into the food service areas, engineering compliance, and dealing with building regulator the Victorian Builder's Association.

"It was a big push for everyone involved,"



Foo Fighters. Photo Credit: Brett Schewitz

states Adrian Potts, National Manager of Staging for Clifton Productions. "We already had a full calendar, which really tested the crew. Our Hercules roof hasn't gone out since COVID. The stage design was based on a previous Foo Fighters tour because of the short time frame, and that really helped in getting everything coordinated, with quick sign-offs to get things moving."

It was a full company effort, with Adrian based in Geelong for a week dealing with back-end compliance. Robertai McKibbin was the project manager responsible for delivering pretty much everything, and Jason Marrable coordinated trucking, flights, and accommodation for fly-in crew, not just for the Kardinia Park gig, but the five other jobs Clifton was running at the same time, including Day on the Green in nearby Mount Duneed.

"We had 40 crew flown in from NSW and QLD staying in Werribee," reveals Adrian. "Getting that many skilled scaffolders at short notice was a feat in itself, especially considering so many have left the industry."

Ultimately, a four-day build was compressed into two, with crew working around the clock. "I'm immensely proud of our crew and everyone else involved for the amazing effort," praises Adrian. "And the show itself was amazing. It's a great venue that's easy to get in, get around, and get out. I'm excited to see what the future holds for Kardinia Park as a regular concert venue."



Amy Taylor, Amyl and The Snffers.
 Photo Credit: Paul Rovere

STAGE

25m wide, six post 15m trim Hercules stage with approx. 1000 stage decks

4 x 20m Delay Towers, 2 with Gondolas
 3 x Camera Risers



THE PUNTERS PERSPECTIVE

Dedicated to Taylor Hawkins, 1972 - 2022

The Meanies, Amyl and The Sniffers, Foo Fighters, Friday 4th March 2022

Foo Fighters surprised everyone with their announcement that they would be playing at Geelong's Kardinia Park in a week. It doesn't happen like that; we normally must wait 10-12 months before a gig. This is a state government initiative, and who knows what it cost, but God bless them for doing it, and bring on more. I have been locked down and depressed for two years. The idea that I could see one of my new favourite bands was mesmerising, and we had to go.

First up, let me say I'm sorry I didn't catch the Meanies. Apologies to Link and Wally. We just couldn't get there on time after work; it was an impossible task.

We did get there just in time for Amyl and the Sniffers. Being a lover of female punk singers, they were always going to be on my radar. Lockdowns have made it hard to follow bands, but I've tried with the help of my son, and I've found their music mesmerising. I tried talking to my son about who to compare them to; Joan Jett and the Blackhearts came up, as did Hole. Amyl's Amy Taylor is an energetic force of nature. Her energy spreads like COVID, and you can't help banging along.

Amyl and The Sniffers song 'Maggot' was

amazing and so wrong; "I am who I am underneath the red light drowning in it. And I remember what I said under the red light." And who could go past 'Don't' Need a C**t (Like You To Love Me)? Is it an act, or a persona? Who cares. As my son said, "She's so cool." 'Hertz' was the showstopper; she smashed it. On the way back to Melbourne, it was song of the night most sung on the train. Amy Taylor was having a ball and you could tell. The audience, only half full at that stage, went mental for the band. The old punk in me that can't help admiring a band that finishes with "See you c***s!" as a sign off - authentic as f**k.

And so, we move on to the main dish of the night, Foo Fighters. As a bit of a back story, I wasn't a huge fan before 2018. I loved Nirvana like I loved my Nanna and I cried more when Kurt died than either of my grandparents. I saw them at the first Big Day Out, and I saw them at The Palais. The first time I saw Foo Fighters on purpose was in 2018. My kids, then aged ten and seven loved them, but I was sick of the repetitious FM radio play, and they became ear fuzzi to me.

That first gig was with Clowns and Weezer back in 2018. They were amazing. They smashed the stage and I fell in love with Dave,

Pat, Taylor, Chris, Nate, and Rami, especially Dave. In Nirvana, he was the dorky guy up the back to me, even more so than Kris. He was the other. I loved when Pat Smear joined Nirvana for the MTV sessions; for me he became the coolest person in the band, and is still the coolest person in Foo Fighters.

'Times Like These' was Foo Fighters opener, and a total tearjerker. My son and I both completely lost it and bawled our eyes out. COVID hasn't been kind. We've all been on our own, and the feeling of connection and the love of live music was inescapable. There were tears everywhere.

For Dave Grohl (I'm using him as shorthand for the band) to think it wasn't going to be a tearjerking banger would be naive. He's a showman and he's playing us. Next up 'The Pretender' went down a treat, as did 'Learn To Fly'. Dave made a point of dedicating the show to Michael Gudinski and highlighted how many times the band has visited our shores through Frontier Touring and the friendship they shared. Taylor Hawkins had a picture of Michael on his kick drum for the night, reminding everyone of how this happened. We now know this was one of the last gigs he would play; RIP.

There was a little flat spot in the middle of the show with the newish songs 'Medicine at Midnight', 'No Son of Mine' and 'Shame Shame', but that's to be expected given we've been in lockdown for so long and so out of touch with the world.

One of my highlights was Dave and the band doing the Dee Gee's version of 'You Should be Dancing,' by the Bee Gees. It lit the night up. I know it's been a side project of the band after watching them troll the Westboro Church. This was authentic and loved by the crowd.

Taylor Hawkins' version of Queen's 'Somebody to Love' was astonishing, which makes it even harder to reconcile that such a vital performer could leave us just three weeks later.

I hate 'Big Me' as a song and it's what turned me off Foo Fighters initially. It's stupid and I don't know why it's in the set, but there it is right at the end. I think they should chuck it out, but judging by the sing-along, I'm in the minority.

The last three songs, 'Best of You', 'Monkey Wrench', and 'Everlong' were amazing. 'Everlong' made me weep again for the fourth time that night.

We are so lucky after all the shite we've been through to have the greatest live rock band in the world turn up in Geelong at a week's notice. Why, how, who cares how it happened, and it was the best rainy night ever. Thank you to the state government, Foo Fighters, Amyl and The Sniffers, The Meanies, and Frontier



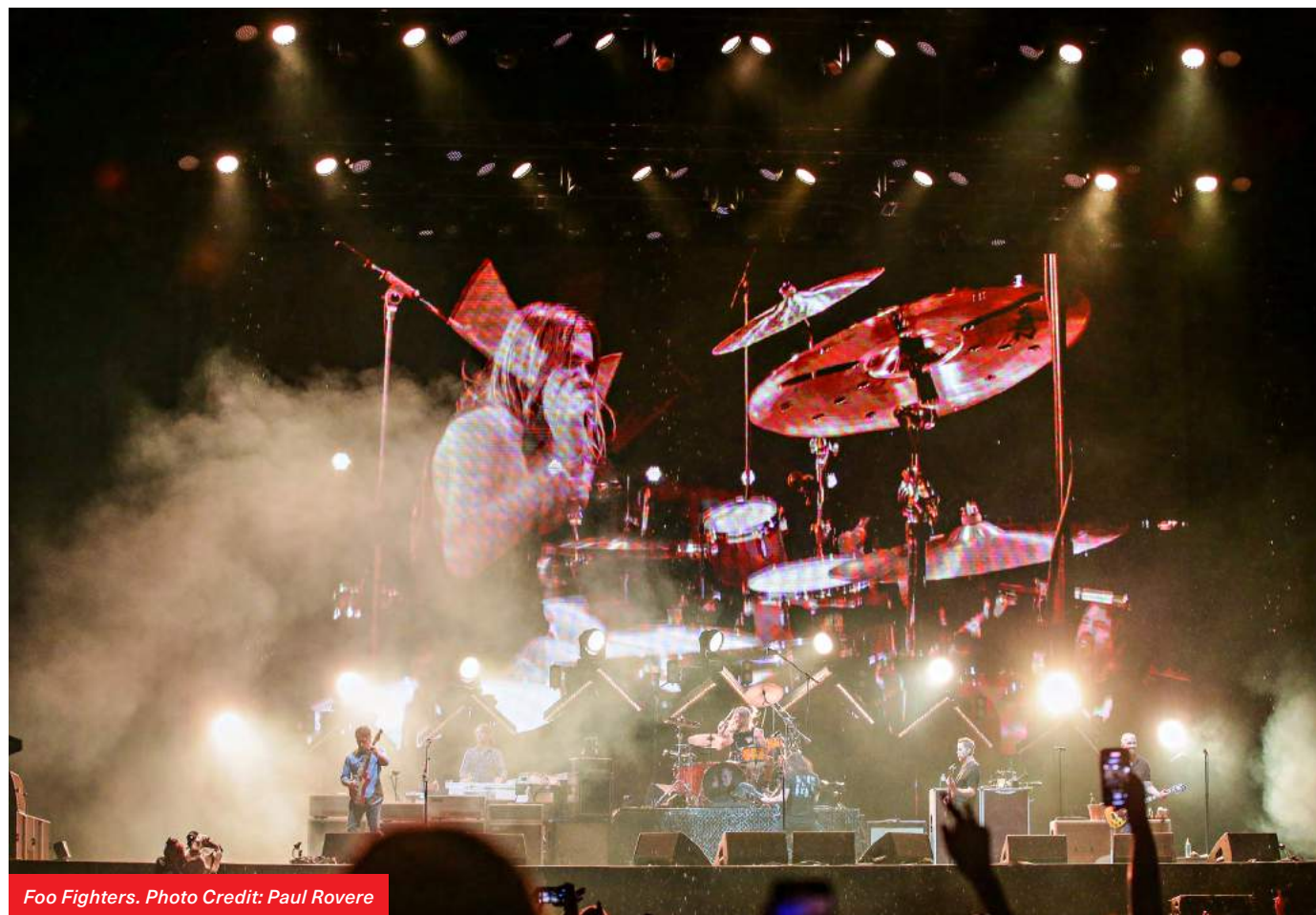
Foo Fighters. Photo Credit: Brett Schewitz

Touring for turning on one of the greatest shows ever, in the pouring rain for thirty-five thousand people at a moment's notice. Build it again and we will come.

The night ended with a huge picture of Michael Gudinski on the screens and 'Don't Change' by INXS playing on the PA as we shuffled through the empty beer cups and made our way to the train station. Vale Taylor Hawkins. I'm sure you're up there with Michael, and Always Number One.



The Meanies. Photo Credit: Paul Rovere



Foo Fighters. Photo Credit: Paul Rovere

WOMADELAIDE 2022

The 30th anniversary of the festival revives the industry



I can't believe that in 30 years, I have never made it to WOMADelaide. From 1994 to 1996, I lived across the road, but was a dirt-poor student and couldn't afford a ticket. I somehow avoided ever working on it, too. And what a loss I feel now. WOMADelaide is the most extraordinary live music environment I have ever experienced. It's so fitting that this is the first major festival back as pandemic restrictions fade.

It's almost impossible to imagine WOMAD happening anywhere else in Australia. The sheer scale of Botanic Park and the fact that the powers-that-be allow it to be taken over like this couldn't be replicated anywhere else. For example, when Melbourne's Princes Park hosted the Big Day Out for one year in the early 2000s, there was so much pearl-clutching from the nearby Carlton Resident's Association that it was never allowed back. Nowhere anywhere

near a CBD in Australia could host something of this size in such agreeable and practical surroundings.

I walked on site not long after opening and went straight to the Foundation Stage to see a group of drummers from the Cook Islands. Seeing the enormous line arrays hanging either side of stage, I almost cried. I hadn't been in front of a big outdoor PA for two years.

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I caught up with NW Group's Australian General Manager Mario Valenti and WOMAD Head of Audio Ian Shapcott at the FOH mix position of Stage 2 early on Sunday afternoon, as Melbourne-based Argentinian band The New Monos got the crowd on their feet dancing. I have never seen two techs look so happy to be at a gig. I couldn't wipe the smile off my face either.

NW Group are three years into their contract as technical supplier, responsible for all audio across seven stages and seven activations. They also supply video and lighting, with a little help in the lighting department this year from Chameleon, who supplied Stage 1 due to the sheer amount going on around the country in 'Mad March'.

With NW Group a heavily L-Acoustics house, their products grace every stage at WOMAD.

"The first thing we do is use L-Acoustics' Soundvision software to map the whole site," explained Ian Shapcott. "It shows all the bleeds, and all the coverage. There's a lot of Soundvision work in preplanning, and it's mostly about how the stages will affect each other. As such, every sub stack is cardioid on the main stages. We're luck here that there's a natural hill and lots of trees insulating the nearest residents in Hackney and College Park, and on the other sides there's the Zoo and more park. We've never had a complaint from residents or the client."

Some household names, including Paul Kelly, Goanna, Courtney Barnett, and The Cat Empire ensure there's plenty of rider-driven demand on the console side of things. "Stages 1, 2, 3 and 7 are very rider driven," confirms Ian, "Especially Stage 1. We have

AVID S6Ls and Profiles, and DiGiCo SD5s, SD7s, and SD10s, two at a time at FOH in an AB set-up, due to riders. Stage 1's monitor engineers are usually with the band, Stage 2 is 50% us, and we're doing monitors on every other stage. Stages 4, 5, 6 are monitors from FOH running Yamaha digital desks; eight sends to wedges and four sends to ears."

One of the most impressive things about the festival, which runs four days with 650 artists performing, is the metronomic precision that all of the acts stop and start across the site. You could set your watch by it. How on earth does stage management get so many cats to walk in a parade?

"It's partly down to how long the festival has been running," offered Ian. "They've worked out the distances between stages, and how crowd movement between them works. When



Baker Boy. Photo credit: Saige Prime



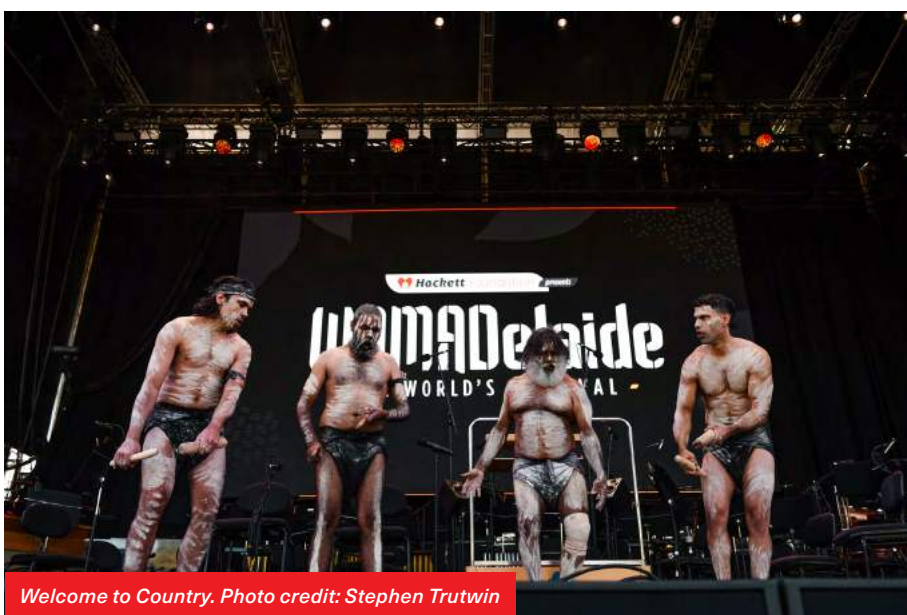
Baker Boy. Photo credit: John Hemmings



Shaolin Afronauts. Photo credit: Saige Prime



Sokel. Photo credit: Stephen Trutwin



Welcome to Country. Photo credit: Stephen Trutwin

Stage 1 is going, so are 4 and 6. When 2, 3, 5 and 7 are running they don't interfere with each other. There's a central Stage Manager who calls to all the Assistant Stage Managers when to start and finish. All of the Stage Managers at WOMAD are excellent. They're all helpful and are bang-on with their times."

"The biggest challenge of WOMADelaide is the sheer scale of Botanic Park," said Mario. "You can't drive up to most of the stages, and you're restricted by the ring roads around the site. Everything is spread out so far. We can come in with trucks, but as we get closer to the first day, everything that's not part of the festival gets pulled back."

"You can only get semis to two stages," added Ian. "The only vehicles you can get to the other stages are rigids. And because it's the Botanic

Garden, you must be careful of the trees and grass."

With 57 NW Group crew on site and human resources in short supply across the industry, getting the festival fully staffed has been a challenge. "This is a full company effort," illustrated Mario. "We have a couple of operators from New Zealand, and staff from Melbourne and Sydney. As COVID restrictions have wound back, everything has gone 'boom!'. We're just coming out of supplying Mardi Gras in Sydney. Our resources are deep, but they're stretched right now."

Experiencing the unique and vast WOMAD, exactly two years to the day after 'Black Friday' shuttered live events in Australia overnight, was a cathartic experience and went a long way to treating the latent PTSD lurking in all of us. "The is the last festival I

worked on pre-COVID, and this is my first festival back," observed Ian poignantly. The sheer joy in returning to our collective passion was written large across Mario's face. "The crew are right into it!" he grinned.

AUDIO

Head of Audio: Ian 'Shappy' Schapcott, NW Group

Senior Project Manager: John Watterson, NW Group

L-Acoustics product deployed: 40xK2, 12x KUDO, 64xdV-DOSC, 16xKIVA II, 4xA15, 20xARCS, 18xARCS WIDE, 10xX8, 10x108P, 24x12XT, 30xKS-28, 8xK1-SB, 28x SB218, 16xdV-SUB, 12xSB18

Audio Consoles:

DiGiCo - 1x SD7, 1xSD5, 1xSD10, 3xSD8, 1xSD9, 1xSD11

AVID - 2xS6L, 1xProfile

Yamaha - 3xPM5D-RH, 3xQL5, 2xQL1

LIGHTING

Project Manager: Luke van Roy, NW Group.

NW Group managed and supplied lighting across the park. Due to the amount of work across the country, NW Group approached their long-time friends at Chameleon to look after the supply of Stage 1.

Stage 1: 120 fixtures as the main festival package with floor packages for L.A.B., Paul Kelly, Courtney Barnett and The Cat Empire, adding another 148 fixtures.

Chameleon crew: Lewis Gersbach and Michael O'Conner.

Stages 2 - 7 and all activations supplied and managed by NW Group.

VIDEO

Project Manager: Wes Chapple, NW Group

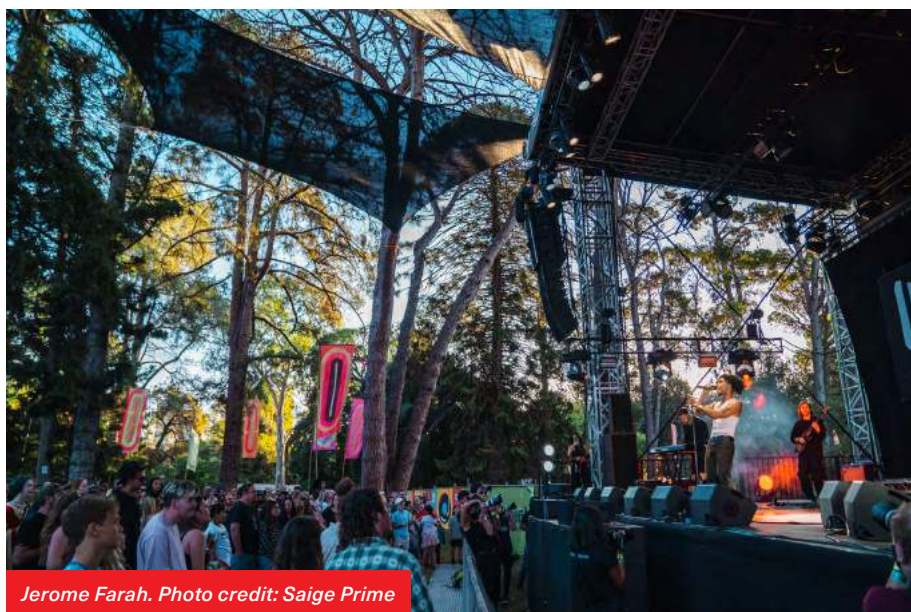
Shadow AV for LED, and TASA for cameras and broadcast on Stage 1, 2 and 3

Stage 1 upstage LED: Leyard P3.9, 9.5m x 5.5m, 19x11 panels, resolution 2432x1408

Stage 1 delay LED: Leyard P3.9, 4.5mx 2.5m, 9x5 panels, resolution 1152x640

Stage 2 delay LED: Leyard P3.9, 4.5mx2.5m, 9x5, panels, resolution 1152x640

Stage 6 backdrop LED: Leyard P3.9, 4.5mx2.5m, 9x5, panels, resolution 1152x640



Jerome Farah. Photo credit: Saige Prime



Taikoz. Photo credit: John Hemmings



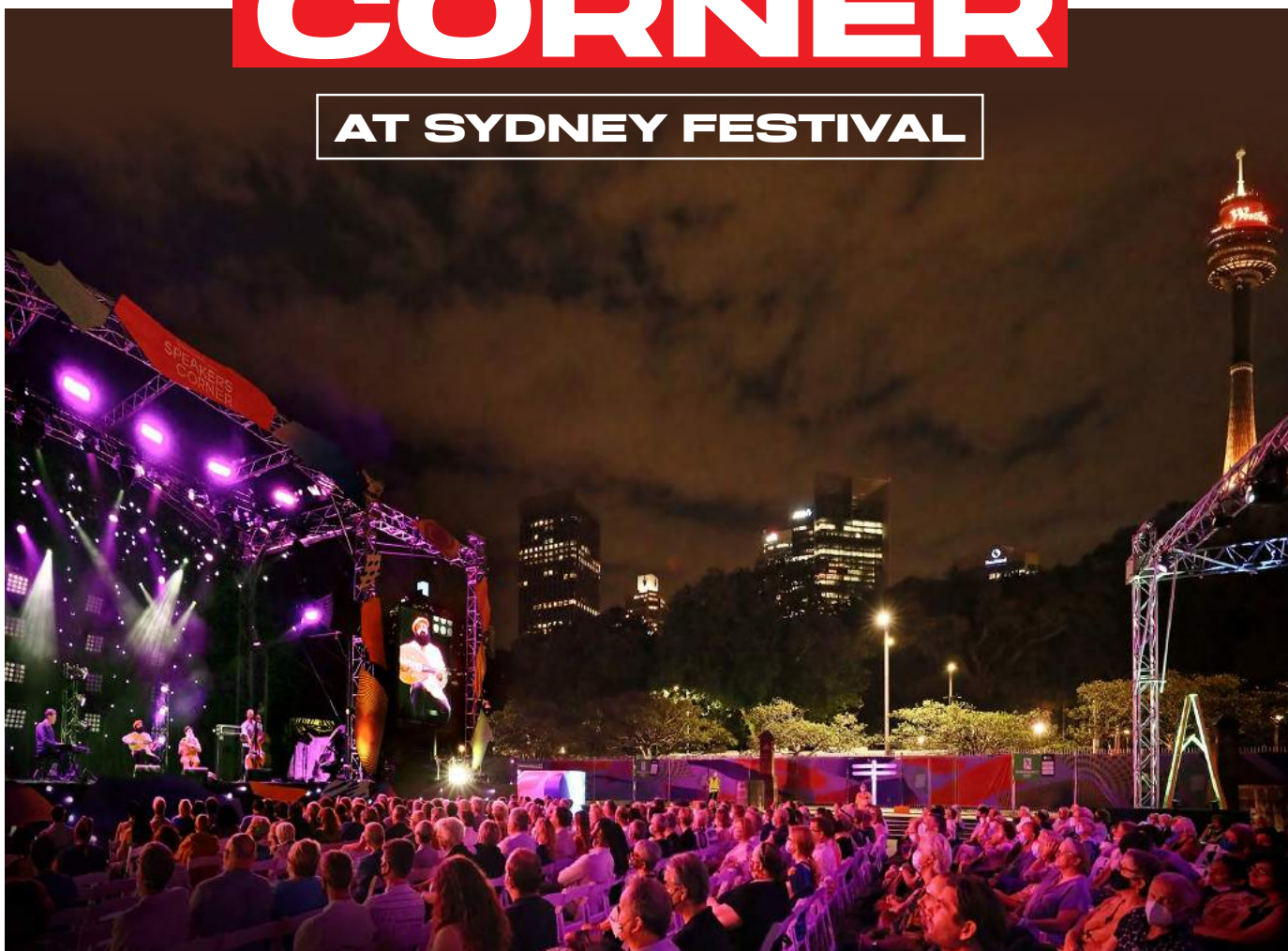
NW Group's Ian 'Shappy' Schapcott



NW Group's Mario Valenti

SPEAKER'S CORNER

AT SYDNEY FESTIVAL



Set at the corner of College St and William St on the forecourt of St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney's CBD, Speaker's Corner has provided a platform for ranters, ravers, and revolutionaries for over a century. In that spirit, the COVID and controversy plagued 2022 edition of Sydney Festival set up a live music and performance hub on the site, set to host everything from spoken word, cabaret, punk rock, jazz, EDM, big band, and classical.

Speaker's Corner was a seated outdoor concert venue for around 500 designed specifically to keep COVID at bay. With the location smack bang in the middle of the city it was accessible, while subject to an extremely

strict set of noise restrictions imposed by council. So how do you keep both the rockers and the residents happy?

Felix Abrahams designed a PA solution on behalf of technical provider Coda Audio. "My first reaction was that this is a challenge," ponders Felix. "We were definitely going to have to bring the sound to the audience, but there were only so many things we could do due to the venue restrictions. There were also the complications of the weight loading issues of the St Mary's forecourt."

With a car park and a pool below the forecourt, the weight restrictions were serious. "Once the truss structure was raised, it was at a fixed height," elaborates Felix. "After it was up, access had to be via scaffold. We weren't allowed scissor lifts, which was honestly more of a problem for lighting than us, but still posed challenges with cabling."

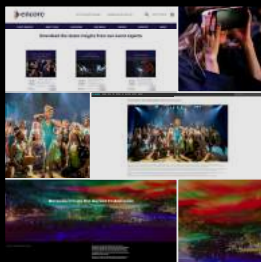
With apartments, a hotel, and other 'sensitive receivers' (in the language of noise restrictions) nearby, parameters had to be carefully calibrated. "After we established what the real numbers were in terms of

acceptable dB limits, we could move forward with the design," continues Felix. "We quickly decided on a main hang and two delay lines, which we established by measuring in software what propagation would be like to the nearest sensitive receiver, then finding a balance between on-site sound intensity and transmission to nearest sensitive receiver."

Felix's design utilised a main left-right hang of two Meyer Sound JM-1P flown each side of the front of the stage, supported by a front fill of one Meyer Sound JM-1P sitting on one Meyer Sound M3D-SUB per side. The two left-right delay hangs, from the truss a third and two thirds of the way down the audience respectively, consisted of three elements of Meyer Sound Leopard line array elements per hang, for a total of 12. Sitting on the ground at the base of the four vertical truss points that held up the grid, on the same plane as the Leopard delay hangs, were four Meyer Sound M3D-SUB. All subs on site were cardioid. The distance from the main left-right PA to the second delay hang was 34 metres.

"The predictability of the newer Meyer Sound loudspeakers like Leopard is extraordinarily

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useful when there's restrictions riding on the line," observes Felix. "And that absolutely proved to be the case when we got on site. I met with PKA Acoustics who were doing the noise monitoring, and it was all as predicted. I expected more variance in the built environment, but it was as per the design. The extra weight of the powered boxes paid off in accuracy."

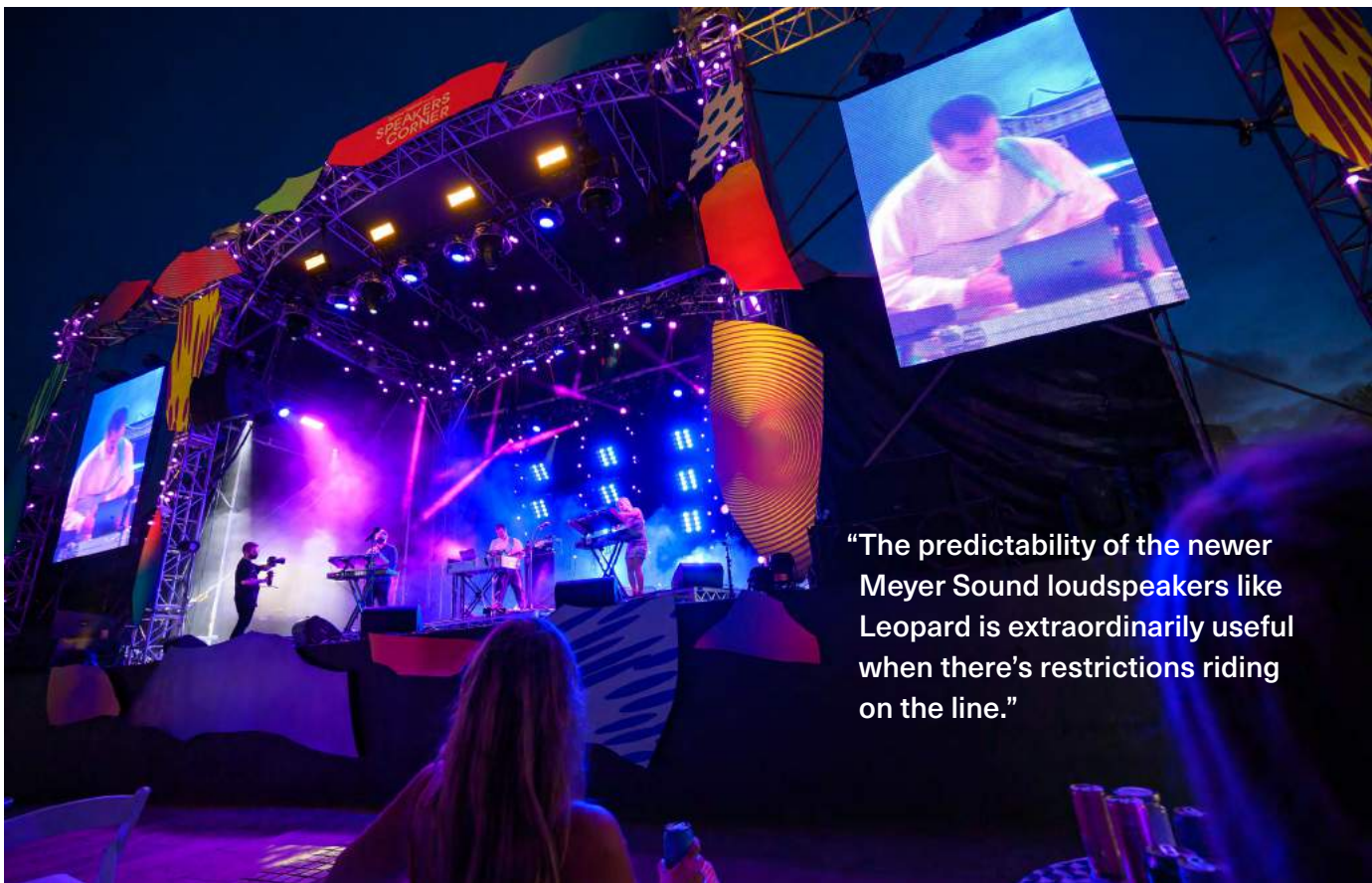
One of the other difficulties in using self-powered loudspeakers outdoors is of course weatherproofing. Coda Audio's very own director, Michael Wilkie, engineered a custom solution. "It's amazing what you can achieve

with plywood, plastic, and gaffa tape," chuckles Michael. Despite some very serious rain during the run, everything survived; a few days after the bump-out, Felix used the same components on another job, and all was as it should be.

In addition to the PA, Coda Audio also provided the rest of the system; a Yamaha CL5 mixer at FOH, and a venerable Yamaha PM5D-RH on monitors. Stage monitoring was a combination of EV Xw12 wedges and Shure PSM 1000 IEMs. The PA was processed through a Meyer Sound Galileo.

Kicking off with a bang with punk rockers Amyl and The Sniffers on 6 January, the venue ran six nights a week, working its way through every conceivable genre before ending at the opposite side of the musical spectrum with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Percussion and String Players on 30 January.

"The onsite engineers thought there was excellent translation from front to back," reports Felix. "Guest engineers including Sydney Symphony's thought coverage was really good. Despite the restrictions, we were all very pleased with the system."



"The predictability of the newer Meyer Sound loudspeakers like Leopard is extraordinarily useful when there's restrictions riding on the line."





BLINDNESS: BINAURAL AUDIO, SCARY AF

Adelaide Festival have really embraced their edginess over the last couple of iterations, with the 'AF' logo plastered all over town. It's confronting, as was the Donmar Warehouse's acclaimed UK production *Blindness*, which I experienced (enjoyed is NOT the right word) in the hauntingly decayed space of The Queens Theatre in the centre of Adelaide's CBD. Presented by Arts Projects Australia, locals Novatech provided the production infrastructure, including lighting, rigging, audio, vision, and control.

Based on the 1995 novel by Portuguese author José Saramago, *Blindness* is the story of a pandemic. One that sends an entire city blind. Society collapses. Very, very bad things happen. It's like *Squid Game* meets *Contagion*. There are warnings on the door about content before you walk in. They are justified.

All of this might be considered a little ho-hum if you're used to confrontational theatre, but here's the interesting thing about the show; there are no live actors. The entire production is a narration performed by British actor Juliet Stevenson, recorded binaurally, and played back to the audience via headphones. Most of it occurs, naturally, in full blackout.

After two years of boring my wife with my 'There will be no significant pandemic art! Shakespeare hardly mentioned the Black Plague! No one's interested!' speech, I was proven pretty spectacularly wrong. *Blindness* is not only about a pandemic, everything about the way it physically functions is because of a pandemic. The audience are physically

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CHRISTCHURCH
WINTER 2024

WELLINGTON
WINTER 2024

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WINTER 2024

PRESENTED BY

Kate & Julius
PRESENTS

BLINDNESS:

Donmar Warehouse Credits

With the voice of Juliet Stevenson

Based on the novel by José Saramago

Adapted by Simon Stephens

Directed by Walter Meierjohann

Sound Designers: Ben and Max Ringham

Designer: Lizzie Clachan

Lighting Designer: Jessica Hung Han Yun

Production Consultant: Professor Hannah Thompson

Resident Assistant Director: Sara Aniqah Malik



Arts Projects Australia Credits

Presented by Arts Projects Australia

Producer: Daniel Vorrasi

Production Manager: Mark Muller

Lighting & Creative Associate: Susan Grey-Gardner

Sound Associate & Technical Manager: Luke Hill

Installation Operators & Stage Management: Lucy Mitchell, Chanel Duval and Deb Shaw

Novatech

Project Manager: Michael Roberts

Technical System Integration & Design: Menk Novakovic and Rowan Lee



segregated and can sit on chairs next to each other if they're from the same household. We were all wearing masks. There are no actors sweating or breathing at you. The headphones the audience wear are supplied in double quantity because as one set is used, the other set is being disinfected backstage.

The show is structured in three acts, which are defined in the amazing sound design by Ben and Max Ringham. We open with some background story, and the narration in your head is being played back in simple stereo. Marking the end of the first section and the beginning of things going very wrong indeed, the Wahlberg DMX-controlled winches move, the LED tubes come down in bright white to just at eye height to encase you in a hellish prison, and everything goes dark. The narration then switches to binaural and it's like the actor is actually sitting next to you, or moving around the space, or, most realistically, whispering in your ear. You feel like you would actually touch her if you reached out. The adjective 'disturbing' doesn't do the effect justice.

Like another tech I talked to about the show, I often found myself concentrating on how the show was functioning technically to distract myself from the actual content. I think if I'd been an average punter with no idea how these effects were created, I might have ended up foetal on the floor.

The real genius in the sound design is accepting the limitations of the equipment and the medium, and then working around them. The first artistic choice is the pairing of the actor and the headphones. The original Donmar Warehouse production in London used 'Silent Disco' headphones rented from a specialist company. They can receive three stereo channels, which allows for the binaural mix, an audio described version, and two mono summed channels. Using the same tech in Adelaide, these are not high quality studio headphones. But you only ever hear a female voice through them, and there's basically nothing going on under 250Hz. This makes the most of the spatial effect.

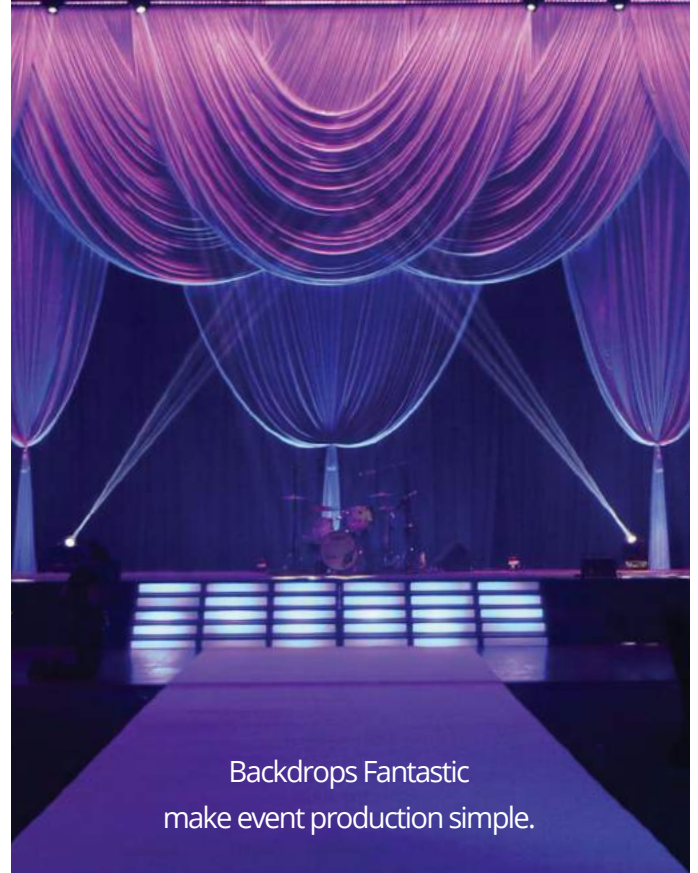
The headphone narration is supported by sound effects, ambience, and music that runs through a surround system encircling the audience. The Adelaide production utilised an L-Acoustics system of eight X8s around the audience perimeter, two X15 HIQs flown above, two SB18 subs and two SB218 subs, plus two 112P powered 12"s at the dock door. This system does all the heavy lifting in the lower frequencies and creates a viscerally perceptible aural environment outside the headphones. Especially for the gunshots and explosions.

Jessica Hung Han Yun's lighting design is more art installation than theatre piece. The 113 Colordreamer LED tubes on winches fly in, fly out, take on different shapes, blind you, lead you, and threaten you. The lighting rig, which also includes 50 ETC Source 4 LED Lustrs, 14 Kupo cyc floods, four Selecon Arena Frenels, and an LED strobe, is run off an ETC Gio 4K. The DMX controlled winches are run by a separate High End Systems HedgeHog 4N.

At the heart of the whole production, a Novatech OneSystem Constellation rack (a gig-in-box we wrote about back in CX171 in July 2021) houses the computer that's running QLab for show playback, the video system that monitors the four infrared cameras around the audience for safety, processes and distributes the audio via a Yamaha TF Rack, and triggers the lighting system via MIDI.

In the end, we're led back into the light through the dock doors. The audience on the day I attended shuffled out in silence. Everyone has some kind of PTSD caused by COVID, especially in our industry. A show like Blindness, running in the middle of a major arts festival, is part of a healing process. As we get back to work making art, we're reminded that one of its main aims is to help us make sense of and process our experiences. Especially the traumatic ones.

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DEARVR MIX:

SPATIAL
HEADPHONE
COMPENSATION

Let me just state for the record, before we dive headlong into a discussion about mixing in headphones versus speakers and the benefits of binaural room emulators like dearVR MIX, that I don't buy into most aspects of the arguments for or against at all. I mix in a combination of headphones and speakers all the time because most consumers of audio listen on both.

One is not the wrong way, and the other right. Both listening formats have their strengths and shortcomings, depending on where your music will ultimately be replayed. For example, I would argue that a headphone mix made specifically for people who exclusively wear headphones is the perfect monitoring format. Who in their right mind would invest in speakers and rooms if their listening audience was always in headphones?

Obviously, you wouldn't bother.

But the point is that very few people listen exclusively in headphones, so the argument is moot (or in this case, possibly mute).

For me, the discussion about why headphones are inherently 'bad' and speakers placed perfectly in a million-dollar mixing room are inherently 'good' is flawed logic, but we don't have the time to discuss this during our short software review.

That stated, when you're mixing in headphones for extended periods of time there's no doubt about it; not only can the experience itself be exhausting and claustrophobic, if your mix is ultimately destined to be replayed on speakers, which nearly everything we ever produce eventually is, your ability to judge tone, depth and particularly width can sometimes be compromised by headphone monitoring.

If you're wearing headphones virtually non-stop, and that's not necessarily a choice you've made, the dearVR MIX plug-in is great at allowing you to regain the sensation that you're working in a room rather than trapped in the fundamentally different listening 'non-space' that is headphones.

A stereo image produced by two speakers in a room is perceived by both ears at different times, tones, and levels. In headphones this natural phenomenon goes out the window, which is why when you're mixing in them, if you're not careful, many judgement calls around panning, reverb, tone and dynamics can too.



The dearVR MIX software convinces your brain that your natural gift for binaural perception is functioning normally, and that your innate capacity to listen in free space hasn't been thrown on the scrap heap, and it does this well.

The layout of the plugin is fairly straightforward, albeit somewhat empty looking. I'm not quite sure why three quarters of the UI needs to be taken up with showing a couple of virtual Neumann speakers floating in free space, but there you go.

There are four different virtual speaker setups: a Mono left input (that's panned centre and retains all the room emulation features of the plug-in), a Mono Summed, a Stereo, and a Wide Stereo image, all easily selected via a small menu on the lower left quarter of the user interface.

On the right-hand side there's an Output section that offers a master gain control, and a somewhat quirky 'Head Rotation' control, which allows you to spin in your virtual chair in

the sweet spot. Though this might sound a bit gimmicky, I actually found it capable of other things, like trimming left and right, although I'd wager this is a potentially dangerous use of this feature. You could also potentially use the Head Rotation control in a mix on a single instrument, where it could function, via automation, like a Leslie!

Meanwhile, placing dearVR MIX on the stereo mix bus of your DAW (where it's intended to reside) allows you to listen to a 'room', actually two Mix rooms and a dryer Analytic room, as well as check how your mixes might fare through basic emulations of a car, a club, a home theatre, a kitchen, living room, and stadium. Each of these options allows you to further control the 'Ambience' and 'Focus' of these different soundstages, exaggerating at your discretion how each of these types of spaces might impact your mix.

The Ambience control allows you to add more or less virtual room sensation to the headphones via a slider, from 'Neutral' on

the far left to 'Experience' on the right. The Focus control meanwhile tends to impact your discrete sense of left and right, with 'Clarity' on the far left of the slider sounding more phase coherent than 'Localized' to the right, which to my ears tends to sound quite smeared.

Though they work well, to my thinking these controls are a bit vague overall in terms of what they describe happening to your audio. I'd have preferred something a bit more scientific and explicit, but perhaps that's just me.

The same feeling applies to the Headphone Compensation selection menu; that part of the software where you get to choose from a large list of headphones and select the pair you're wearing (I was using Audio-Technica ATH-R70xs). This section offers additional gain trim, two phase options (linear and 'min'), as well as a basic high and low shelving EQ, neither of which tell you where their crossover point is set. Given that there are acres of space on the UI, maybe Dear Reality could have been more explicit about these controls, and avoided abbreviating Minimal to 'Min'... or is that short for Miniscule, or Minutes? Dunno.

Regardless of that gripe, the software works amazingly well. Particularly when you take the time to finesse the two main slider controls that put you in virtual space – but not too much space – the action of bypassing and then re-engaging the software shows you just how claustrophobic headphones can be. Once you've used the software for a substantial amount of time, turning it back off is downright horrid!

But to me this is the big question: when do you turn dearVR MIX off and when do you leave it on?

It's a dramatic move, putting anything across a mix bus, whether it be a compressor, an EQ or in this case a room emulator. But if the job of this software is specifically to allow you to work in headphones as though you're in a control room in front of speakers, when you're done and ready to print the mix, do you bypass it first?

From what I've been hearing thus far in headphones and speakers, yes you certainly would. But I suspect not everyone will agree with this assertion. Maybe there will be occasions where it might be preferable to leave it on, especially if you're using it in ways the maker never intended, like on a particular sound or subgroup within a mix.

Either way, dearVR MIX is an interesting tool, one that's designed to compensate for a specific problem that headphones throw up. Like so many plugins on the market, however, how many different ways dearVR MIX is ultimately applied to people's work beyond the original intentions of the manufacturer, only time will tell.



INSTALLATION



BARED FOOTWEAR SYDNEY

Anna Baird created Bared Footwear thirteen years ago to create shoes that not only look good, but were also good for your feet, the planet, and the communities that work in the shoe production process. With two existing store locations in Melbourne CBD, Bared Footwear were looking to expand with a flagship store in Sydney.

After many months looking, Anna Baird found the perfect location in Sydney's CBD. The King Street boutique is a two-storey masterpiece featuring extensive timber panelling and floor-to-ceiling windows.

The design was inspired by the colonial heritage precinct across the road while incorporating reconciliation, public accessibility and sustainability into the overall design.

Once the architects (FJMT) and interior designers ACRD had created the aesthetic vision, Affective Building Services were engaged to bring the project to life for a client with an eye for design and detail.

Amber Technology's Technical Sales and Support (TSS) team were heavily involved in the project, with key focusses on the placement design of the Renkus Heinz speakers and JTS RF wireless antennas, as well as providing both installation and post-sales support.

The client was looking for a very simple to use but high-end audio solution, with a particular attention to the placement of speakers, and the overall aesthetics of the proposed loudspeakers.

Part of the audio brief was to have the ability to host in-store events with DJs, plus the ability to have streamlined control of the overall store

which has a high attention to detail and a keen focus on customer satisfaction.

The store's layout, high ceilings, and timber flooring were all challenging for the AV design. Keeping the aesthetics consistent for the boutique was of utmost importance, which created challenges for both antennas and loudspeaker placements throughout the location. Placement of subwoofers also proved to be a challenge, and placements underneath seating in the venue solved the issue for the brief.

The key feature of the audio design of this project was the selection of Renkus Heinz compact CX41 speakers. The CX41 delivers



big sound for small form factor. They were chosen for their compact size that delivers outstanding performance. The miniature, space-saving design delivered not only the hi fidelity required but also complemented the aesthetics of the project.

XILICA Solaro QR1 provided the simple-to-use DSP head end and control centre. Solaro QR1 enables frictionless communication anywhere with an ultra-small footprint so that it can be mounted in a variety of discreet locations (such as under tables, behind a display or in a dropped ceiling) and is powered by PoE. In Bared Footwear, the Solaro QR1 was rack mounted in an equipment rack.

The MC2 T1000 amplifier is specifically designed for the fixed installation market and was paired with the Sonance Dual 10" Bandpass Subwoofer. Both were selected for their compact and high output form factor, plus ease of placements and fidelity delivered.

The JTS RF wireless microphone kit consisted of an RU-8011DB receiver and RU-850LTH handheld transmitter plus half wave antennas. This allowed the user to roam over the two floors of the boutique. Lift shafts and other high-density material throughout the build were challenging for radio frequency, and the JTS system worked effectively to overcome this challenge.

"We appreciate Amber Technology's positive work support which they gave to the entire team working on this project," said Matias Garrido, Affective Building Services' Project Manager. "We are amazed at the speed and quality of work Amber supplied with the challenges and uncertainties we faced on a daily basis. Not to forget the challenges posed by a state lockdown, construction lockdown, restrictions, and nation-wide delays and shortages on building material. The ultimate smoothness which we have achieved in this project is only because of Amber's support for our team."

INSTALLATION



GLOW CHURCH

GOLD COAST

Glow Church is a contemporary church founded by Pastors Joel and Ellen Cave on the Gold Coast. Glow has grown steadily, increasing to include multiple presences in Australia, the UK, South Korea and the USA. Clear messaging and an engaging worship experience have always been important within the church service experience at Glow. This translates to a practical requirement for technology and equipment to help deliver these elements with consistency and uncompromising quality.

Having worked with Australian integrator Forefront Productions for several years, Glow recently activated another step in its production master plan to upgrade the FOH speaker system and main LED screen at the Gold Coast campus.

Glow began its journey with Forefront with an Adamson IS7 line array system that could wheel in and out of its Melbourne campus, where the church bumped in and out every Sunday. The Adamson rig was chosen partly because it can scale up once Glow's Melbourne campus moves to a larger location. Having experienced the sonic quality of the IS7 system in Melbourne, the contrast to the existing Gold Coast PA became obvious. A decision was made to convert the other existing campuses to Adamson as the opportunities arose.

"When we heard the Adamson system side-by-side with the existing system at our Gold Coast campus, it became an easy decision,"

says Pastor Joel Cave. "The difference in quality was extremely noticeable in the bottom end and particularly in the warmth of vocal quality cutting through with clarity and precision. Previously, the PA felt muddy and there was little separation between instruments and vocals. They felt they were always competing with one another. Now with the Adamson system, each vocalist and musician is sitting right where you want to them to be in the mix and are easily distinguishable from one another. The lead vocals always cut through with ease, like a hot knife through butter."

With the flexibility and scalability of the Adamson IS7 system, the same audio system can be deployed across Glow's smaller to larger campuses, providing absolute consistency to the experience at any location.

CMI Music & Audio, Australian distributor of Adamson, partnered with Forefront for design and technical support of the project. Brian

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Vayler, CMI's House of Worship Solutions Manager, worked closely with Forefront's audio system designer Matt Wever to deliver the final system design. CMI assisted Forefront with additional Adamson inventory to stage a full-scale demonstration, and also provided temporary loan equipment until the ordered system arrived in stock.

"The worldwide challenges of equipment supply in our industry is ongoing and a daily challenge," says Nick Burns, owner of Forefront Productions. "You can't always obtain the products desired for a job in a reasonable timeframe. Fortunately, CMI Music & Audio has great foresight in anticipating our needs, and supply of Adamson equipment has

been the most accessible of any product we deal with in this challenging season. Brian and the team at CMI understand our customers' unique needs and timeframes, and always assist quickly and comprehensively."

The Adamson IS7 system at the Gold Coast campus consists of two main left-right arrays of eight IS7 elements per side and two outfill



arrays of six IS7 elements per side, bring the total up to 28. "The system was designed to eliminate any need for stage lip front fill," explains Nick. "Even with the usual higher level of acoustic energy spilling from stage for the first rows of seating, which is always tricky to combat in a church setting."

Rounding out the bottom end of the system are six Adamson IS119 subwoofers in an array under the front of the stage. "The IS119 is a very powerful sub with very musical sonic characteristics," adds Matt Wever. "In this case, the number of sub elements are deployed to provide controlled coverage and consistency throughout the space, rather than bone-rattling bottom end."

Driving the system are Lab Gruppen D:Series installation amplifiers with integrated Lake Processing on board. "One of the unique characteristics of the Adamson IS7 is that the number of speaker elements you can power with a single amp is very impressive – up to 12 boxes," continues Matt. "This means that for a growing church that will eventually move to a bigger venue, it's cost effective to just add more speaker elements without having to purchase more amps."

Forefront Productions have been prominent in the house of worship landscape for many years, with their unique 360-degree ethos of design, planning, implementation, training, and support. "When we made a decision to

work exclusively with Forefront across all our campuses, we had some goals that were good in theory. Our experience has been that they weren't just good in theory; it's now been better than we could have imagined," relates Pastor Joel Cave. "Some highlights have been the great support and relationships between our production and tech staff at Glow and the Forefront team. There's a great flow and consistency between all our locations in audio, lighting, and visuals, including cameras and screens. Having a one-stop-shop for all the things every creative church Pastor needs brings real ease, instead of dealing with four or five different companies."

"You think you are saving money trying to get the best prices across all the different elements, but we have found when you work with one company who already understands the vision you want to achieve, you actually end up saving time and money, as one provider's value is far better than it being spread across multiple facilitators," states Pastor Joel. "Only one phone call is needed from our production manager to Forefront for any of our locations, and the solution is always provided in quick time. Most companies are very one dimensional, but Forefront thinks about the worship experience from start to finish and often are far better at executing our vision. Forefront facilitates the vision a pastor has in their heart, so we get out of the way and let them do what they do best."

With many church volunteers coming from a non-technical background, Forefront provide invaluable technical and training support, teaching the community how to operate all of the elements in their new installation.

Representing multiple brands in the sales and installation space, Forefront also have a considerable rental stock, and have recently invested in one of Australia's largest inventories of Adamson Systems loudspeakers, ordering Adamson CS10 and CS7 line array elements, supported by CS119 subwoofers.

Forefront is now offering nationwide in-situ Adamson Systems demonstrations with their new dedicated 'Road Show' service. "There's nothing quite like being able to see and hear the difference new technology can make in your own space," enthuses Nick Burns, "so we're hitting the road with a full range of different Adamson Systems products, digital audio consoles, lighting, and LED screens; whatever a client needs to hear, see and try in their own space. We encourage people to get in touch to book an obligation-free demonstration."

To make a booking for a demo go to:
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We're loading up the truck with the latest in audio, lighting and LED video gear and hitting the road to come visit you! Book your demo at ffp.com.au/demo

forefront
WAY AHEAD



BLENDING WITH THE DQOR

The German-born and Adam Hall owned LD Systems have been slowly raising awareness of their audio products line in Australia, which includes the successful Maui range of portable line array 'stick' PAs. In business for 20 years now, LD make everything audio from battery powered speakers, through to DJ gear, to install speakers. The cleverly named DQOR range (the letter 'd' is pronounced 'day' in German) are a new series of surface mount loudspeakers for the savvy integrator, and are finding their place here in Oz.

Disco Techs Australia, founded in Melbourne in 2016, have become the go-to repairers for pro DJ equipment from Technics, Allen & Heath, Pioneer DJ, and Denon. With a certain notoriety in the DJ and nightlife community,

they also provide on-site AV support and maintenance for hotels and nightclubs. This often includes installations of all sizes, including the modest but cool job that they've just deployed LD's DQOR range in.



"We've just installed a nice little DQOR system in Harvie Wine Bar in Armadale," explains Lukas Brock, Managing Director at Disco Techs. "The owner is a long-standing client of ours and runs a number of hospitality venues around Melbourne. He came to us with a small budget install for his new café and wine bar. Nothing terribly elaborate, just good clear sound over three floors, and outdoor areas he wanted activated with the same products as indoors for consistency."



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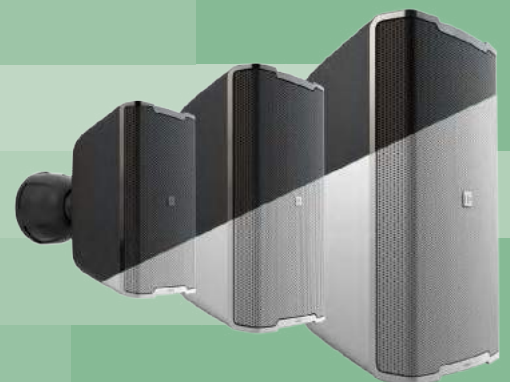
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The customer was drawn to LD Systems DQOR because of its inconspicuous, easy-to-camouflage design. "Harvie is in a nice, white art deco building and these small point source boxes don't take up much real estate on the wall," relates Lukas. "They manage to express a lot of sound without being visually intrusive. The coverage is really wide at 120° horizontal and 80° vertical, so you don't need many to get the job done."

Used purely for BGM, the total installation currently includes four DQOR 3" in the main bar and four DQOR 5" on the excellent rooftop space, which boasts a city skyline view. There

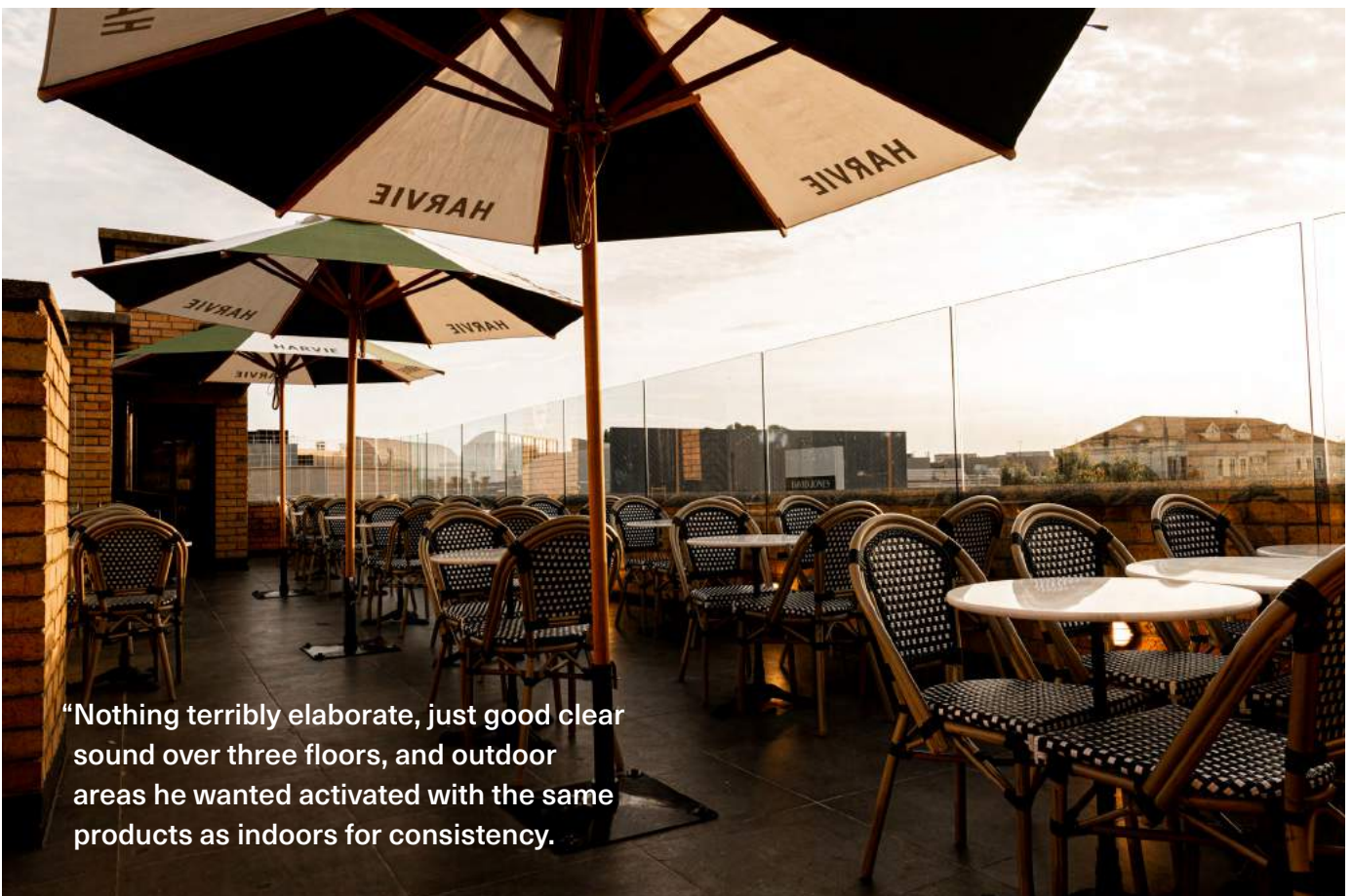
are plans in place to install six DQOR 5" in the rear beer garden when the post-COVID timing is right. All DQOR loudspeakers are rated IP55, so there's no issue with being exposed to the elements.

"The DQOR range is quite flexible," continues Lukas. "They're available as a standard 8 ohm box, or as a 16 ohm with a 70/100V line transformer. But it's the mounting system I'm most impressed by. You wire up the speaker cable to the bracket itself, which flush mounts on the wall. Then there's two metal contacts the speaker slips onto, so the speaker itself has no wiring. You screw it tight and that's it. Their

tilt angle is 27° and they can go 45° horizontal. They're installer and maintenance friendly; if a speaker goes down, you can pop it off and slip a new one onto the bracket; no wiring required. An end user could do it in a pinch. I've spoken to other installers and they agree it's the way to go."

Supplied by Australian LD Systems distributor AVECorp, the DQORs at Harvie are powered by two LD Systems XS 400 2x200W power amplifiers. "For the DQOR's size the fidelity is phenomenal," remarks Lukas. "There's a couple of other venues we're now putting forward these products for, including another by the same owner as Harvie. We're looking at projects that include four to six storey bars, with control systems, processing, and lots of I/O."

discotech.com.au
www.ld-systems.com
www.avecorp.com.au



"Nothing terribly elaborate, just good clear sound over three floors, and outdoor areas he wanted activated with the same products as indoors for consistency."

THE RIVERLINKS THEATRE UPGRADES TO L-ACOUSTICS KIVA II



Riverlinks Theatre, the largest civic theatre in Shepparton in northern Victoria, hosts various weekly events from touring bands and musicians to exhibitions and banquets. The flexible venue possesses a balcony above a retractable seating system that holds 825 theatre-goers or 450 banquet guests. The venue, located two hours north of Melbourne, recently installed a brand-new PA system to accommodate its versatile range of events.

Around the mid-2010s, Matt Schroeders, Technical Manager of Riverlinks Theatre, knew that the old system was starting to become a liability to the theatre's regular event production objectives and its users. Schroeders developed a replacement proposal for the Greater Shepparton Council, which owns and runs the theatre, but it was initially rejected. Determined, Schroeders persevered, revising his proposal with further details about the total cost and clearly outlining the benefits of a new system. The council accepted the

proposal, and a brand new PA system made its way into its annual budget.

While an event-restrictive global pandemic was a blow to the industry, it offered Schroeders and his team the time to manage the long and arduous process of selecting the new PA system and the partner that would install it.

Just three tenders for a listening demo shootout were issued, and Riverlinks allowed each party to demonstrate the system in the theatre, requesting that they present a solution

for both room configurations: a flat floor and a tiered seating module. For a comprehensive review of each of the systems presented, Schroeders and the theatre's technical co-ordinator Peter O'Keefe were joined by the venue manager, a representative from the venue's procurement department, and a non-technical reviewer who could provide an unbiased opinion.

After the shootout, Light & Sound Solutions came out on top with a sound design based around the Kiva II variable curvature line array.

O'Keefe explains, "Kiva II is designed for our kind of venue. It ticked every box without trying. It wasn't being pushed beyond its limits; it wasn't being shoehorned to make it work. The other systems arguably sounded just as good when cranked up, but Kiva II was exceptional at low volumes, retaining a beautiful full-range clarity."

Both L-Acoustics Kiva II presented by Daniel Thomas, Director at Light & Sound, and his team shone. They knew that a Kiva II array with six or more boxes and two or three subwoofers came in well under 250kg, which was the preferred weight limitation for the venue.

The system, installed by Light & Sound and provided by L-Acoustics Certified Provider Distributor Jands, consists of eight Kiva II enclosures per side flown next to three SB15m subwoofers in cardioid mode to minimise low-frequency spill onto the stage. Underneath the stage are a pair of KS21 subwoofers which were not part of the original tender shootout.

"Light & Sound brought 21-inch subs to the shootout, even though this was not part of the brief or budget," recalls Peter O'Keefe. O'Keefe and Schroeders instantly adored the extra octave of bandwidth that the 21-inch boxes provided and subsequently upgraded the stage infrastructure to house them.

Light & Sound configured five LA4X amplified controllers with presets for the three main room modes: tiered seating, flat floor, and flat floor with balcony, easily ensuring even coverage, both tonally and in terms of SPL for the venue's various applications, without the need to rehang or adjust the array trim.

Now, as the Shepparton community comes out of pandemic restrictions, the re-opening of the newly equipped theatre is especially welcome. "We can put on a dance contest on Friday, a networking banquet on Saturday, and a congregation's conference on Sunday. With a potentially diverse program of weekends like these, our PA needs to be just as versatile," explains O'Keefe of Riverlinks Theatre. "With this versatile and easily adaptable Kiva II system now installed, the theatre is a true all-rounder in classic country town style."

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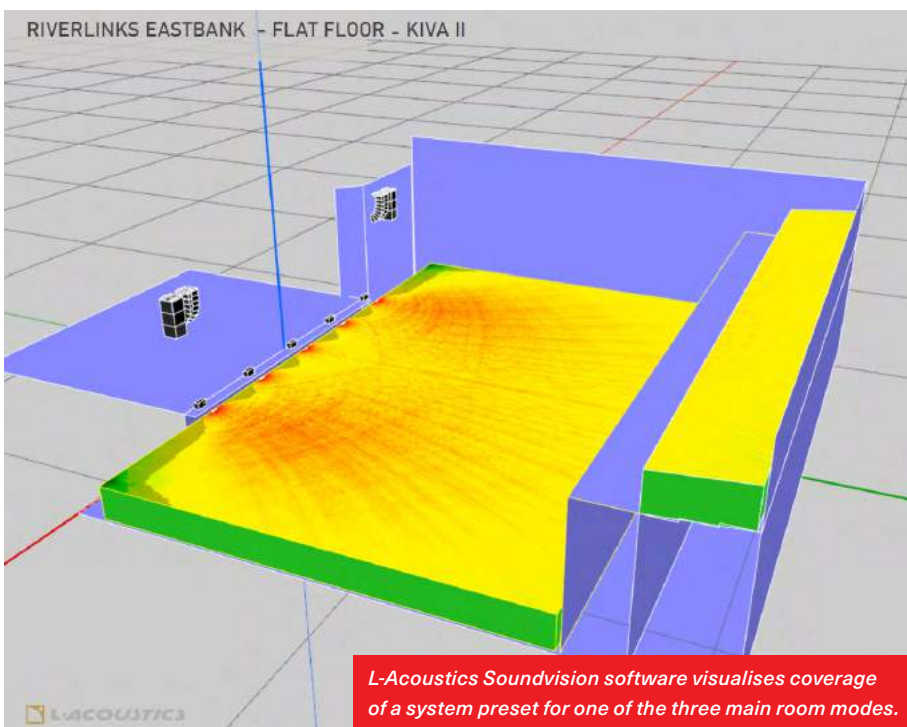
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The new PA system consists of eight L-Acoustics Kiva II enclosures per side flown next to three SB15m subwoofers. Underneath the stage are a pair of KS21 subwoofers.



Eight Kiva II enclosures per side flown next to three SB15m subwoofers in cardioid mode minimises low-frequency spill onto the stage.



L-Acoustics Soundvision software visualises coverage of a system preset for one of the three main room modes.



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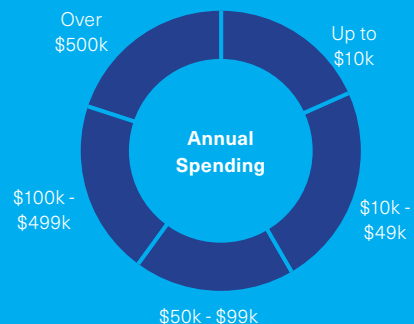
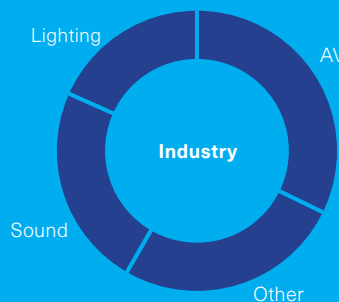
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BJÖRK IS BACK

WITH D&B SOUNDSCAPE

After a run of large scale residencies in the US, Mexico and Europe in 2019, Björk is back, bringing her critically-acclaimed Cornucopia tour to the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium and San Francisco's Chase Center. As with the previous tour dates, d&b partner Southby Productions deployed a Soundscape system powered by the d&b En-Scene object-based mixing and En-Space room emulation software.

Cornucopia is based on Björk's 2017 album Utopia, the show is directed by Lucrecia Martel and Björk with co-creative director James Merry. For Cornucopia, the end goal was to utilise sound as a creative tool to increase audience engagement

and immersion. The production is that of a theatrical performance with pulsating visuals and spectacular vocals resulting in a full sensory experience for the audience.

Björk designed the show, starting off with system trials in a small studio situated in a lighthouse on a remote Nordic island, before moving to larger rehearsal spaces to experience the scalability of Soundscape.

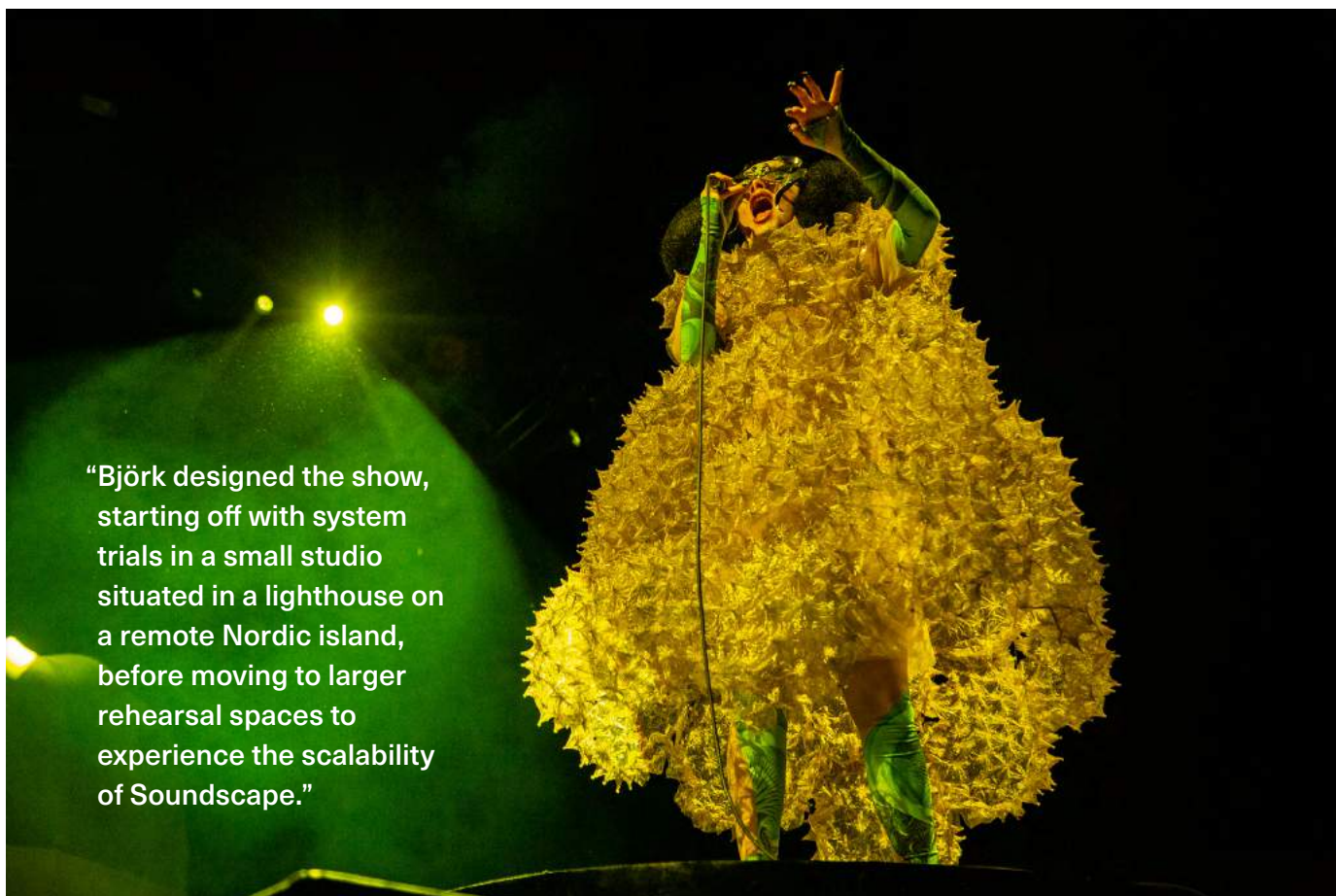
For the West Coast shows, the team deployed a 180-degree Soundscape system to align with the size of the venues. The team also utilised a new tool, En-Snap, the result of a d&b partnership with Gareth Owen Sound. En-Snap enables a straightforward cue-based control within the d&b Soundscape environment. The software tool connects directly to the d&b DS100 signal engine and, with a single click, stores the parameter values of all 64 sound objects and any En-Space room emulation setting as an En-Snap cue.

"Soundscape is key to giving the audience the experience they expect from a Björk show," said Jack Blenkinsopp, System Tech for the tour. "Everything in these shows

from the visuals, to the stage presence, to the audio experience is quite special and Soundscape heightens the experience. There are a lot of moments in the show where we have positioned the sound objects to match their position on stage, for instance the reverb chamber. It really draws the audience in towards the performance, and what is happening on stage whether that be Björk, the flutes or the choir. No other tool captures the audience so authentically like Soundscape."

For John Gale, FoH engineer on the tour, he was focused on ensuring the smooth transfer of the system between shows. "My biggest concern was ensuring we could scale the system. The LA venue and San Francisco venue were totally opposite; we were coming from a theatre to an arena in a short period of time," said Gale. "Yet the system performed exactly the same. I believe no matter where you are sitting there's really good coverage with the Soundscape experience."

Over the last couple of years, d&b have made significant new developments to Soundscape, particularly within the DS100. "It's great to



“Björk designed the show, starting off with system trials in a small studio situated in a lighthouse on a remote Nordic island, before moving to larger rehearsal spaces to experience the scalability of Soundscape.”

come back to a system two years later and see they have been continuing to develop the product in the background,” said Gale. “The remit from Björk was that this needed to be a theatrical show and less of a pop concert and Soundscape truly allowed us to achieve this. Björk has been extremely happy.”

The control system and stage package for the Cornucopia tour is so bespoke that Southby decided to airfreight the elements that were used on the previous European Arena run

to California, while the main speaker system components were supplied by Eighth Day Sound.

“Soundscape is integral to the Cornucopia Tour, the system is complex in its capabilities, yet its flexibility and scalability means we can deploy it all across the world,” said Chris Jones, Director at Southby Productions. “Everyone is blown away by the results of Soundscape and the popularity of the system has cemented Southby’s place as one of the global specialists

for Soundscape solutions.”

Speaking about the system during the European tour in 2019 Björk commented, “We spent a lot of time making sure that there will be synchronicity between the live music and the live visuals, Cornucopia is a celebration of the execution of that. I personally feel like it’s the most gorgeous sound that I’ve ever heard in a room.”

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DIGICO & D&B SOUNDSCAPE INTEGRATION

d&b audiotechnik has partnered with DiGiCo to advance the accessibility and ease of use of the immersive audio system platform that is Soundscape. With this partnership, there will be a dedicated Soundscape User Interface fully integrated into the surface of all DiGiCo SD and Quantum consoles, allowing front-of-house engineers to control Soundscape object parameters on the DS100 on the consoles.

“By partnering with DiGiCo, we are ensuring that Soundscape is accessible to FoH engineers in their preferred mixing and automation environment,” said Georg Stummer, Product Manager, d&b audiotechnik. “This integration will allow Soundscape to become an intuitive part of their creative workflow and design repertoire. It is important to us that we take the object based capabilities of our high-performance immersive toolkit as close as possible to creatives and their existing production environment. Soundscape is defining the way spatial audio is used for live productions.”

The partnership made it possible to replace the generic OSC control for the DS100 on DiGiCo consoles with an intuitive Soundscape control interface, integrating new features

like free assignment of DS100 sound objects and different mapping areas for each channel strip of the console. All parameters and assignments of the Soundscape User Interface can be stored and recalled with the console Snapshot memory.

This integration can be expanded for bi-directional communication between the console and DS100, via the d&b software bridge (Remote Protocol Bridge) while also supporting setup with two DS100s, controlling two DS100s in sync within a redundant setup or up to 128 sound objects on two different DS100s from one console.

“At DiGiCo we recognise that immersive sound technology is gaining rapid industry acceptance and represents an exciting future for our industry. We want to ensure that FoH

engineers, and sound designers can access this technology at their fingertips as a normal part of their workflow,” commented Austin Freshwater, MD at DiGiCo. “We are proud to partner with d&b to provide a seamless and efficient way to integrate Soundscape into show programming and operation with our consoles.”

“In a short space of time Soundscape has had an enormous impact upon both d&b and our industry,” commented Amnon Harman, CEO d&b Group. “d&b is deeply committed to furthering our market leadership with this technology. This partnership with DiGiCo is an exciting next step in ensuring that our mutual customers can work seamlessly with our systems to realize their creative visions.”



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HOW ARE NFTS SUPPOSED TO CHANGE EVENTS?



Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) seem to be taking the internet by storm. For those who have yet to come across them, they are a fresh application of the blockchain technology behind cryptocurrencies, this time in the form of a provably unique asset. There are many uses for NFTs being invented and tested at the moment, including some that could cause some big ripples in the world of events.

What are NFTs?

In order to properly appreciate the use cases of NFTs, it is important to first understand what they are. For that, it helps to understand how the blockchain works. The short version is that it is a network of ledgers of digital information, each hosted locally on thousands of computers. Since the information is decentralised and publicly accessible, it is much harder to falsify and corrupt, verging on impossible.

This technology, which is such a significant paradigm shift that it has earned the title of 'Web3', has most famously been used to create an entire economy parallel to those that run through major national banks: cryptocurrencies. Unlike traditional currencies,

cryptocurrencies are impossible to forge and easy to trace. Those two features got people thinking about other applications of the technology and the NFT is the result, an asset other than a currency that is impossible to forge and easy to trace.

The most obvious and most popular application of NFTs so far has been artworks. The Bored Apes Yacht Club is the Bitcoin of the NFT space, being widely known even outside of crypto communities. Put simply, it consists of 10,000 subtly different pictures of apes, each of which is logged on the blockchain. While the picture itself can be easily copied, just as you can photograph a painting in an art gallery, the blockchain can prove who the actual owner of these increasingly valuable works is.

The future of NFT events

Sean Specie, Chief Strategy Officer at Elevate Experiences, admits that he is a "non-technical person", but one with a significant interest in cryptocurrencies and NFTs from the perspective of an event professional with extensive experience. He said that while the company he works for has yet to use NFTs for events, he does personally believe that they will impact the future of the industry in several ways. And that they already are doing so.

He told us that he sees two ways in which NFTs will impact the events industry; events being formed around NFTs or NFTs being integrated into existing events. On the first of these use cases, he said "I don't own a CryptoDads NFT but I do want one because

I've heard that the community is great. I know that they had an in-person meet-up at ETHDenver just for CryptoDads holders. People flew in from all over the world in order to meet up in person with these people that they've been interacting with online."

He added that NFT.NYC, one of the leading NFT events, is holding its fourth meet-up in New York City in June 2022 and, while he has not personally attended it, he knows people who have. "They said that it almost feels like an early SXSW. It's like different communities coming together but united under one banner."

NFTs in established events

On the second of Sean's suggested use cases, there have already been several successful applications. As a single small example, Playboy hosted a private party at NFT.NYC using their own NFTs as entry tickets, with attendees needing to show their wallet to prove its authenticity. Sean can foresee similar applications like this beyond crypto communities, too. With larger public events like sporting events and concerts, it could reduce the risk of ticket forgery.

In fact, Sean's vision is already a reality. Colby Mort works at GET Protocol Foundation with a small yet dedicated team determined to change the nature of the ticketing industry. He spoke to BetterCast on our podcast about the

system they have developed, which uses NFTs as tickets.

"Each NFT is a unique instance, each of which is minted under a smart contract," he said, admitting that this all sounds like gobbledygook if you don't know about the blockchain. "Essentially, a smart contract is a blueprint for an NFT ticket. So each ticket is unique but follows the same rules. The benefit of that is that each smart contract has a unique address. If I need to validate that an NFT belongs to that contract, I just need to do a quick search within that address."

GET's system stores your NFT ticket on your phone and generates a rotating QR code, which refreshes every 15 seconds. This ensures that the ticket cannot be copied and shared. Additionally, as soon as the ticket is scanned, the metadata in the NFT is changed to record that fact.

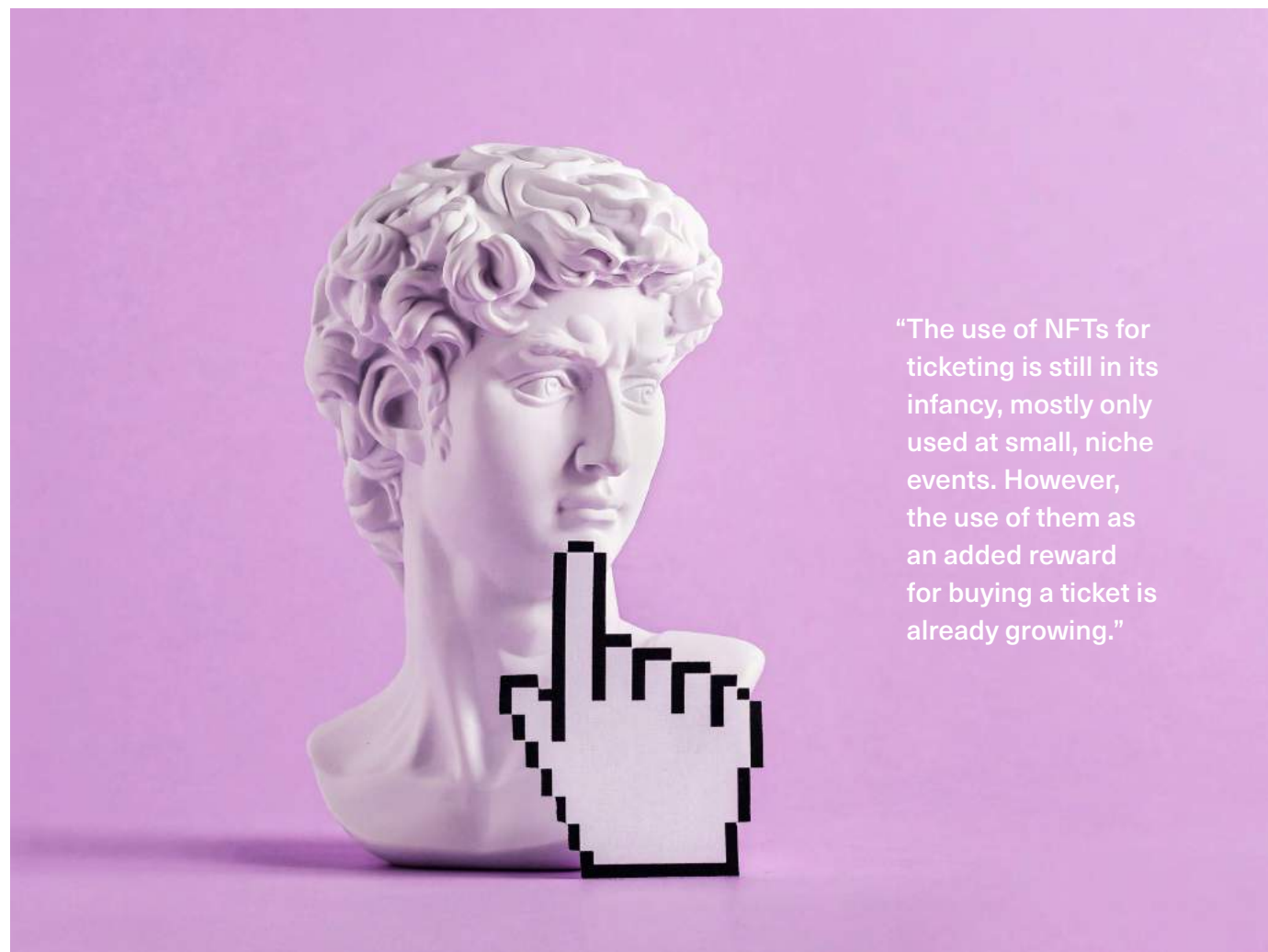
Making a ticket more than a ticket

The use of NFTs for ticketing is still in its infancy, mostly only used at small, niche events. However, the use of them as an added reward for buying a ticket is already growing. The NFL issued commemorative NFTs to people that had tickets to go to the Superbowl for example, and the use of proof of attendance protocols (POAPs) is growing.

A POAP is effectively the digital equivalent of keeping your lanyard or ticket stubs as a souvenir. However, they can then be used for giveaways and special access at or after the event. This is already something that can be done with physical tickets, such as using ticket numbers for raffle draws, but using NFTs simplifies the process and creates a broader range of options.

The YellowHeart app has been created around this concept. It launched in October 2021 and Josh Katz, CEO of YellowHeart, said in a statement: "The YellowHeart Wallet is a major milestone for the live event industry. The app allows fans, artists, and venues to interact with Web3 marketplaces, which will greatly evolve the fan experience and create long-term recurring revenue opportunities for artists, teams, and venues. Artists, teams, and venues that don't adapt will get left behind."

YellowHeart chief procurement officer Thomas Emmanuel added: "Connecting tickets to blockchain technology via non-fungible tokens means that rewards, content, access, discounts and more can be granted on a one-to-one basis. For example, a fan who has, say, the Maroon 5 community token or any other artist or brand-specific community token, would open the app and simply slide over to the 'Rewards' tab. From there they can access the various benefits of the NFT, such as early entry, offers before or after the show at a



partner establishment, after parties, along with exclusive content like video moments, highlight montages, or concert recordings.”

NFT communities as customers

One of the more remarkable features of NFTs is that they inevitably create communities. The CryptoDad community mentioned earlier is just one of many examples. Sean likened them to the homeowner’s association in his neighbourhood of Jacksonville, which offers bonuses for membership such as access to two pools and a sand volleyball court through a keyfob only issued to HOA members.

“What’s interesting about NFTs, and another reason why I find them interesting from an event professional’s standpoint, is that I could get the HOA to hire me and do events for them,” he said. “They do events where they bring in food trucks and DJs and there’s the 4th of July fireworks shows, just for people that live in the neighbourhood. The interesting thing about NFT communities is that, if you issue 10,000 Bored Apes and people buy them, all of a sudden you have a community where these people are verified community members and you can start doing events for them. These are potential clients that are being formed right before our very eyes.”

Colby added that, for corporate events, NFT tickets benefit sponsors by helping to provide a community that they know are interested in their products or services, meaning that benefits and promotions can be much more targeted. NFT tickets may even grow in value after events because they provide membership to that community and the original event hosts can still earn from resales.

NFT scalping

It is worth noting that while NFTs do prevent ticket forgery, they have been significantly less effective at preventing scalpers. Bots have been very successfully used to buy up every available token as soon as they are issued, allowing these digital scalpers to then wait for the value to increase and resell them for a profit.

As an example of this, Time Magazine issued 4,676 TIMEpiece NFTs in September 2021 and, despite attempts to limit the risk of bots buying the whole lot, it wasn’t long before they were completely sold out. Originally priced at about US\$310, their resale value was about US\$9,500 at the lowest.

In spite of this embarrassing blunder, Time President Keith Grossman is determined to give it another try. “We’re going to make sure that the next time that we do this, everything that we have seen that went wrong or that didn’t go as we planned, is fixed,” he said in a statement. With NFTs still a fairly new technology, there will inevitably be oversights like this. This is still a learning period.

Why aren’t NFT tickets already more widespread?

The most significant obstacle presently keeping NFTs out of widespread use in events is the adoption rate. Despite their fame, even cryptocurrencies still hold only relatively niche appeal, mostly due to a lack of understanding of the technology among most of the world’s population.

“There’s a little bit of a learning curve that you have to go through,” Sean said. “It’s not necessarily hard to understand, but there are some nuances that people aren’t used to. I imagine that it would be a lot like when credit cards first came out. I think that the technology might advance a little bit faster than we think, though. I think that the events industry could be a catalyst for that, such as through using NFTs for ticketing.”

He also believes that more big companies and institutions becoming early adopters will help to normalise the technology and accelerate its widespread use. In particular, he would like to see more ticketing companies like Ticketmaster using NFTs.

GET Protocol is already working in this direction. Colby said: “We’ve made sure that our system is as accessible as possible, so an event manager doesn’t need any knowledge of NFTs and blockchain to tap into our infrastructure. They sell tickets through a normal web shop and you would have no idea that NFTs exist in this system, but whenever a ticket is purchased it is actually minted as an NFT. I think it comes down to making sure that whoever builds the infrastructure makes it as accessible as possible.”

“That being said, I do think there is an element of education that is needed for event organisers to understand what NFTs can be used for. That’s something that I think is going to come over time. Right now, the whole Web3 space operates very close to the code layer, which is not very user friendly. There are already tools that are starting to move the experience away from that, though.”



SENPAI FOR THE TECH GUY

I've been mentoring a junior recently. A local fella called Josh Hamill moved back home, heard about me, and got in touch. He is studying for a Diploma of Music Production at RMIT and is eager to get into all things noisy.



Josh Hamill

We talk and text regularly and it's heartening to see someone so enthusiastic. It helps counteract the jaded cynic in me. For him, any experience with any tech gear and any tips from veterans are a good thing right now. Tall tales from old hacks can also make his potential seem more exciting and may highlight a few pitfalls that he can avoid.

My audio production skills have always been average at best. Yeh, I can wire up a PA and produce an OK sound, but my old man ears hurt and I'm not an intuitive mixer. I'll readily admit that I made a much better LD when I was touring for a living. I made the switch then because my young ears were already damaged with permanent tinnitus, combined with a serious dB drop in both sides. Plugs saved eardrums serviceable enough for daily use but scorched any serious audio career.

So, it's slightly ironic that I'm 'passing the baton' to a younger generation. He is already ahead of me in many music production areas. However, there might be a bit of self-interest involved. Until Josh found me, I've been the only local person with more than rudimentary knowledge about how our memorial hall PA

works. For over 10 years, I have been called upon to setup and operate for every and all functions at the hall, be they weddings, dances, art shows or film nights. That means I've been the default go-to for all local events, whether I feel like attending them or not.

As an ardent community minded volunteer in many other groups, it is hard to say no and hard to charge for these gigs, when I know everyone else is there for free. But it's equally difficult to be taken for granted. Just because I can doesn't mean that I should. I've thus become a little pickier about which shows I'll bend over for and learned to say NO a bit more often.

Having a proxy to hand off to is brilliant for me. If it's a gig I like, I'll be able to enjoy the show as a punter. If it's not one that I'm keen on, I can pull the 'busy doing my nails card' and stay home while Josh covers it. Either way, he gets valuable experience on the tools and community service for his CV. Likewise, I get time off to focus on me, or other volunteer ventures. Or navel gazing. Or whatever. And I'm not pulling the pin entirely - I know there will be plenty more gigs for me. Nor do I want to take Josh for granted, or let the community

committee chooks bully him into bending over for nothing.

Passing on knowledge and skills is a rewarding thing to do. Sometimes, the most useful skills are soft. These little life lessons don't have to be overt. Otherwise, you just sound like an old geezer carrying on about how much better it was in the old days. It wasn't, OK! However, following the old maxim that age and treachery always overcome youth and enthusiasm, hints about soft skills can be worked into conversation, without being too obvious.

Good teachers are also good listeners though. Effective mentoring involves being mindful of not just big-noting or showing off, but being open to new perspectives, however naive or innocent they might first seem. You may well learn something from your mentee. Remember, they have a totally fresh perspective on things you might have long taken for granted. Agree Yoda would, no?

Watching the way Josh goes about his newly found calling is uplifting. He is chomping at the bit to get into everything audio right now. Such is the unbridled passion of youth. I want to support that. He has contacted local music

shops, music teachers and any gig within a wide radius. He is building up his studio gear and simultaneously in training for a trek to Everest base camp and Island Peak. That kind of tenacity and gumption will go a long way.

We met yesterday and he reported finding a local hire and production house, offering his services and already being asked back. There's immediate payoff for a good attitude.

Also at our meet was local sax genius and music teacher, Nick Lester. We are all excited to get some more live music happening around here and wake the hills up from the slumber of the recent social pox years. Over a coffee, we started cooking up ideas to reinvigorate our sleepy town by putting on a show or two. Gig number one is in planning now. Watch this space...

Audio courses were viewed with disdain by the working crew that I knew when I started. So, I did a deal with a mixer mate: he needed a couch to crash on for a few days and I got him to explain how a console and basic effects worked. Even better, he let me ghost him at a gig. One song in, he walked off to the bar and left me to it. He got paid and I got blooded. The band were happy to have me back again the next week, so I must have got something right.

Dave's mentorship of me was rough, but it was what I personally needed - to be thrown in the deep end - sink or swim. I soon met and worked with much better audio engineers, yet few of them were as generous or forthcoming in sharing their approach or technique. Thanks for holding all the 'secrets' tight, dickheads...

Which is why I make a point of giving back. Wherever I am. The old rule that the support band (or anyone else further down a food chain) shall be screwed over is all about bullying and power trips. Its deep root comes from insecurity. An anxiety about being shown up by someone more talented or skilful. Promoted by those insecure of their place in

the world, or something even deeper. These are the ones who keep all the cards close and never share. The best way to subvert this is by openly giving to others what you know. Double it down by being an example that others can follow. That shows someone in control of, and comfortable with, their ego.

I don't have children of my own to pass my knowledge on to, so this is one way to leave some kind of legacy. And, as long as we stick to analog consoles and broad concepts, I've got something to offer. Never did get the hang of them pesky digi-ma-tal thingummies.



Josh Hamill

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Chet Reynolds

WHEN THE SPOTLIGHT HITS YOU

SNIPPETS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF A BYGONE ERA

“Six months ago I couldn’t even spell autodidactic.” Well, that’s not exactly what the derogatory inscription scrawled on band-room walls in the pioneering days of sound engineering actually stated.

Substitute ‘autodidactic’ (self taught) with ‘sound engineer’ and you begin to understand the taunt. However, we were a self-deprecating lot who had to learn our trade in the field as schools for live sound didn’t exist, so most of us found the graffiti amusing.

When my last band split in 1981, the equipment was also split amongst the band members. I augmented my share of the PA booty with enough equipment to put together a PA rig for hire. The Trading Post was littered with PA equipment, which was mostly the product of failed and acrimonious band break-ups along with consignment gear from Smithy’s.

Smithy’s was a consignment PA equipment shop in Neutral Bay, Sydney where the late Neil Smith, who passed away in 2014, would showcase and sell anyone’s PA equipment for a 10% commission. Smithy was also a mentor to fledgling sound technicians of the time: “No, mate, you don’t want to put that amp with those speakers; you need more power.” And,

“If you use those horns you’re going to need rings because the drivers roll off at about 10K,” he’d say.

My single four-way PA was made up of a pair of single folded horn W bins with Altec 421 8H 150 watt speakers. For mids and highs I used the ubiquitous JBL 45/60 bins. And taking Smithy’s advice I bought JBL horns with compression drivers that had a higher frequency response so as to eliminate the need to run rings (JBL bullet tweeters). Instead, I ran a couple of boxes of piezo tweeters for show; this was so I could call it a four-way as hirers thought a four-way crossover system was far superior to a three-way crossover system. Nobody ever questioned the facade.

My first few gigs were freebies mostly for bands that I personally knew, knowing they would be somewhat forgiving for on the job learning. Then, after placing only a couple of ads in the Trading Post an onslaught of work rolled in. In fact, there were so many gigs that owner/operators often rang each other to pass on work.

Dealing with the stress of learning the trade was compounded by the dealing with the stress of unruly punters at venues and private functions. There was the time I returned from doing a sound check to find a drunken fool using my mixing console as a dinner table while he wolfed down a paper plate full of food.

It was also a time when you were menaced by management hovering over you with decibel meters, so most of us included some sort of compressor/limiter in the armoury. I was the proud owner of a revered Urei 1176LN compressor/limiter, which had attack and release knobs to fiddle with; a trap for young players. In hindsight the dbx 160, which had

auto attack and release may have been a better choice. However, my most memorable faux pas at a popular venue was over-compressing the main act into a void.

Cancellations and sometimes not getting paid at all went with the turf, so in 1982 I jumped at the chance to commit to working with a single act.

It was the year Britain and Argentina were at war in the Falkland Islands, Michael Jackson released his Thriller album, and I took a full-time booking with the Chet Reynolds Band. Chet Reynolds had a single out on Parlophone entitled 'Anita' with 'How Do You Talk to Girls?' on the flip side. He had been a regular on TV shows like The Mike Walsh Show, The Midday Show with Ray Martin, and The Don Lane Show.

The Chet Reynolds Band featured a six-piece line-up with keyboards, guitar, bass, sax and drums. The band was managed by the keyboard player, and I recall the saxophone player was formerly with Stormy

Monday. The English drummer had Deep Purple emblazoned on his drum cases as he had played in an unofficial line-up of the iconic band. There was a young guy who did the lights and together we loaded all the equipment in and out of the gigs. Both band and crew got on well and we had a lot of laughs.

Chet was a great singer who had a witty and dry sense of humour, which we all loved, but sometimes his cutting wit on stage got a bit edgy and we'd have to close ranks to safeguard him against punters who took offence. Once during a show in Newcastle he paused to tell a sailor on the dance floor that the venue wasn't a good hiding place during the current Falklands war.

"You can't hide here, you know; there's a war on," he taunted.

Chet learned that I had been a singer in my last band, so one of his pranks was to put me under the spotlight by inviting me onstage to sing. I'd always do The Beatles' 'Get Back' because everyone knew how to play it. I'd do a set and forget mix, mount the stage and sing my signature tune. It was all tongue-in-cheek, but Chet would always feign sincerity to the audience.

The gig with the Chet Reynolds Band lasted for the best part of 1982. We worked a minimum of five nights per week, which included a two-week stint on Queensland's Gold Coast where we also played second fiddle for a couple of nights to a touring headliner act. It was a watershed event for me, a fledgling sound engineer, because when their sound engineer shouted from the stage for me to pull 2K from his graphics I realised his ear was two octaves out. Being able to correct the feedback at 8k instead of 2K gave me a nice confidence boost (and I never told him).

My most cherished memory with Chet and the band was being dragged out at short notice when the band was asked to fill for a band that couldn't make a gig at a club in Sydney's St George district. Our crew pulled out all the stops to set up on time for the first bracket. Things were going smoothly until the leader of the no-show band turned up and sat with the club's manager at the back of the venue leering and bad-mouthing the band.

During the course of the next set, Chet announced that there was a special guest in the house that he'd like to invite up on the stage to sing. Chet's introduction was quite lengthy. He spoke in glowing terms of this special guest singer before announcing, "And now ladies and gentlemen without any further ado I'd like to invite on stage...our sound engineer, Brian." And, of course, I energetically delivered my old standard of Get Back.

The Chet Reynolds Band split amicably in late 1982 when Chet returned to his home state of South Australia. Sadly, Chet passed away circa 2011.

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- Industry meet & greet with canapes (Friday evening)
- 18 seminars & workshops (Saturday & Sunday) with complimentary lunch, morning & afternoon teas
- Industry banquet with live music (Saturday evening)
- Archive of excellence live interview
- ACETA annual general meeting
- Summit meeting of associated peak body Presidents and CEOs (Sunday)
- Recreation and networking opportunities in a convivial environment

(Social events at cost)

So, grab a partner and prepare for a fabulous weekend in the beautiful countryside of Wangaratta.

When

17th - 19th June 2022

Where

Wangaratta, VIC

For more info visit

www.aceta.org.au



ASTERA WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY



Battery operated, remote controlled Film & Entertainment lighting for professionals, with the most advanced technology



Up to 20hrs



Wireless DMX



Smart App Control



IP65 Waterproof



Flicker Free

Talkback+

Detect all available lights, set them up, check their status, configure DMX addresses & DMX profiles.

TruColour Calibration

Individually calibrated lights lead to 100% colour consistency & exact colour reproduction of colour temperatures.

Green / Magenta correction

Adjust green / magenta colours during content creation to reduce post-production work.

Anti-theft Feature

The lights give a visual & audible alarm & send notifications to the AsteraApp if they are being moved during an event.



CONTACT OUR TEAM FOR A FREE DEMO

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