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- / The Weasle Eicke Scholarship
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- / Melbourne's New Winter Lights Festival Rialto Aglow
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- / Brian Coleman: The Gaffa Tapes

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- / Dear Reality Exoverb
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Cover Photo – Solaris at The Malthouse. Photo Credit: Pia Johnson.
Contents Photo – The 67th Eurovision Song Contest. Photo Credit: Sarah Louise Bennett.

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The Australian Festival Industry Conference full 2023 program unveiled



AFIC Founder and Event Director - Carlina Ericson

The Australian Festival Industry Conference (AFIC) has unveiled its full program for its third annual event to be held on Wednesday 30th and Thursday 31st August at Luna Park, Sydney.

AFIC is being delivered in partnership with H2 Insurance Solutions and is now the Asia Pacific's leading industry meeting place for festival management personnel, encompassing music, arts and culture, food and drink, sporting and 'ideas' festivals.

Spanning two days, the conference features:

- Two keynote presentations by Rhoda Roberts AO and Anthony Bastic AM
- Updates from the NSW Government and Austrade
- Presentations from more than 20 industry-leading professionals
- Three panel discussions
- Two evening networking events
- And a Trade Exhibition

AFIC founder and Event Director, Carlina Ericson, says the conference program will deliver invaluable learning and networking opportunities for the industry:

“This year’s program offers learnings like never before across a range of hot topics such as accessibility, sustainability and crowd science. Delegates will hear the latest research on audience purchasing behaviour. They’ll also walk away with insights into how to maximise marketing effectiveness, and how best to prepare for crises through careful communications planning. This year is certainly not one to miss!”

AFIC’s keynote presenters are two of the industry’s visionaries and creatives, Rhoda Roberts AO, and Anthony Bastic AM.

Rhoda’s keynote will cover how festival directors can co-design their programs with First Nations peoples, and says attending the Australian Festival Industry Conference offers a remarkable opportunity to gain insights from Indigenous and industry leaders, participate in crucial conversations, and collectively work towards creating festivals that are culturally sensitive, inclusive and authentic.

“Together, we can build a festival landscape that embraces diversity, fosters mutual understanding, and celebrates the rich cultural tapestry of our nation,” said Rhoda.

Anthony’s presentation will explore how organisers can activate non-traditional public spaces and take an inclusive approach to program content development; especially relevant for local and state government producers.

“By appealing to diverse audiences, we are fostering a sense of belonging, amplifying community engagement and embracing our shared cultural heritage. The spaces become dynamic platforms for creativity, innovation and collaboration,” said Anthony.

Delegates will also receive timely updates from two government personnel:

Samantha Palmer, General Manager Visitor Economy and Client Programs, Austrade, will cover what the recently reimaged Thrive 2023 visitor economy strategy means for the festival industry, along with education and funding opportunities; and the Hon. John Graham, MLC, NSW Minister for the Arts; Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy and Minister for Jobs and Tourism, will provide an update on the government’s priorities moving forward.

A key theme being explored this year is ‘sustainability’. AFIC will feature an Australian-first presentation by Justyna Jochym, CEO of Festival City Adelaide. Justyna will be unveiling Adelaide’s first ever city-wide event sustainability strategy. She’ll outline on how Adelaide’s major festivals have been collectively working together in partnership with Green Industries SA and Green Music Australia on the strategy, the first of its kind in Australia!



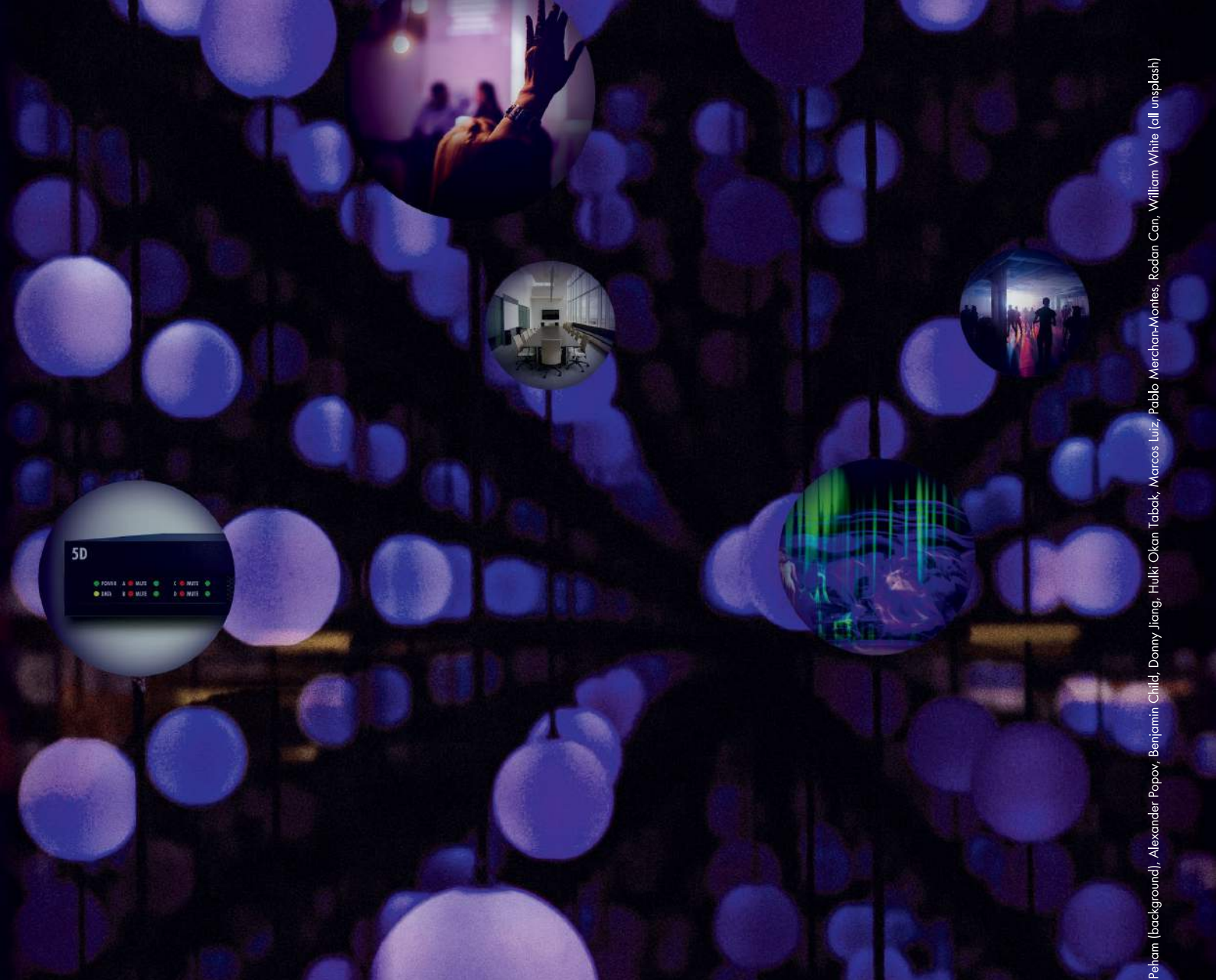
Rhoda Roberts



Anthony Bastic

Greg Donovan, Managing Director of Big Red Bash, will discuss how he manages waste at the world’s most remote music festival. He also joins a dedicated panel of experts covering sustainability.

Best practice standards and methods for accessibility will be covered via a panel discussion, featuring Liz Martin, CEO of Accessible Arts, and Ashleigh O’Gara, Event Manager of Ability Fest (The Untitled Group).



Photos: Thomas Peham (background), Alexander Popov, Benjamin Child, Donny Jiang, Huki Okan Tabak, Marcos Luiz, Pablo Merchán-Montes, Rodan Can, William White (all unsplash)

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A third panel has been added this year, entitled 'Ask the Experts': a new Q&A-style opportunity for AFIC delegates to ask a panel of experienced industry experts almost anything! Panellists include Lisa Dowsett, Head of Events & Partnerships at Northern Beaches Council; Shannon Green, Senior Manager of Business Development at Sydney Showground; and Rhoda Roberts AO.

Between them, they've managed almost every type of festival or major event imaginable, from curating nationally significant Indigenous events such as Parrtjima Festival, to producing food and sporting festivals such as Good Food Month and the Australian Running Festival, to event crowd control and safety, to music festivals such as Glastonbury.

"We're also excited to be bringing AFIC to Sydney for the very first time", says Carlina.

It's the first time AFIC has been staged at Luna Park in Sydney; one of Sydney's leading entertainment venues. It offers spectacular views overlooking the harbour and provides the perfect setting for delegates to network at both our evening events.

Tickets are on sale now until 22 August, 2023.

To view the program and to purchase tickets, visit australianfestivalconference.com.au.

AFIC's 2023 Speakers:

- **Rhoda Roberts AO**
Creative Director, Parrtjima Festival and First Nations Advisor, AGB Events
- **Anthony Bastic AM**
CEO & Creative Director, AGB Events
- **Samantha Palmer**
General Manager Visitor Economy and Client Programs, Austrade
- **The Hon. John Graham, MLC**
NSW Minister for the Arts; Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy; Minister for Jobs and Tourism
- **Justyna Jochym:**
CEO, Festival City Adelaide
- **Greg Donovan:**
Managing Director, Outback Music Festival Group
- **Ashleigh O'Gara:**
Event Manager, Ability Fest (Untitled Group)
- **Caitlin McNaughton:**
Manager, Research and Insights, Patternmakers
- **Andrew Macarthur:**
Managing Director, Clean Vibes and City Return and Earn
- **Shannon Green:**
Senior Manager, Business Development, Sydney Showground (Royal Agricultural Society of NSW)
- **Liz Martin:**
CEO, Accessible Arts
- **Sally Porteous:**
Managing Director, Red Lanyard & The Event Planners Workshop; Founder, Event Managers Network
- **Lisa Dowsett:**
Head of Events & Partnerships, Northern Beaches Council
- **Jake Challenor:**
CEO & Co-Founder, Sound Story
- **Alana Hay:**
Founder and Managing Director, Milestone Creative
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- **Dr. Abbas Elmualim**
Partner, Bold Futures

A PATHWAY TO JOBS IN LIVE MUSIC

THE WEASLE EICKE SCHOLARSHIP



Weasle

The Victorian Minister for Creative Industries, Steve Dimopoulos, has announced a \$190,000 grant for CrewCare to roll out its 'A Pathway to Jobs in Live Music: The Weasle Eicke Scholarship' program:

"Victoria is the creative State and hundreds of thousands of workers power our 34-billion-dollar creative economy," the Minister said. "We're growing our creative workforce and backing workers to develop their skills, build their careers and deliver the experiences that make Victoria so unique."

CrewCare, a volunteer not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the welfare of all production workers in the live music industry sector, wishes to acknowledge and thank the Victorian Government for its ongoing commitment to the many businesses and live music workers who contribute so much to the Victorian gig economy.

About The Scholarship

A Pathway to Jobs in Live Music: The Weasel Eicke Scholarship 2023 (WES), is a revised initiative of the 2022 program delivered by CrewCare, based on the successes and response of last year's program. The scholarship is specifically designed to develop the skills of students studying Live Production and Sound Production in tertiary institutions, and to upskill casual workers from crewing companies.

The program will be delivered by the CrewCare WES team in partnership with multiple tertiary educators and Australia's leading production providers through facilitating training and job opportunities. Successful applicants will receive a stipend of \$100 per day for each of the 10 training days. Regional students will also receive \$100 per night towards their accommodation costs while attending the training days in Melbourne. While undertaking work experience, trainees will also receive relevant award rates.

With practical experience and networking opportunities, the program will ensure participants succeed as future leaders in the live entertainment industry.

As Andrew McKinnon, CrewCare Board Chairman, points out: "The Weasel Eicke Scholarship Program fills the gap between education and vocational experience,

preparing participants to take on employment with a ready-built network of mentors and employers."

Deb Hatton and John Phillips, RMIT VE Program Coordinating team (Live Production and Sound Production), also commented that: "The scholarship has been a great opportunity for RMIT VE's Diploma students studying Live and Sound Production skills. It has proved that formal training integrated with industry, amplifies the options available to early career people, helping them develop and land professional (technical) roles in production while finishing off their qualifications.

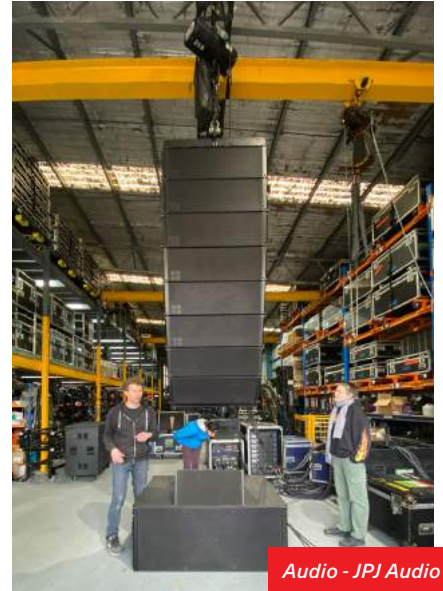
The Diploma of Live Production and Technical Services, and the Diploma of Music Industry Sound Production, are in full support of collaborating with industry and CrewCare in 2023, (and beyond) to continue to benefit a wide range of careers in Live Music and Performance."

Rebuilding The Workforce

The flow-on effects from the COVID-19 pandemic saw a mass exodus of skilled workers, employers estimating that the number of skilled workers is down 40% compared to pre-pandemic levels. The quantity of shows being scheduled is also greater than ever before to compensate for the shortfall sustained from lockdowns. This has led to immense delivery pressures for crew with



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fewer experienced leaders on site to oversee new staff.

CrewCare foreshadowed this situation in 2020 which led to partnering with Creative Victoria, production suppliers, tertiary educators, and arts organisations. It successfully delivered The Assisted Music Business Industry Training (AMBIT) 2020, designed to up-skill technical crew during COVID, the training modules of which were completed by 385 attendees. It also delivered the Weasle Eicke Scholarship (WES) pilot program in 2022.

From this, 85% of trainees have been offered ongoing, regular work within the live music industry, and 22% have been employed full-time.

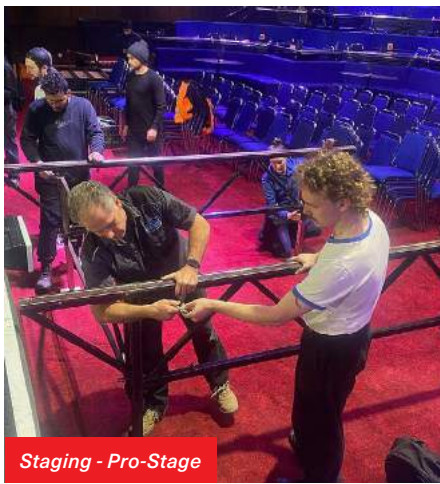
Jamie Russell, Senior Manager at Hire & Production ResolutionX, believes that: "There's certainly been a disconnect between new staff wanting to break into the industry and established suppliers. This program really closed that gap and allowed us to engage with one another to train those who needed the skills and address the industry's staffing shortages."

"We've now happily engaged 5 of the trainees into our casual staff pool, working in both our onsite production work and our warehouse environment. To welcome them into our business knowing they've had not only the specific training with us but spending time with some of our well-respected industry partners made that recruitment decision a very easy one, and it's paid us back in spades with a couple of these staff becoming consistently booked by our team."

"To see the next generation coming up through this program and getting that same kick out of lighting like we all once did, was nice for our crew to experience. We couldn't have been prouder of our involvement and are thankful to the CrewCare team who brought this all together. It's been a win-win for everyone involved."

Apply Online Now:

crewcare.org.au/weasle-eicke-scholarship



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Lighting - ResolutionX

Why 'Weasle' Eicke?

This scholarship is named in honour of a beloved industry leader and veteran Wellesley 'Weasle' Eicke, who prematurely left us in 2021.

Weasle was an accomplished lighting operator and technician who committed his career to lead Australia's longest serving crewing company, Gig Power.

His work ethic was outstanding and the standards he expected of his staff were no different. And he famously led from the front. Often, when running crews of 100 casuals, he could still be found teaching a newcomer how to roll a multicore into a roadcase, or the best way to pack a truck.

He was a true champion of bringing all people along for the ride. Weasle worked with literally thousands of people over the years, his enthusiasm and guidance helping them on their path in the industry. This program is an embodiment of everything Weasle stood for and what he displayed in his professional life. The scholarship is a fitting tribute to an industry great who was taken too young.

"The Weasle Eicke Scholarship will advance workers and students in Live Music to direct employment opportunities while honouring a much-loved industry leader," says Andrew McKinnon, CrewCare Foundation Director. "CrewCare is pleased to have the Victorian Government's support as we work to address the critical skill shortage the live music workforce faces as it rebuilds to operate at full capacity."



Video - Woohah

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First GLP impression X5 IP Bars head to Sydney for The Tina Turner Musical

Photo Credit: Daniel Boud



Neg Earth supplies LDs Bruno Poet and Max Narula with “flawless” new battens

The latest production of Tina: The Tina Turner Musical in Australia is the first show worldwide to feature GLP’s new impression X5 IP Bar. The IP-rated linear LED batten contains 18 powerful 40W RGBL LEDs, a wide zoom range, and next generation iQ.Gamut colour calibration algorithm to guarantee superior colour rendering.

Designed by Bruno Poet since the original production in 2018, the Tina Turner Musical is playing in several cities around the world, but only in Sydney has GLP’s staple impression X4 Bar been replaced by the new impression X5 IP batten. Neg Earth supplied the first 24 of these after the rental company’s project manager, Lindsey Markham, had suggested them to Poet and the show’s international associate LD (and co-collaborator), Max Narula. The production at Sydney’s Theatre Royal is the ninth version of the show, which is also running in London,

Stuttgart and on tour in the US, and is now serving as a tribute to the Queen of rock ‘n’ roll following her sad death.

Narula explains the circumstances surrounding the unexpected adoption of the new fixtures for the nine-month season in Sydney, followed by a two-year tour of Australia. “Traditionally, we have used X4 Bar 20s, but when we were looking last August there was no available kit in Oz, so we were asked to reach out to companies in the UK. We’ve worked with Neg Earth on arena shows previously; their personal attention to detail is peerless, and since they no longer wished to invest in further X4 Bars, Lindsey instead suggested trying the impression X5 IP Bar, which we didn’t know existed.”

GLP UK’s Simon Barrett provided the rough specs, and along with Neg Earth will provide backup for the first field test. Local service company Resolution X is also on hand to provide local service support.

If there had been any limitations with the X4 Bars, believes Narula, it had been the slight lack of brightness and ability to handle warm colours well. All that has now changed with the impression X5 IP Bar.

The new firmware ensured complete compatibility with the X4 colour palette and enables precise programming on the 18 individual pixels. “We are very picky with the colours in theatre because we have time to tweak and fine tune over the show’s four-week technical rehearsals; and this includes the new lime chip,” Narula continues.

“You can take your X4 shows and transfer them onto X5, and it gives you individual pixel control on RGBL as well as RGB, which is brilliant.” Narula says there is a virtually limitless number of attributes presented by the impression X5 IP Bar: “They are absolutely fantastic: they’re bright and the colours are outstanding, with wonderful saturates. In fact, the spectrum on the warm side is now unmatched. In addition, they are silent, and the dimming curve is as brilliant as on the X4. The silent operation is vitally important,” he adds, “as a lot of the scenes in the show are incredibly quiet.”

Further to this, Narula highlights the compactness of the unit, which is a great asset on this production given the way the truss is designed. Consequently, the 24 impression X5 IP Bars in use form an integral part of the show’s design and handle “some big light curtain scenes” effortlessly.



Ruva Ngwenya and Ikettes



Ruva Ngwenya

Finally, Max Narula also notes another extremely neat addition: the much requested two-degree frost feature, which is now also available on the X5 IP Bar.

The take-away, he says, is that any designer can simply flip from X4 to X5 and notice no difference “apart from brilliantly new bright light,” adding: “If people want to use it, they know they can just drag and drop.”

His enthusiasm is supported by Bruno Poet

himself, who says: “Since Max and the team did all the setup in Australia, my first glimpse of the light curtains in action was when I arrived during cast dress rehearsals on stage.”

“I was immediately blown away by the improvement over the original X4 Bars. The additional intensity made the light curtain look bolder and crisper, giving us a better balance against the video images behind. I was also really impressed by the quality of the colour we

could achieve with the new lime chip. I’m now a huge fan of the impression X5 IP Bar, which will be my go-to light curtain for future productions. A huge thanks to Neg Earth and the GLP team for getting these first units ready for us.”

In summary, Max Narula says: “GLP have shown us how to design [shows] using light curtains. Now we have a weatherproof version, which is great. I must say it’s fun to be the first show in the world to use these.”

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RIALTO AGLOW



The New Winter Lights Festival Arriving in Melbourne

In partnership with the Victorian State Government and the City of Melbourne, Rialto has announced a new winter lights festival coming to the city of Melbourne on July 19th. 'Rialto Aglow' is a 10-day festival, featuring interactive light installations from some of Australia's most exciting public artists, nightly live entertainment from 6-9pm, and festival-themed cocktails, food and bites from 5pm until late.

With a new large-scale projection artwork leading into the Rialto Piazza, interactive works of light, music, sound and colour will immerse the Piazza from Collins St to Flinders Lane and King Street.

Large-scale works from Simone Chua's prolific Amigo & Amigo studio (VIVID Sydney,

Canary Wharf London, Eurovision 2023) include Accordion, a multisensory large-scale installation inspired by the traditional instrument of the same name. The work is comprised of six giant colourful interactive archways, each with an interactive pad at the base that can be jumped on to create unique waves of colour, light and music. Accordion has toured major festivals from London to Hong Kong, before arriving at Rialto Aglow.

Lunar Lamp Posts is Amigo & Amigo's new large-scale 10 x 10m interactive light installation inspired by the cycles of the moon. The lamp posts are designed in a circular pattern showing the moon's different phases around the Earth, with over 40 different music sounds and interactive lighting animations. The audience are invited to touch and play as the forest of moons illuminates and animates.

Said Simone about the works: "Bringing light artworks into public spaces creates safe spaces and changes the fabric of our city, inviting discovery and play from audiences of all ages. There's something really romantic and urban about Accordion, while the Lunar Lamp Posts conjure up the magic of the moon.

Our mission is to inspire play and cultural connection with our works, while at the same time, transcend language and culture barriers. We love to create destinations in unusual or unexpected places that spark curiosity and joy."

Beloved Australian neon light artist Carla O'Brien (White Night, Burning Man, Festival of Light) will also have a range of works popping up around Rialto Aglow, through her new studio Volter International. Highlighted works include a playful live instrument installation, Neon Play the Music, and the iridescent Double Rainbow Love Heart Archway, while all her works provide irresistible photo opportunities, much like Carla's Neon Angel Wings did for Katy Perry at Burning Man festival in 2016.

Entrance to Rialto Aglow, and live entertainment each night is free for Melbournians and visitors of all ages.

It commences at 5pm every day until late, from July 19-29, 2023.

Visit rialto.com.au/aglow for more information.

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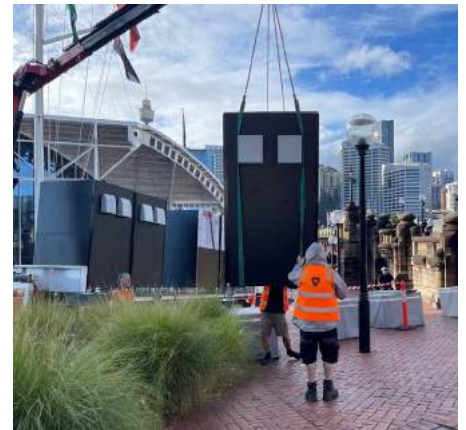
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Vivid Sydney 2023's WORLD FIRST



TDC Captures the Beauty of our Natural World at Vivid Sydney 2023 with world first deployment of Barco laser projectors



Whether they were aware of it or not, patrons that visited Vivid Sydney 2023 witnessed The Beauty of our Natural World on the largest installation of laser projectors ever mounted in the Southern Hemisphere. This astonishing array of over 150 laser projectors deployed throughout the Festival by TDC featured 30 state-of-the-art UDM-4K30 systems from visualization technology leader, Barco from Belgium.

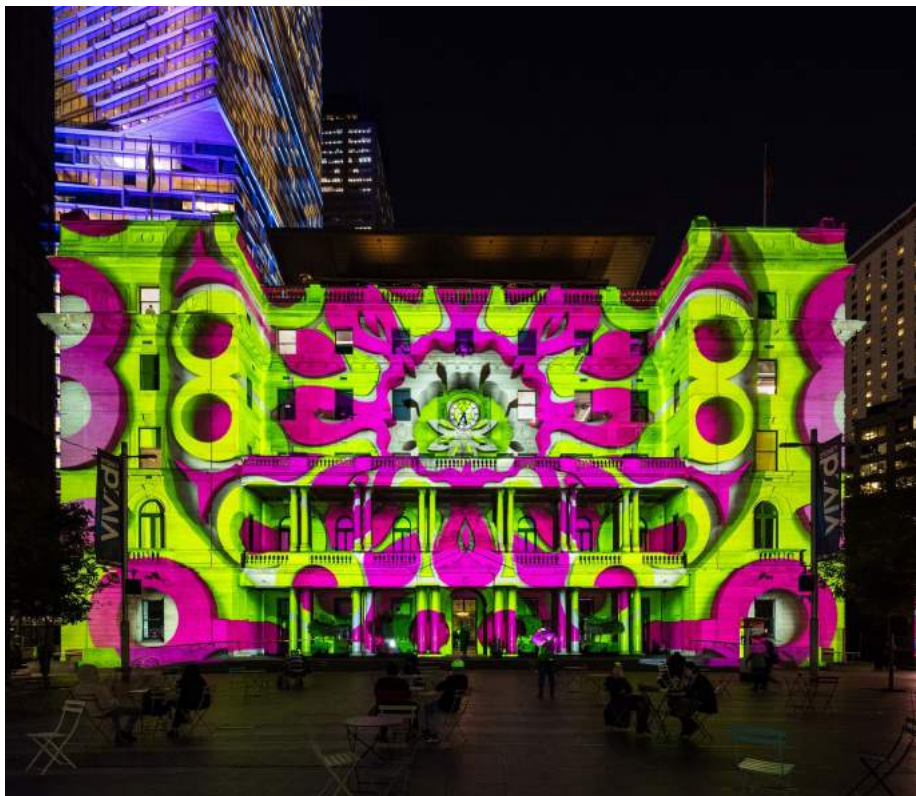
TDC's fleet of over 150 laser projectors illuminated multiple sites across Vivid Sydney 2023, including projection onto Australia's largest museum object, the HMAS Vampire, as well as Customs House, ASN Clocktower and, of course, the Sydney Opera House, all of which displayed visually spectacular artworks themed around Vivid Sydney, naturally celebrating The Beauty of our Natural World.

Michael Hassett, Founder & Managing Director at TDC, said about the event: "Every year TDC evolves its technology offering,

and this year our project teams were very excited to be achieving a world first in laser projection. The Barco technology has standout features including high brightness, low-latency processing and a robust design, plus Barco is the only projection system that meets our requirements for colour uniformity, reduced power consumption and return on investment."

Michael added that things grew larger, but also more streamlined: "Each year, we provide manufacturers with some processing and operational suggestions for improvement





in deployment, which this year included low operational costs and monitoring using our TDC LiveView platform, which allowed us to operate the equipment from one central location. We were delighted to have that direct feedback included in the UDM-4K30, which

visitors to Vivid Sydney were the first to see in action anywhere."

Vivid Sydney Festival Director, Gill Minervini added, "We always aim to improve the sensory experience for visitors to Vivid Sydney and one of the ways we do that is

by partnering with technology experts like TDC. Experiencing the glorious vibrancy and fragility of our natural world has never been more important, and we were thrilled that visitors were able to immerse themselves in the artworks deeper than ever before."

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Bose Professional PowerShareX Amplifier Series

Bose Professional have released three new amplifiers - PSX1204D, PSX2404D and PSX4804D. These smart amplifiers, with Dante digital audio, offer 1200, 2400 and 4800 watts of rated power across four channels, providing the power and functionality required for a variety of applications.

PowerShareX amps easily integrate with Bose Professional DSPs, loudspeakers, and the entire ControlSpace ecosystem. They provide proven Powersoft technology allowing system designers access to innovative power-sharing flexibility to dynamically allocate power evenly or asymmetrically across outputs, high peak power capability to deliver maximum output from all Bose Professional loudspeakers, and Dante connectivity to support up to four digital input channels and four analog inputs for line-level source connections. All within a space-saving 1RU design. Available Q3 of 2023.

Australia: Bose Pty Ltd pro_anz@bose.com or 1800 844 943

New Zealand: Bose Pty Ltd pro_anz@bose.com or 1800 844 943



Adamson IS7c 2-way speaker

The IS7c is an ultra-compact, light-weight, passive 2-way coaxial speaker from Adamson. It uses an ND7-C co-axial transducer utilizing Adamson's Advanced Cone Architecture. ND7 comprises a 7" low frequency section and a dome compression driver.

The IS7c offers a frequency range of 80Hz to 20 kHz with 130 dB of maximum peak SPL, as well as a nominal concentric dispersion of 90 degrees. Rigging points are available in the form of top and bottom mini-SLR discs, each containing 3/8" threaded insert. Two Speakon NL4 connectors and a 2-point barrier strip are available for connection. The IS7c will be available as a weatherized product, offering superior corrosion resistance and an elevated IP rating.

Australia: CMI cmi.com.au
 or 03 9315 2244

New Zealand: Direct Imports
directimports.co.nz or 06 873 0129



Renkus-Heinz UBX Series column loudspeakers

The new UBX Series column loudspeakers from Renkus-Heinz use their patented beam-steering technology, combined with Passive UniBeam™ Technology to ensure precise coverage and high intelligibility. Utilizing neodymium 3-inch full-range drivers in narrow cabinets, the UBX Series has an incredibly small footprint and included wall mount brackets allow for plumb surface mounting.

Available in 3 models: UBX4 (4 drivers), UBX8 (8 drivers), UBX16 (16 drivers).

All 3 models are weather-resistant (IP64) out of the box with gland nut-protected input cover and use high-quality audio transformers for 70V/100V constant voltage operation.

Australia: Amber Technology
www.ambertech.com.au or 1800 251 367
New Zealand: Amber Technology
amber.co.nz or 0800 42 62 37

NEW GEAR

Astera PlutoFresnel

PlutoFresnel is an LED wash offering a 15° to 60° beam angle without any colour fringing, both wired and wireless DMX control and an inbuilt battery with up to 3 hours run time. It uses a full spectrum high rendition Titan LED engine with output comparable to a traditional 300W Tungsten Fresnel yet uses 80W, and 4.5kg in weight.



Australia: ULA Group Info@ulagroup.com +61 7 5509 4633
New Zealand: ULA Group nz@ulagroup.com +64 9 218 6532

Astera LeoFresnel

LeoFresnel also has a 15° to 60° beam angle and uses the Titan LED engine to output equivalent to a standard 1K tungsten lamp (and even higher when running in 6500K daylight white.) It features wired or wireless control, 2 hours of onboard battery runtime and draws 250W, and 14kg in weight. The Fresnel lens is detachable, allowing addition of projection lenses or gobos.



Dynalink A3245 HDMI KVM extender

Altronics have released the new Dynalink A3245 HDMI KVM extender system with USB. This unit has been designed to extend both HDMI signals and USB peripherals for device control using economical Cat6/6a cabling. It achieves distances up to 70m and is 4K @ 60Hz ready. KVM passthrough allows remote control of source device at the display end. Installation is made easier thanks to power over cable (PoC) support.

Australia: Altronics
altronics.com.au or 08 9428 2188
New Zealand: Altronics altronics.com.au

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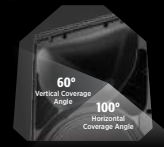
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GROUP TECHNOLOGIES



JBL COL Series Slim Column Loudspeakers

JBL have released two Slim Column Loudspeakers, COL600 (24-inch 600 mm) and COL800 (32-inch 800 mm). They are designed for a variety of applications, including conference and meeting rooms, lecture halls, retail stores, concourses, transit spaces, and fill applications.

Both units feature wide horizontal and narrow vertical coverage with a built-in 10° down-tilt to the aim. Racetrack woofers provide maximum radiating area in a column form factor. Multi-tap transformers allow for use on either 70V or 100V distributed speaker lines, while the speaker is switchable for direct 8-ohm operation.

COL600 and COL800 are IP54 rated and available in black or white, with two included L-brackets.

Australia: MadisonAV
www.madisonav.com.au
 or 1800 00 77 80
New Zealand: JPRO
www.jpro.co.nz
 or (09) 275 8710



AMX CE Series Universal Control Extenders

AMX has four new Universal Control Extenders, including CE-IO4 with 4 I/O Ports, CE-IRS4 with 4 IR/S Ports, CE-REL8 with 8 Relays, and CE-COM2 with 2 Serial Ports.

An open control API makes it simple to integrate CE Extenders with any IP control systems or apps and the integrated web interface enables configuration without specialized applications.

Compatible with any IP control system, compact form factor, low-cost, professional-grade expansion option, web configuration interface, and HControl native.

NEW GEAR

AMX SVSI N4321D Audio Transceiver

N4321D Transceivers are designed for corporate applications, colleges and universities, casinos, convention and entertainment centres. They provide robust Dante, AES67, or PCM networked audio over IP and analog transcoding, allowing point-to-point or point-to-multi-point audio delivery.

The N4321D connects independent IP and analog audio networks and supports balanced and unbalanced analog audio. It supports converting from PCM to Dante, Dante to analog, analog to AES67, or nearly any other combination of these technologies.

An open API makes it compatible with any AMX or third-party controller on the market. With two auto-sensing gigabit Ethernet ports, units can also be used to bridge low-latency multi-channel audio between separate networks. One Ethernet port is PoE for use with a PoE switch, eliminating the need for an external power supply.



AMX MUSE Next-Gen Automation Platform

AMX are releasing the next generation of their Automation Platform – AMX MUSE.

MUSE allows simultaneously processing multiple scripting languages, supporting no-code and low-code capabilities and simplifying routine development tasks.

AMX MUSE will also enable users to work in standard IDEs with the ability to mass deploy across forthcoming purpose-built controllers and MUSE-embedded HARMAN devices.

Due to be officially launched later in 2023, MUSE will provide a modern, standards-based option to the longstanding AMX NetLinX control platform.



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Sennheiser TeamConnect (TC) Bar Solutions

Sennheiser has entered the unified communications A/V bar market with flexible all-in-one devices for small (TeamConnect Bar S) and mid-sized (TeamConnect Bar M) meeting rooms and collaboration spaces.

The TC Bar S features 4 microphones and 2 speakers, while TC Bar M has 6 microphones and 4 speakers. Both easily integrate with any meeting platform and can be further enhanced with other compatible products, including those from Sennheiser.

Mounting options like; wall mount, VESA mount, tabletop or freestanding. The option of using Dante for adding extension mics and/or a 2nd external USB camera make the device even more scalable.

Full-range stereo speakers ensure natural speech and outstanding intelligibility. Integrated beamforming technology enables seamless transition between presenters and offers freedom of movement and configuration within the space.

The built-in DSP gives users the opportunity to further optimise room acoustics. The TC Bars also come with an automatic conference and music mode switch to provide the best audio to match the content.

The 4K Ultra HD camera is enhanced by AI features like "Autoframing" and "Person Tiling", enabling all remote participants to clearly see everyone in the room. With advanced AI, even the smallest gestures and facial expressions are conveyed to ensure increased meeting inclusion and engagement.

TC Bar Solutions follow industry best security practices, and their configuration is password protected. The communication to the Sennheiser Control Cockpit, as well as 3rd party media control systems, is encrypted using industry standard Transport Layer Security 1.2 and safe from misuse. The TC Bars also support IEEE 802.1x network authentication and, of course, for additional privacy, a lens cap is included.

Australia: Sennheiser
en-au.sennheiser.com
 or 02 9910 6700

New Zealand: Sennheiser
en-nz.sennheiser.com
 or 09 580 0489



Williams AV Digi-Wave AIM transceiver

Digi-Wave AIM (Advanced Interpretation Module), a portable digital communication system, includes new features to support growing interpretation, bilingual and multilingual scenario demand in the Pro AV market. The AIM mode includes all of the current features of the Digi-Wave 400 series, including intercom and courtroom modes, and now comes with a new Q&A mode for easy question-and-answer sessions. This makes it perfect for international meetings and bilingual tours, with the ability to switch between two languages and multiple open mics for each language. Built with flexibility in mind, the new AIM mode features:

- Interpretation Q&A mode – easy to switch between two languages and allows for multiple open mics for each language
- Interpretation 24 channels mode – the most channels among comparable devices
- Customized channel naming – customizable with up to 5 characters or select from one of the 100 available ISO language codes
- Subgroup feature – allows interpretation groups to be divided into subsets of channels
- Control function – allows administrators the ability to program channel names and subgroups offline
- The Digi-Wave AIM transceiver is compatible with Digi-Wave 400 receivers with firmware version 1.3.0 or higher. Receivers needing a firmware update can do so through Williams AV for a fee. Additionally, for a fee, current Digi-Wave 400 transceivers can be upgraded to include the AIM functionality through Williams AV



Australia: Amber Technology
orders@ambertech.com.au or 02 9998 3800
New Zealand: Now Sound LTD
info@nsl.co.nz or 09 913 6212

Audio-Technica AT2020USB-XP Cardioid Condenser USB Microphone

AT2020USB-XP is a USB microphone designed for streamers, podcasters and other content creators. It includes a touch-sensitive mute switch, a headphone jack with volume control and personal mix control to monitor the microphone. It uses a 24-bit 192 kHz sampling rate, three levels of noise reduction (via selector switch with LED indicator), automatic gain control (with LED indicator), and the inclusion of a pop filter. A light inside the mic changes colour to indicate power, mute and peak status.

The microphone comes with a custom desk stand and clip-on pop filter, 95 mm (3/8") -16 to 16mm (5/8") -27 threaded adapter, and a 3.1 m USB-C to USB-A cable with a USB-A to USB-C adapter. The AT8455 shock mount, to effectively absorb vibration noise, is sold separately. The microphone is available in stores and online for an RRP of \$349.

Launching alongside the AT2020USB-XP are two new mounting solutions. The first one is the AT8703 microphone desktop stand for \$79 RRP and the AT8700 adjustable microphone boom arm for \$159 RRP. Included with the boom arm are four USB cable clips, four XLR cable clips, and a table clamp.

Australia: TAG tag.com.au (02) 9519 0900
New Zealand: Direct Imports directimports.co.nz (06) 8730129



LAYERS OF MULTIPLICITY

When you listen to your favourite recordings by other artists what do you hear? If you're anything like me, what you perceive is often vastly different to the average listener, particularly when it comes to production techniques like double- and triple-tracking, harmonies and layering. But not always. Sometimes we're in the dark like everyone else.

Let's say you're about to embark on a production that needs to sound big, wide and spectacular. You've already decided that a minimalist approach is not the way to go and you're determined to push the production's sonic boundaries. What's the worst thing you can do in that circumstance that will almost certainly doom the production to failure?

Stall mid-process.

Far too many of us balk at the prospect of generating excessive channel counts in our productions, even when our imagination suggests otherwise. Sometimes it's because

we've heard too many old-school producers quip that excessive numbers of tracks infers indecisiveness, or a lack of ideas. At other times we find ourselves working with a client who's easily spooked by the apparent confusion generated by multiple recordings of anything.

In either circumstance, the moment things get a little tricky or confusing the temptation's always there to throw your hands in the air and pull the pin on the process. What you're left with then is a product that's half-baked; caught in no-man's-land between a desire to expand into more complex territory or shrink back to a place of relative safety.

But a more insidious problem then arises. We remain subconsciously tethered to our original concept and fall back on tried and trusted tools of engagement, stereo reverbs, delays, synths and mic techniques, to generate the 'width and depth' that our original approach would have more ambitiously provided.

There's still scope for large-scale mix outcomes using only these techniques, of course, but often the results are a pale imitation of your original concept.

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Stay The Course

So, before you embark on multi-tracking a single part, layering vocal harmonies, or building width into a production via a multiplicity of performances, you need to reaffirm your commitment to the approach, remembering that it's not always easy to pull off, invariably breeds doubt mid-process, and inevitably involves more time and effort than more modest alternatives might require.

Moreover, before you hit the 'go' button on any kind of sonic endeavour like this it pays to be clear about what it is you're trying to achieve. It's imprudent to dive headlong into a complex recording process if you're unclear about the sonic aims or even the methods you intend to use to achieve them. Without a plan or process in mind there's every chance you'll end up in the weeds and need a machete to hack your way out.

And if you don't have a plan, what then?

Learn to develop one, just like you would any other production or engineering technique.

The Planning Permit

One way to develop a more planned approach to your future large-scale productions is to analyse some of the techniques employed by others.

As a first exercise, try analysing a song you listen to constantly, focussing in on how each component of the instrumentation is represented in the final mix.

Start by writing down all the component parts on a large sheet of paper over the course of several repeated listens. Once you're satisfied you have them documented, start listening to each sound individually (not the song as a whole) asking yourself how each sound has been recorded and mixed. You may not get this exactly right, of course; it's hard deciphering the nuts and bolts of a sound from the outside, but give it your best shot regardless.

Listen critically. Don't jump to conclusions. Write down specifics about each sound, not vague adjectives like 'warm' or 'big'.

Where is the sound placed? Is it panned? Is it a single instrument or five? Is it buried low in the mix or leading the arrangement? Is it filtered? Is it broken up into several harmonic pieces? Is it comprised of a large cluster of instruments? Is it chorusing or pitchy?

Listen for details, clues or any giveaways that might help reveal the technique behind the sound.

When you apply your exceptional powers of audio analysis and deduction to a familiar track, one thing that might surprise you is that the song is not quite the construction you thought it was. Some of your favourite ingredients aren't quite what you'd assumed them to be – and yet you thought you knew the song so well! All this time you've heard a particular sound a certain way and subconsciously come

to a bunch of erroneous conclusions, never noticing your mistakes until now.

These errors might seem harmless enough, or even irrelevant. But when you're in the business of crafting song productions for a living, mixing complex arrangements, or writing and recording, it matters a great deal. Any misinformed sense of 'knowing' that you squirrel away in that brain of yours can later prove damaging to your own process, sometimes taking years to extricate, especially if they're long-held beliefs.

And nothing sends you up the garden path faster than a self-imposed myth.

An example of this might be a sound in your favourite track that you'd always assumed was a stereo recording of a single performance. But now, when you listen more critically with pen and paper in hand, lo and behold!, turns out it's comprised of multiple performances of a single arranged part. There might be two, three or even more performances in there where you'd always assumed there was one!

In the same song, that especially wide stereo synth part you've grown so fond of over the years is not a single stereo track at all, but rather a single chord featuring two or three inversions, and multiple panned sounds all with slight pitch variations. What makes this sound so massive is not the fancy synth patch you'd always assumed it to be, but rather microscopic variations between several hitherto hidden individual performances.

Details like this are often lost on the average listener, but not you, not ever! So how have these production techniques slipped past your ear unnoticed until now?

Critical analysis, not casual listening.

These 'component parts' are harder to determine sometimes from an outsider's perspective, even when you're an accomplished producer. But if you're in the business of making music for a living, it pays to be aware of how certain sounds are constructed by others, particularly if they influence your own musical aesthetic.

Micro Idiosyncracies

There are a million ways to layer sounds for scale, width and depth in a production; far too many to even begin to touch on here.

But it helps to understand why all these layers, multiple performances, audio clusters (call them what you will), have the effect on your ear that they do. They all have something in common; micro-idiosyncrasies, 'fingerprints', if you will, that combine together to make a sound huge.

Every performance has its own unique fingerprint, and individual recordings need only vary microscopically to provide stereo width, complexity, chorusing and scale that no reverb or echo can authentically mimic. Exploiting this characteristic of an individual sound is what

then allows your next production to sound big. Frankly, orchestras have been doing this for centuries! Shall we tell them they've been wrong all along; that you really only need one violin, a viola, a timpani and some reverb to sound big?

So, forget the nay-sayers; they mostly have no idea what they're talking about anyway. Allow your next big production to take full advantage of the innate sense of scale that layered sounds can create. Try planning the piece on that same large sheet of paper you used earlier, only this time you're going to imagine the arrangement in detail yourself.

What sounds do you want to appear close and intimate in the final mix? What sounds do you want to use to frame the song and provide width, and what will establish the sense of 'horizon'; giving it the scale you desire?

Remember, the layering of sounds is all about their differences, microscopic or otherwise, so you don't necessarily want to make them all perfect. You may record 15 individual human performances on an acoustic instrument, or you might generate 10 different sounds from one MIDI file using different patches and micro adjustments to pitch. You may like the slight imperfections exposed when two individual, hard-panned performances come together to create one massive sound that appears to flutter in the stereo image. Conversely, when there's a dozen performances all panned in almost mono up the back of the song, you may want them to be as tightly performed as possible, so as to create scale but not mayhem. The choice is ultimately yours.

Regardless of how you build the components of your new epic track, don't let the purists who say 'less is more' influence your thinking too much – sometimes that advice is garbage; a rule based on a theory that applies to nothing in particular. If Bohemian Rhapsody had been made following a minimalist philosophy, what would the outcome have been? Would any of us even know the song?



Andy Stewart owns and operates The Mill studio 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

The Inaugural Hawke's Bay Music Month Keeping it Rural



Photo Credit: Hugh Chesterman of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage

Small Hall Sessions and NZ Music Bring Communities Together Post-Cyclone

“For a week after the cyclone I was totally stunned, wading in silt, and busy cancelling three upcoming tours, but after a week or two I got to thinking...”

You get the impression Jamie Macphail probably never stops ‘thinking’, as evidenced by his lifetime in the entertainment industry, the production of myriad events over the last decade including the Hawke’s Bay Arts Festival, and most recently the creation of ‘Small Hall Sessions’.

The idea to bring mainstream folk, pop and country artists to the 61 community halls dotted around the Hawke’s Bay region was borne of the COVID lockdown. Jamie saw it as an opportunity for communities to connect, to revitalise historic halls, and to grow a new audience for touring artists. Out of every trial the indefatigable Jamie seems to find inspiration, and Cyclone Gabrielle was no different.



Sarah Terry and Friends. Photo Credit: Andrew Caldwell - Ankh Photography

For years, Jamie had contemplated adding a local dimension to national music month: “New Zealand Music Month has achieved its goal to give New Zealand artists a national, even global platform. I felt maybe it was time to support and promote artists on a more regional level. I was torn as to whether the time was right post-cyclone. Should I be asking people to spend money after such devastation?”

He decided the benefits to the traumatised communities of a good night out balanced the value in providing much-needed paid work for Hawke’s Bay artists. Jamie forged ahead

with ‘Hawke’s Bay Music Month’, contacted NZ Music Month’s Rodney Fisher and secured support of the NZ Music Commission, followed by sponsorship from wellbeing organisations Farmstrong and the Rural Support Trust, and local councils, substantially reducing the cost of the tickets.

Thanks to Jamie’s passion for small halls and rural communities, not only was the focus on local music, but the tour encompassed the whole region including some of the areas hit hardest by the cyclone. In under four weeks Small Hall Sessions and NZ Music Month



Project Prima Volta. Photo Credit: Andrew Caldwell



Phil Edwards Band. Photo Credit: Andrew Caldwell

pulled together 16 nights across 16 halls, every evening featuring three different artists, totalling 89 acts across the entire tour.

Each of the 90-minute concerts included an emerging artist, an established artist and an artist with a national profile. The line-ups were selected and curated by Sarah Terry, Head of the School of Music at Eastern Institute of Technology/Te Pukenga (EIT), Richie Jackman, owner of Napier Music Machine, and Kevin Murphy, Events Manager for Napier City Council and founder of The Backline Trust:

“All bar one of the acts performed their original material, no covers bands, just homegrown songs by homegrown artists. Locals performing songs that they’ve written, right here,” Jamie said.



CASHEK. Photo Credit: Andrew Caldwell



Arahi. Photo Credit: Andrew Caldwell



Danica Bryant. Photo Credit: Andrew Caldwell



Photo Credit: Hugh Chesterman

On the production side, things were ready to go: "I use a top-end minimalist approach!" Jamie laughs. "We use a high quality but small DB Audio PA system, which you can't see but sounds beautiful; a bespoke lighting rig and desk developed by Henry Norton at Hastings-based Sight & Sound Services; a whole lot of pipe and drape; and our own spectacular box office and bar." Designed by local engineer Isaac McCormack in just three days, Jamie is very proud of the collapsible kit: "It combines the feel of an agricultural show with a shooting gallery, transforming the halls and bringing a bit of circus to the occasion."

The crew of five, including Seb Woodham-Budge on sound and Kalib 'Kake' Walsh on lights, ensured a professional show every night. From its inception, Jamie's Small Hall Sessions has worked with the music department of EIT to offer employment to their full-time students to learn live sound and lighting production, and Seb and Kalib have now delivered over a hundred Small Hall Sessions: "Of course, the cyclone threw up a few curve balls! One hall took an hour longer to get to than it had prior to the cyclone, a few were civil defence centres that had fortunately reverted back to normal by the time we toured, and a one hall was even being used as a classroom by a damaged school, but thankfully they moved out the day before."

Logistically demanding but highly rewarding is Jamie's conclusion: "The musicians all commented on how focused the audience were on the music and the lyrics. The audiences were stunned by the depth of talent in Hawke's Bay, from 17-year-old students to our 60-year-old fire chief playing wonderfully poignant, but funny, folk songs."

Some of the outstanding performances included: Arahi (Jamie's tip for the next New Zealand breakthrough artist), who performed both solo and with his new band, Te Tokotoru; and Project Prima Volta, a youth group who had sadly had their performance of 'Magic Flute' cancelled due to the cyclone.

Each show was opened by a video message from ex-All Black and spokesperson for Farmstrong, Sam Whitelock: "He recorded a beautiful message reflecting on the aftermath of the earthquakes in Christchurch and how important it was to take time to go 'off-farm'. He reminded everyone that you can't keep running on adrenalin or you'll drop. It was a sincere, heartfelt message from someone who understood."

Jamie was pleased by the overwhelming response. "We are in constant competition with streamed entertainment and to get over 1,000 people out was a great achievement. One lady recounted she'd only come grudgingly after a friend had forced her along, but enjoyed every minute and was now reflecting on the downsides to her family's typical night in, five of them all on a device each. I want to challenge people to make the effort to go out, connect socially and be uplifted by music. With everything that people have been through recently due to the cyclone, it's perhaps even more important. People are hurting and concerts are an opportunity to open the taps on their emotions and let go for a couple of hours."

Jamie acknowledges that the Small Hall 'movement' in New Zealand has a way to go: "In Australia, it is well established. Fanny Lumsden, our next touring artist, sells out over a hundred small halls and the Aussies have a highly successful Festival of Small Halls. Here, to make it happen, we have to do everything from booking the hall and finding the artist, to promotion, production and ticketing, along with carrying all the risk. I would love to be able to get more support and develop a model that can be replicated across the country."

Could that be next on the unflagging Jamie Macphail's list of things to do?

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EUROVISION'S LIGHTING EXTRAVAGANZA

In a unique collaboration between countries, the 67th Eurovision Song Contest, that annual glam-and-glitter-tastic extravaganza of music and lighting, was hosted in Liverpool recently by the UK on behalf of last year's winner, Ukraine, after security concerns in that country made hosting the event untenable. It's the first time two nations have co-hosted the event.

Two semi-finals took place on the 8th and 11th of May 2023, where 37 acts were whittled down to 26 finalists for the spectacular Grand Final on the 13th at the Liverpool M&S Bank Arena. The show topped UK viewing figures and was broadcast globally to over 160 million viewers.

In what he called "a dream-come-true project", multi-award-winning lighting designer, Tim Routledge, and his team were responsible for every aspect of the lighting, including all 37 performances, presentation states, commentator boxes, voting sequences, and the half-time and opening shows for the two semi-finals and Grand Final. This massive undertaking was based on briefings, renders and notes, mostly delivered remotely, and a 20-minute meeting with each of the countries' delegations back in March. "We had to focus on the key points from each to realise their design wishes and work fast to deliver everything within the time frame," Routledge said.

Well known for his sumptuous glossy floor and epic pop lighting designs for television, it

was Tim Routledge's first ESC. So it was for set designer Julio Himede, who collaborated closely with Tim on the massive project. Julio is equally accomplished; acclaimed for his work on major music broadcast shows like MTVs VMAs and EMAs, amongst others.

The set effectively surrounded the performance space with video, so lighting placement was challenging and had to be facilitated where there was no encroachment, whilst maintaining the architecture of the space and creating all the right moods.

The results were a feat of synergy as much as technical excellence, in an infrastructure where lighting, video and scenic presentation worked seamlessly as one visual entity.

Tim Routledge and his team created 37 unique immersive lighting environments to showcase each delegation's songs, keeping each of these micro-shows animated, fluid and energised, curating lighting and video interactively and simultaneously. This enabled the end-goal of offering the clean, precise shots from multiple angles that resonated with

camera directors Nikki Parsons, Ollie Bartlett and Richard Valentine, and translated brilliantly on the TV broadcast.

A Sheer Mountain of Gear

With such tight time schedules and high-profile exposure, Routledge needed equipment that was fast, accurate, versatile and reliable. He chose Ayrton's new Zonda 9 FX, Karif LT, MagicBlade R and the laser-sourced Cobra as some of the key components of his lighting inventory.

90 Zonda 9 FXs were used to create 10 'Svoboda 3000' pods, Routledge's modernised recreation of the classic Svoboda batten, which he says were a "massively important feature" in the show.

The pods were mounted on independent automated hoists and tessellated within the three concentric rings of oval lightboxes above the centre stage to form one big curve, and could each be lowered and raised at will.

"I've always loved those Svoboda lights, plus

Tim's FOH team included Ukrainian LD and programmer Zhenya Kostyra, a regular at Kyiv-based rental company Alight, who worked as the overnight associate LD when on site, with James Scott as the overall lighting design associate.

Lead programmer was Tom Young, and the other two main programmers were Marc Nicholson and Alex Mildenhall.

Follow spots were called by Louisa Smurthwaite, and Morgan Evans worked with Tim and Tom during the pre-viz period which included four weeks at Neg Earth's studio ahead of the get-in in Liverpool, when the process continued onsite as each delegation's lighting looks were finessed.

Seven students, on stage and lighting design and technical courses, at two locally based academies: the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA) and Cheshire College, had the opportunity of working on Tim's crew for the duration of the event. Five were RoboSpot operators and the other two were lighting technicians, all recruited via Robe UK's NRG (Next Robe Generation) programme.

Additionally, Tim's team co-ordinated with four vision engineers in the truck, and at the centre of ensuring all things lighting ran as smoothly as the surface of the best polished Eurovision glitterball, was gaffer Keith Duncan.



Photo Credit: Sarah Louise Bennett

it was a kind of nod to my late father who first gave me a book on Josef Svoboda when I was young," said Routledge. "We wanted to create a Svoboda pod that was epic and could fly in and out individually."

Zonda 9 FX's large face was ideal for providing the eye-candy and dressing looks that Routledge was after, as well as performing as a punchy wash light. "Zonda 9 FX has great power, but we chose it mainly for the clever matrix effect (LiquidEffects) on the front," he said. "These gave really cool looks to fill the shots when they were dropped in low and

created something pretty without having to blow the shot with loads of powerful light; they looked great without even having to use their punch. They proved very popular with the delegations and fulfilled the brief of what I was trying to achieve with the pods perfectly."

96 MagicBlade R were rigged in the central chandelier feature that filled the space between the oval light boxes in the centre of the arena. These were used for "fun stuff and sky eye-candy filling the centre spot above the oval stage," Tim added.



Photo Credit: Sarah Louise Bennett

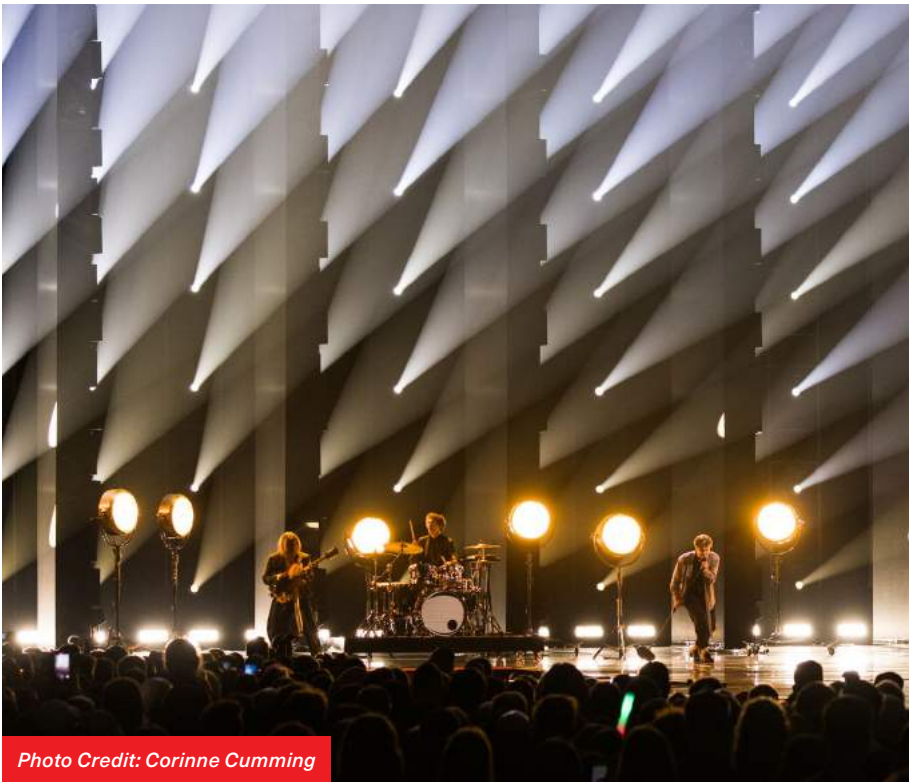


Photo Credit: Corinne Cumming

50 laser-sourced Cobra, which can narrow down to the tightest of beams at 0.6°, were rigged down the sides of the arena to provide big beam looks for all the audience ‘down-the-room’ shots and dressing shots for camera reverses. “The Cobras were used really well on several numbers,” Routledge said, “especially France’s prop, which was edged in a mirrorball fascia, and during the Semi-Final 1 half-time show when the performers opened up their costumes to reveal a mirrorball-textured heart jacket. We pointed the Cobras at those with phenomenal effect.”

“At another point, Spain wanted their artiste to scoop up a beam of light in her hand: one Cobra was aimed at a specific spot for a closeup on her hand bathed in high-intensity light that looked like she was literally holding light. The punch and tight beams the Cobras gave us shooting from 80m; well, they were brilliant in every sense of the word!”

In addition, 30 Karif LT were rigged around the arena on goal posts to provide back beams for the audience shots and to add background texture to the oval stage’s left and right wings. “To avoid compromising audience sightlines, we were quite restricted for space and height, so I needed a compact beam light that would work well in those tight spaces. Finding the right LED fixture that was small and fast was the challenge, and Karif LT fitted the bill really well.”

Tim also utilised over 600 Robe moving lights for his design, which comprised approximately 2500 luminaires plus two kilometres of LED tape, clocking up 1,500 individual light sources when counting the individual pixel cells of the various fixtures, all supplied via lighting equipment contractor, Neg Earth Lights.

The lighting rig included a 15-way Robe RoboSpot remote follow system running with 15 out of the 66 Robe Fortes in the building, which were positioned all around the arena, offering the flexibility of picking up artists from any angle, eliminating shadows and ensuring faces looked perfect.

The Forte parameters could all be controlled via the front-of-house grandMA3 consoles, leaving the operators free to concentrate on following the artists.

Other Robe elements included 152 LEDBeam 150s, 84 Painters, 123 Spiiders, 190 TetraXs, 12 Robe BMFL Blades and 12 Robe PATT2013s (a fixture that Tim invented, and that he used on this occasion to light Latvia’s performance).

A back wall of TetraXs worked brilliantly as stun-and-amaze effects for several artists. They were on the reverse side of seven LED columns making up the back wall of screen which rotated 360 degrees revealing the TetraXs, and made their presence felt during the performances of Israel, France, Finland and others.

An upstage wall of Painters was revealed when the screens were rotated at 90 degrees.



Julio Himede and Tim Routledge. Image courtesy of EBU BBC



Photo Credit: Chloe Hashemi

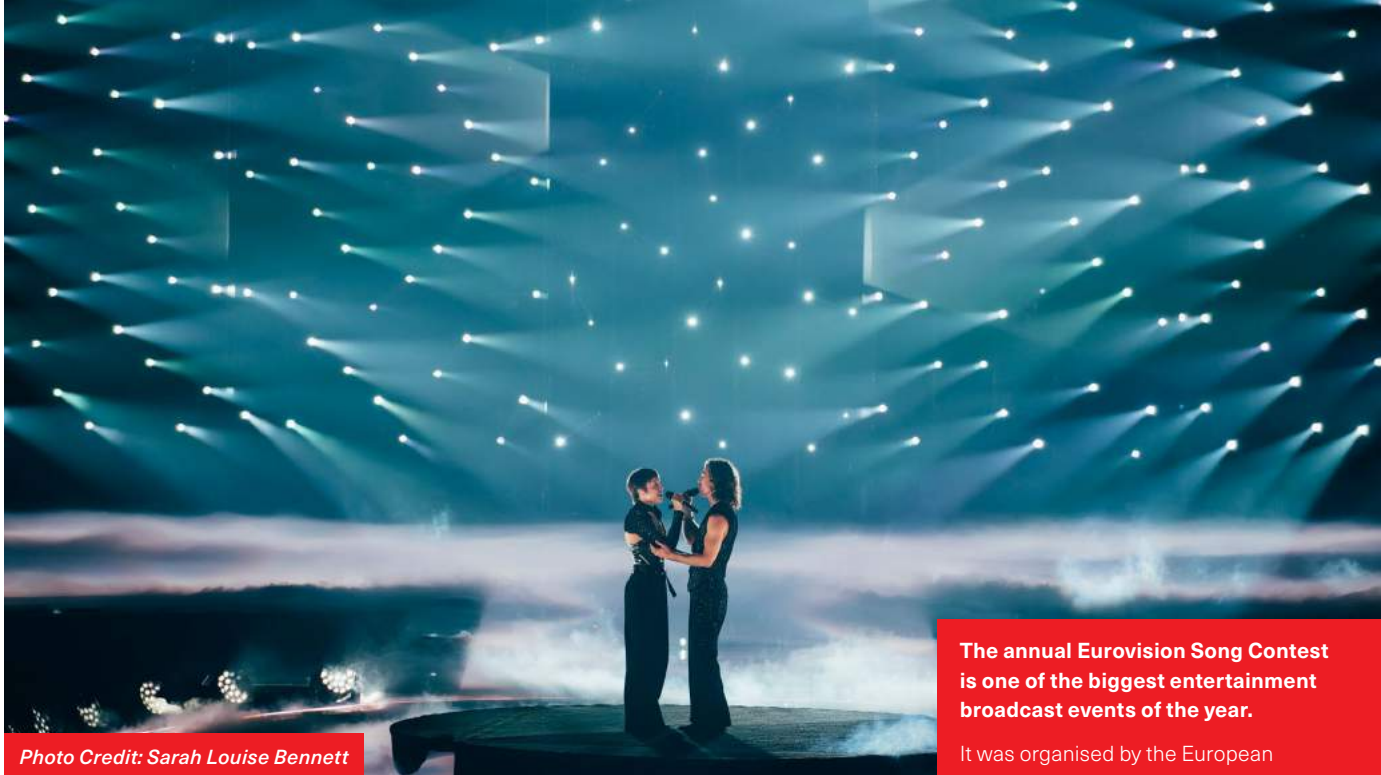


Photo Credit: Sarah Louise Bennett

The annual Eurovision Song Contest is one of the biggest entertainment broadcast events of the year.

It was organised by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and host broadcaster the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) on behalf of UA:PBA, Ukraine's public broadcaster.

The live shows were presented by British singer Alesha Dixon, British actress Hannah Waddington and Ukrainian singer Julia Sanina, who were joined for the final by Irish TV personality, Graham Norton.

The 2023 winner was Sweden with 'Tattoo', performed by Loreen, who became only the second performer in the history of Eurovision to win twice, following her success in 2012 with another banger, 'Euphoria'.

Coming in a nail-biting second was Finland's flamboyant Käärijä with 'Cha Cha Cha' which stormed home with the biggest public vote.

Cues Around the Block

Tim elucidated that around 79,000 lighting cues were programmed into the consoles over the course of the three live broadcast shows. For the Grand Final, in particular, which featured everything from thrash metal to hip-hop, there were 50-second set changeovers, and each delegation had its own creative directors and demands. Needless to say, and given the sheer intensity of creating that many individual performances in a short space of time, several of them very complex, challenges abounded.

Tim was also the first to credit the "massive" teamwork that made it all happen, together with the fusion of skills, experience, personalities, and camaraderie of all involved. Tim was "thrilled" with the outcome, even

admitting that designing a Eurovision final event was one of his professional bucket-list items!

"It is the most joyous show I have worked on," he said, "with a team who just wanted to be there and give it their all, and of which Ukraine could be very proud!"

"I want to heap praise on my programmers: Tom Young, Alex Mildenhall and Mark Nicholson, who programmed over 79,000 beat-perfect precise lighting cues, and my Associate LD, James Scott, for helping this dream come to fruition," he concluded.

Neg Earth Lights was the official lighting supplier for Eurovision Song Contest 2023, with great technical support by Ambersphere.



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PAUL JACKSON

Solaris at the Malthouse

Like so many Melbourne theatre workers, Paul Jackson cut his teeth working at La Mama. “I wouldn’t have a career without La Mama, it’s where I learnt to do shows.” Paul started out as a production manager, but then one fateful day, somebody who’d seen one of these shows mistakenly thought he’d designed it and asked him to design a show for them. Paul has worked as a set designer, including as recently as last year on *Monsters at the Malthouse*, but is predominantly known in the industry for his lighting design and subsequent love of a boom. “A friend of mine once said: ‘What you want to do is only half of the equation, the other half is what the culture wants you to do.’ Everyone wanted me to be a lighting designer, so I stuck with that.”

Paul’s key years at La Mama were in the mid-to-late ’90s when his tools were entirely comprised of incandescent fixtures. “I remember unpacking the lights on the 30th Anniversary of La Mama in 1998. They were Selecon Acclaim Zoom Profiles; we were pretty excited about those.” Over his career, Paul has worked through massive developments in lighting technology. “I’ve seen moving lights become commonplace and takeover, and I’ve seen LEDs go from being an effect-driven device to a standard.”

The first time Paul used moving lights, on a *Joining the Chorus* show in Mildura in 1998, the programmer operated the moving light rig and Paul operated the conventional fixtures on a separate desk. This practice of having both a ‘moving light’ programmer and a ‘conventional’ programmer was commonplace when the technology was first introduced. “The first time I used LED properly was during the 2008 Adelaide Festival. I was very excited back then by the fact that we could instantaneously turn the lighting stage red and then immediately back to white. We did a lot of primary colour mixing and primary colour shadow mixing.” Paul explains the design for *Moving Target* was about deconstructing white light. “It started as LED white and then fell away into RGB mix. That level of colour saturation and monofrequency colour was very exciting.” This initiated a period where Paul worked in block primary colour and thought a lot about colour as a way of dissolving space. “A lot of lighting

design is about creating depth and shadow and texture. What primary, monofrequency colour can do is flatten everything out and reduce space to a single plane. Being able to move between those two things was very exciting.”

As technology has developed and improved so has its influence on Paul’s craft. “The Lustr and LED colour mixing profiles have fundamentally changed how I work.” Working with four or five colour chip instruments, Paul can work with colour saturation, but in a way that is shaped and controlled. Paul’s lighting design on *Solaris* (Malthouse 2019, touring to Edinburgh and London) included a red wash with a blue strip through it, an effect he says is only possible with LED instruments that can shutter and generate vibrant, primary colours. The Lustr has also created the ability to move between cool and warm light without having to shift shadows, and without needing to rig twice the number of lamps. And it has freed him from the need to worry about the incandescent curve when a lamp is on low. “Not having to calculate the warmth and being able to get low-level cold light that’s controllable, has been a great improvement.”

While technology has clearly inspired his designs, Paul maintains it hasn’t led to the death of the incandescent, just a repositioning of it. The most common place where you’ll find incandescent fixtures in one of Paul’s designs is in front-of-house lighting positions for face light. “If I want to pop a face out of

"We go through stages where people are excited about theatricality and phases where they are deeply suspicious of it, and lighting gets lumped in with that."

Sunday - MTC

an environment, I want incandescents to do that. They have the skin response that LEDs can't manage. LEDs can generate contrast very well, which is really great, but if you want that skin response you have to work with incandescents."

Likewise, he describes the dimmer curve of a filament as radically different to anything else. "I love that, particularly as back light." And Paul is yet to find a lamp that can beat the classic 2K Fresnel for a large, single-colour wash. He wouldn't bother using incandescents to attempt saturated colour anymore, but appreciates the tinting and gel work you can do that LED still struggles with. "One of my favourite designs is one I did at La Mama with eight lamps. I can't tell you what they were, I

just used what was there. It was a very pure experience of light and space."

In terms of future technology, Paul looks forward to seeing LED cyc units develop, and he would love a Lustr's engine within a moving head. "I suspect there are issues with output there." He would also like a colour mixing Fresnel that has the output of a 2K. "You can use 50-degree Lustrs, but I still love the old 223 Fresnel with its big dinner plate lens and the beautiful softness of light. Something that would give me that quality that could also colour mix would be great."

New technology is one of the factors that has determined trends in lighting design over the years. "Often you will see a new wave of

technology be exploited and exhausted before it gets incorporated as just another tool in the bag." Yet Paul sees trends in lighting design as more driven by the industry's relationship to lighting and other technical aspects of theatre. "There have been periods where people were really interested in light and fascinated by it, often that will correlate with when there are strong practitioners around. But it shifts along with how people are feeling about the more theatrical side of making shows. We go through stages where people are excited about theatricality and phases where they are deeply suspicious of it, and lighting gets lumped in with that." Included in these trends is how shows are staged. "When I started in this caper, making shows in theatres was seen

"If I want to pop a face out of an environment, I want incandescents to do that."

Monsters at the Malthouse



Lorelei - Victorian Opera

as very old-hat and very conservative, so we made shows in car parks and warehouses. And then people became really interested in making shows in theatres again and went back to proscenium arch spaces. Now we're circling back again." Trends like this make a difference to how people think about light and space.

A sophisticated understanding of the gear is not the only skill of a lighting designer. Paul describes the role of light in a production as fundamentally dramaturgical. "On a basic level, light is telling people what's important and where to look. On another level it's creating a mood or a tone. But it's also shaping how those performers and characters exist in an environment and a space. Constantly transforming that and shaping that is what I find interesting."

Making a show is a collaboration between all departments, but Paul's key collaborators over his career have been with directors, many of whom he has ongoing working relationships with. "I am always interested in the director's

take on a script. Language and conversation are how I approach things. Discussing things with a director is what drives me and what I find most interesting."

Paul has mentored students both through the Besen Program at the Malthouse and the Women in Theatre program at the MTC. What he hopes to impart on students is that there is no right or wrong way to do the job. "There's a danger in thinking there's a better or worse way of doing it; there's not. There's only your way." Notably, Paul describes the first design he ever attempted as a failure. "I think I was just trying to do what the book was telling me to do. The whole point of being an artist is finding the thing that you have to contribute that nobody else can and exploring that as fully and deeply as possible." Paul encourages his students not to learn how to design like him, but to understand how they would do it differently, and interrogate that. "In many ways students should find observing me a little frustrating, because they want to do it another way."

As for his own bugbears, Paul dislikes when the lighting design does either too much or not enough. "I find a lot of contemporary lighting design overstimulated: too many cues, accentuating every beat. It has its place and people enjoy it, but it's not for me and it's not what I do." A fan of darkness and shadow, he also doesn't like designs that are too bright. "I spend a lot of time turning lights off. I get brightness burnout!" Ultimately, Paul wants theatre makers to appreciate the dramaturgical role of lighting. "Shows that don't have an ambition for the lighting and don't have a sense of its contribution, apart from seeing the action on stage, I find a wasted opportunity. But I would think that; I'm a lighting designer."

Paul Jackson's lighting design can be seen on upcoming productions at the Malthouse: This is Living, MTC: Escaped Alone and What If Only, Black Swan Theatre: Dirty Birds, and the Queensland Ballet.



Solaris at the Malthouse

IT'S A LONG WAY TO THE TOP



IN A SEVEN-SEATER VAN

'I'm with the band!' If only these four coveted words lived up to their romanticised reputation. Sure, it's great to be in a band, but what about touring with one sans the necessary talent to stake your claim? Thankfully, this untalented chick has lived through a three-year reconnaissance mission of life on the road, touring with an up-and-coming band, and is now happy to finally report back.

This intrepid tale dates back to 2000 - 2002, when we were all still ecstatic that the Y2k bug hadn't decimated our computers, and

Radiohead's 'Kid A' was cranked up on everyone's stereos. A record deal in Nashville and a four-month tour with a well-established band in the USA meant it was time to pack up and leave Australia; no return tickets booked.

My role? Dutiful wife of band member ready to live the touring dream. Pinch me now!

Exposure

Our journey begins on January 17th, 2000, when we bid farewell to anyone who cares, in search of fame and near impossible fortune. Three band members and three wives en route to Nashville; the fourth member stuck in another country due to visa issues, but hey, that's rock 'n' roll. Leaving an Australian summer for an American winter was the more pressing issue as we arrive in sub-zero temperatures to an empty airport. Apparently, the band manager didn't get the email about arrival times. It's ok though, we have tiny hotel

rooms and a 24-hour Waffle House to help us acclimatise to our new country.

With a three-week window to prepare for the upcoming tour, various shows are booked to start garnering exposure. The band is ready to hit the American stages minus the stranded guitar player. Thankfully, the bass player is multi-talented enough to wear the guitarist's hat, just not at the same time; he's not that talented. EMI studios to the rescue. Bass tracks are laid down with a click track onto a Digital Audio Tape which temporarily becomes the 'fourth band member' for the next three weeks of shows. This all works beautifully until the audience demands an unexpected encore. Fortunately, nobody notices the repeated songs from the setlist.

With the prodigal guitarist now reunited with his band members, tour preparations are in full swing. Our home for the next four months is a

seven-seater van dragging around a U-Haul trailer bursting with music gear, merchandise and overpacked suitcases for seven people. The daily loading and unloading of this trailer can only be described as a frustrating game of Tetris where nobody wins. Every configuration known to man is achieved throughout the ensuing months accompanied by numerous expletives.

Inflatable Expectations

First stop on this 67-city tour is Florida. We all pile into our snug van with a strange mix of anticipation and trepidation. This little-known Australian band is about to play to thousands every night in an inflated air dome arena all over the USA. The headliner draws the crowds so the risk of performing to only half a dozen people is one less thing to worry about.

Now, while it's a given in this industry that every band needs to 'pay its dues', before 'making it', nobody really outlines what this looks like.

Let's just say it includes a lot of driving through the night, sleeping on hotel floors, car problems, sleep deprivation, zero personal

space, irritability, cheap bad food and poverty. But hey, we're on tour!

A few days into the tour and we start to get the hang of this new daily existence: checking our itinerary to see how long we'll be driving and whether it's worth us all cramming into one hotel room, arriving at our destination and finding the closest amenities to preen ourselves, sound checks, eagerly awaiting the provided catering, setting up merchandise and braving the elements till show time. Having an inflatable dome as the nightly venue means no green room to loiter in. Our seven-seater van has now doubled as a backstage green room as we try to escape arctic temperatures, blustering winds and adoring fans (or fan).

The headliners needn't concern themselves with these issues, however. Their luxurious tour bus replete with bunks and lounges ensures they are always well rested and comfortable. Each night they're also whisked off to hotels for showers while we remain stewing in our own juices. The upside to this is that their discarded hotel rooms are now available for us if we choose not to drive through the night. We take advantage of this on numerous occasions and couldn't care less about the wet towels strewn across the floor.

On days off in between shows, the never-ending stocktake of merchandise takes place as we share hotel rooms, and one-bathroom-to-seven-people ratios, where one cake of soap is stretched to its limits. With very little money in our pockets, exploring each city becomes an interesting venture, but the land of free refills and gargantuan portion-sized cheap food ensures we don't starve to death.

Blood, Sweat and Food

Four months and 67 cities later, we complete our first ever tour and head back to Nashville. After playing to hundreds of thousands of people and scribbling their autographs on paraphernalia to new adoring fans, the band is quietly confident that selling up and moving across to the other side of the world was worth it. Well, at least for a while anyway.

Putting our roots down in Nashville in a shared apartment, signing up with a booking agent and trying not to kill each other due to personal space issues, the next two and a half years can definitively be described as 'paying our dues'. Mini tours, festivals and casual shows become our way of life as we experience every high and every low on offer. A montage



Now, while it's a given in this industry that every band needs to 'pay its dues', before 'making it', nobody really outlines what this looks like.



of this time would include blowing a trailer tyre on the highway, crashing a borrowed RV into a pole, driving off from a gas station attached to the petrol bowser, drinking water in Montana that tasted like feet, an overnight drive contaminated with someone's dog crap-smeared shoe, toothpaste freezing solid on tour, the trailer unhitching itself down the highway and selling blood plasma to buy food. Fear not, there were great times too, but who cares about those?

Now, if you're reading this hoping for a happy ending where the band finally makes it and wins a couple of Grammys, you might want to look away. It appears that en route back to Nashville a lone deer prancing across the I-40 highway had other plans for this illustrious band. Swerving to miss the fearless creature, an accident ensues, terminating in a ditch. One injured band member, a smashed-up van and the destruction of various instruments later, Australia, it seems, was calling us home.

We gave it a good shot, had the experience of a lifetime and lived to tell the tale.

But I'm no longer with the band.

Postscript: The injured band member made a full recovery. RIP the guitar amp, drums and bass guitar. Later the band decided to call it quits back in Australia for various reasons. How very rock 'n' roll.

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Anolis at Auckland Sky Tower

In 2021, the iconic 328-metre-tall Sky Tower in downtown Auckland was enhanced with a lighting installation comprising 154 Divine 72 LED fixtures.

The lighting design was created by Richard Bracebridge and Sam Walle from Light Works Ltd. Technical specification, installation and systems integration were the work of Nick Abel from LS Group, with lighting fixtures supplied through Anolis' New Zealand and Australian distributor, Jands.

Light Works has been involved with lighting the Tower since 2007 when it was first re-lit following the original metal halide installation which dated back to 1996 whilst it was under construction.

The 2007 floodlighting involved re-lighting the shaft, utilising positions on top of some conveniently located bus shelters along Federal and Victoria Streets below, and upgrading the upper part of the tower and mast using the best quality RGB LED floodlights available at the time.

Forward 11 years, and by 2018 the installation was unsurprisingly looking patchy and dated, and in that time, LED technology had advanced dramatically, becoming brighter, more efficient, hugely more effective, and better value.

The team faced several challenges, starting with the ongoing city centre and waterfront regeneration project, which saw the removal of the bus shelters and the installation of some sculptural artworks around the base of the Tower.

While these did offer up some 'top space' for mast illumination lighting positions, the footprint was vastly reduced, and not in optimum positions for effectively lighting the shaft section.

Lighting real estate on the 'shaft' for fixtures to highlight the top section was even more at a premium, as any fixtures had to share the space with a forest of communications equipment including FM radio transmitters, local and national TV satellites and

broadcasting kit, wireless internet hubs, cell phone hubs, weather monitoring and laser links.

The Anolis Divine 72s, which had just been launched at the start of the project, were selected for these and several other reasons. The signature colour was white, so they needed to produce a proper crisp white with the smoothest and most even coverage.

The size and shape of the fixtures made the Divine 72s ideal for fixing on the top of the street level sculptures, with 96 units sitting on top of the three building locations and a single column "artwork" at the base of the Tower.

Sixty Divine 72s are deployed around the Tower's top section, ensconced between the various communications elements, run via a Pharos LPC 2 controller that can be remotely accessed via phone and tablet app. It can instantly be switched into any colour or any number of combinations at the touch of a button for special occasions.

Jands in NZ

Just four months ago, Jands moved into their new premises at The Hangar, Catalina Bay, Auckland. Kit Watson, General Manager of Jands New Zealand, commented, "With the rapid growth we are experiencing, Jands required a modern and well-equipped working space to help us best support our partners. The Hangar, being a stunning and well set-up office facility, offered the best balance of a meeting space while allowing us to focus our resources and efforts into our partners and people."

At the same time, Jands announced the appoint of Maldwyn Greenwood as the new Technical Manager, NZ, and Nicholas Van Dyk as Technical Sales Manager, joining the existing team of Jason Allott and Phil Sargent in supporting the region. The new facility and new talent in the team ensure that Jands will be 'Setting The Stage' in New Zealand for decades to come.

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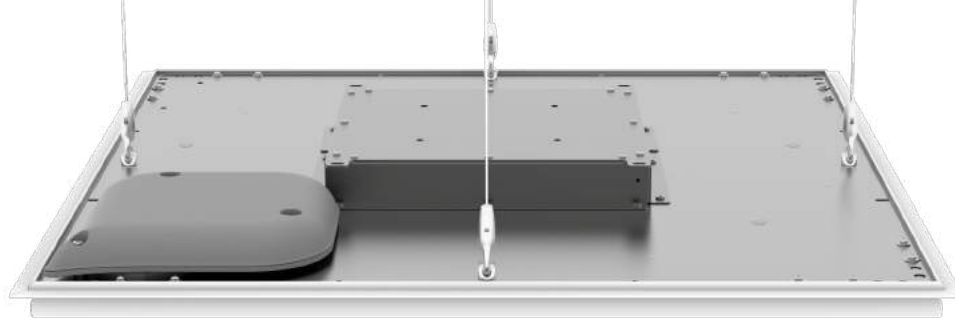


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Shure's Revolutionary MXA902

Jands has announced that its dealers are now accepting pre-orders in Australia for Shure's award-winning MXA902 Integrated Conferencing Ceiling Array. This state-of-the-art device has been recognised for its excellence with the SCN Installation Product Award following its premiere at InfoComm 2023 in Orlando, Florida.

This new addition to the Microflex Ecosystem marks a significant stride in audio conferencing technology and is designed to deliver premium audio capture and reproduction in small to medium-sized meeting spaces, with minimal setup.

The Shure MXA902, a comprehensive ceiling-mounted audio solution, seamlessly integrates into rooms where space and storage are at a premium, or non-existent. It combines Shure's next-generation array microphone with an integrated wide-dispersion loudspeaker, complemented by onboard IntelliMix digital

signal processing. The result is an unrivalled audio experience, with enhanced directional voice capture and natural-sounding far-end speech reproduction that accommodates multiple talkers with ease.

In addition to its advanced features, the MXA902 meets the certification requirements of popular platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams when used with the ANIUSB-Matrix interface. This ensures its broad usability and effortless integration into your existing digital ecosystems.

Moreover, the Shure MXA902 provides mounting flexibility, being compatible with a variety of accessories previously used with the MXA920. These include the A910-HCM Hard Ceiling Mount, A900-CM Ceiling Mount, among others, offering a range of installation options for diverse settings. This dynamic new product is set to redefine the audio-conferencing experience.

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
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EVENT TECHNOLOGY

by Michael Vrklewski



BEHIND THE 42ND ASEAN SUMMIT

This year, the 42nd ASEAN Summit, the bi-annual Heads of State meeting of ASEAN Member States, was held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, on the 10th-11th of May 2023. It was chaired by Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia.

The attendees of the meeting include leaders and representatives from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Timor-Leste, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

An event as high-level as the ASEAN Summit requires equipment of the highest quality and reliability. Congress Indonesia was chosen to supply an end-to-end solution that covered conference microphones and interpretation equipment.

Setup and Testing

During the two-week setup, Technical Producers from Congress Indonesia meticulously checked and tested the conference microphone and interpretation configurations, ensuring all microphones corresponded to the schematic to suit each leader's position. Throughout that period, different government agencies dropped by to test the system, which even included an unscheduled visit from the Indonesian President himself!

Conference Microphones

ASEAN leaders spoke using Bosch Dicensis Wired Conference Microphones. These use internationally recognised encryption and open standard security technology, ultimately assuring the best protection against unauthorised access. They also allow for uncompressed digital audio to be fed straight into the system, meaning latency-free interpretation channels are easily accessible through the unit itself.

Interpretation Equipment

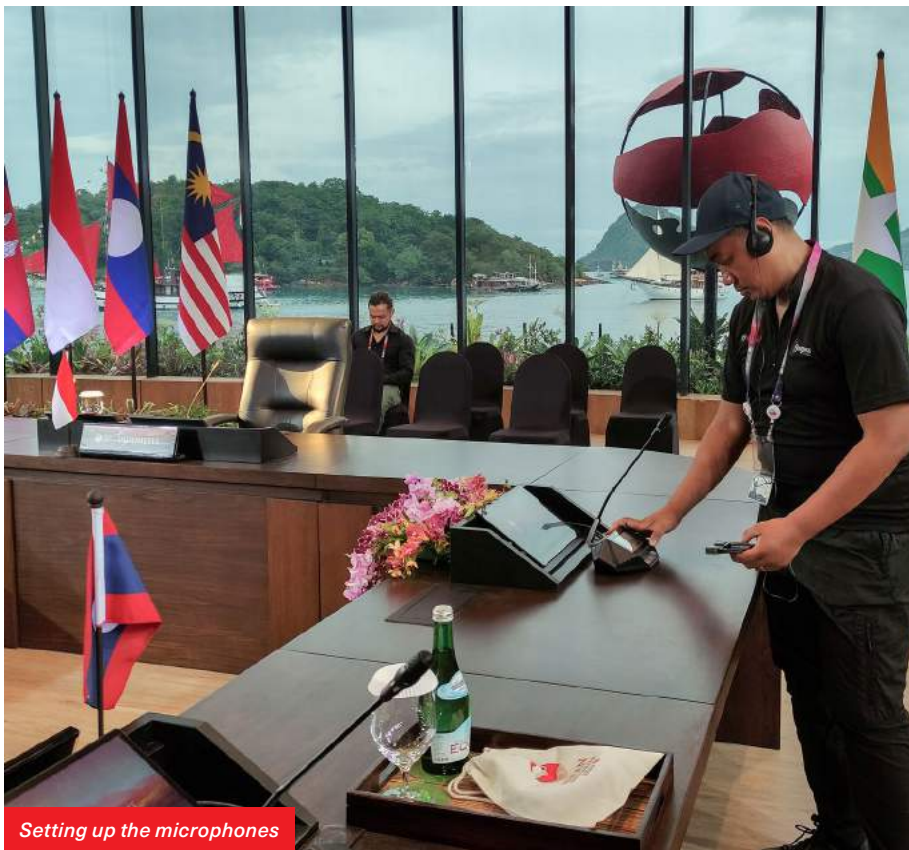
Interpreters worked in a nearby room from a remote interpreter hub. The hub had eight side-by-side ISO 4043:2016 compliant soundproof Audipack Interpreter Booths. Each Interpreter, seated in a booth, used a Bosch Dicensis Interpreter Desk and had a live feed of the meeting on the screens through the front window of the booths.

Languages

Live simultaneous interpretation was available in nine languages. These include English, Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, Thai, and Vietnamese.

Each leader could use their provided headphones and select their desired language channel directly from the touch screen of the Dicensis microphone. For delegates that didn't have access to microphones, handheld Bosch Integrus receivers were made available so that they could listen to the interpretation channels too.

With this equipment, each member in the room or leader participating in the meeting could listen and speak in their languages, maintaining seamless multi-lingual communication throughout the meeting.



Setting up the microphones

Challenges

Logistics: Every event has its logistical challenges and the ASEAN Leaders' Summit was no exception. Labuan Bajo is a remote island not accessible by land from Congress Indonesia's Bali office, meaning necessary equipment had to be prepared and allocated months before the summit's date. The amount of spare equipment increased significantly because of the inability to access additional equipment at short notice. This practice came in handy when required equipment quantities changed, and lighting challenges emerged last minute.

Room turnaround: The room's layout changed considerably from the first to the second day. The main meeting was split into two rooms for the second, and all the tables were completely rearranged. Knowing this would happen, Congress' technicians planned a cable arrangement that was versatile enough for a wide range of different microphone positions.

The layout had to be changed in only a couple of hours overnight, meaning the technicians had to be quick on their feet. Extensive pre-planning of different potential radiator positions ensured a quick and smooth transition while maintaining an optimal signal.



Live simultaneous interpretation was available in nine languages

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Supporting the mental health of Australian entertainment industry workers

ENTERTAINMENT ASSIST
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Security

With a high-level event like the ASEAN Summit, security is a prominent feature. Military and presidential guard occupied almost all sections of the considerably small building. The venue was on lockdown during the President's visit, including rehearsals. There was no moving in and out, so all the equipment, including spares, had to be on-site.

Signal jamming is always expected at an event like this too, and there was the potential that this could interrupt the meeting. Considerable communication between the Congress team, venue team and presidential guard ensured that jammers were moved to locations that would not impact the meeting's equipment.

Signal coverage

The biggest challenges were around the main conference room itself. With all the blinds open, excessive sunlight threatened to compromise the infrared system. This issue was compounded when additional truss-mounted lighting was added to compensate for the backlight from the windows.

Congress Indonesia countered all the lighting interference by adding more radiators than they had initially planned to use, adjusting the position and angle of the radiators, optimising the signal, and effectively eliminating the interference.



The Results

From a technical perspective, the 42nd ASEAN Summit was highly successful, despite its considerable challenges. The meeting enjoyed seamless communication and no major issues were reported.

Paula Luciana, Event Producer for Congress Indonesia commented: "Without smooth communication, the summit wouldn't have run well. The outcome was the result of close collaboration with all the vendors involved." Ardan Yogi, Operations Manager for the company, added: "With our experience delivering the G20 Leaders' Summit last year, we were very confident in our ability to deliver on ASEAN. It was an outstanding experience all round."

www.congressrental.id



The Corporate Landscape *Moving Forward*

The world of corporate events has changed since the COVID era, but perhaps not as much, nor in the same way, as many of us would have predicted two or three years ago. And like the recent past, the future looks every bit as mysterious, replete with its own set of challenges.

Like much of the wider industry, corporate events were almost completely shut down over the COVID period. Restrictions and uncertainty made the idea of putting on an event back then seem far too risky, much less profitable, or fun. And as we all know, much of 2020 was a total write-off.

The Corporate World Post-Lockdown

When corporate gigs finally started up again, they came back slower than many had anticipated. We didn't really have that sudden influx of bookings or people wanting to do gigs as soon as capacity restrictions lifted and venues reopened, that many of us had hoped for. Resumption of play returned at a slow trickle, despite the optimism surrounding the relaxation of restrictions.

And even when the gigs finally returned, they were only ever really 'pencilled in'. We constantly saw gigs scrapped last-minute, pushed back, or moved because so-and-so got sick or was in the orbit of someone who later fell ill. A lot of gigs were postponed, and postponed again, and interstate gigs were rare, as people needed to self-isolate before being allowed to mingle with others. Many of us had full calendars of these 'pencilled in' dates.

For a while there we endured the ever-present anxiety of feeling like a gig could be cancelled any time, without notice. All it would take was one person getting sick (or testing positive), or being near someone who was sick, and a whole event would be cancelled. There seemed to be a lot of angst surrounding events; a general feeling of despondency and a lack of motivation mostly because nothing ever seemed to be a 'sure thing'.

When, despite all the hurdles, some gigs did go ahead, and apologies for reminding everyone of this, social distancing and other measures were enforced. We had the dreaded times when you weren't allowed to have singing or dancing or people mingling, which basically defeated the purpose of having events in the first place, it seemed.

We also had supply chain issues, which created innumerable logistical headaches around everything from moving people and equipment, to buying electrical tape. By themselves, these challenges were enough to completely change, or sometimes even cancel, events.

Like the wider industry, COVID rules and restrictions had a severe impact on corporate events.

Challenges Facing Corporate Gigs Today

But while we're now unofficially out of the 'post-lockdown' period and things have (more or less) returned to normal, we're still feeling the after-effects of the whole sorry saga. Arguably the biggest challenge facing corporate gigs today is finding crew, especially experienced technicians who are often booked months in advance. A significant number of these people left the industry over the COVID period or since the re-emergence of activities. Many retired or semi-retired, while others found employment elsewhere, which has resulted in a significant skills shortage that very few anticipated, where there's now more work than there are workers! This situation likely won't change anytime soon until we can train up new staff.

Moreover, the skill and labour shortages go well beyond finding good technical crew for corporate gigs. Our clients, suppliers, couriers, caterers and almost everyone else with whom we come in contact, are in the same boat.

Gigs where there's too much to do, too many unknowns, or unsavoury hours are getting put into the 'too hard' basket rather than being seen as a challenge to tackle. This 'prioritising' is so commonplace now that it's changing



"Like the wider industry, COVID rules and restrictions had a severe impact on corporate events."

future. The higher paying jobs seem to be moving more towards TV, film and movie work, as evidenced by the large investments currently being made in sound stages, film studios and other broadcast equipment. This will only serve to compound the labour problems facing corporate companies and venues.

While streamlining and cost-cutting measures might make sense to get gigs over the line today, these methods will affect how we stage gigs into the future. They will come at the expense of quality, versatility, creativity, and events being adaptable on-the-fly.

Remote working could also significantly impact the industry. For a while now, people have done a lot of pre-production work at home, or in remote locations, but now we're starting to see people operate whole events from remote locations. This could be a trend that has the potential to permeate the whole industry; on the upside, opening up the labour market to corporates in ways no-one had foreseen, although this too won't be without its hurdles and challenges.

The future of corporate events will inevitably be shaped by the conditions it faces. With current labour shortages and a future economic outlook that's more than a little shaky, we could be looking at a more streamlined, less extravagant, more value-driven approach to corporate events over the short term.

the way people approach gig planning and booking. This may eventually be for the better, of course, as it could drive innovation and new thinking around how we deliver events.

In fact, it's happening now. More effort is already being made to streamline processes, simplify gigs and put better systems in place, although nowadays this seems to be borne out of necessity rather than preference.

Streaming, Zoom call-ins and hybrid gigs have become the norm, not the exception. In the post-lockdown world, it was imperative that every corporate gig had this setup due to social distancing and capacity limits. While it's not quite so crucial these days, it's still much more commonplace than it was pre-lockdown. These unexpected changes have brought with them new equipment requirements, new skills to learn, and of course a whole new set of challenges.

Problems Facing Corporates Moving Forward

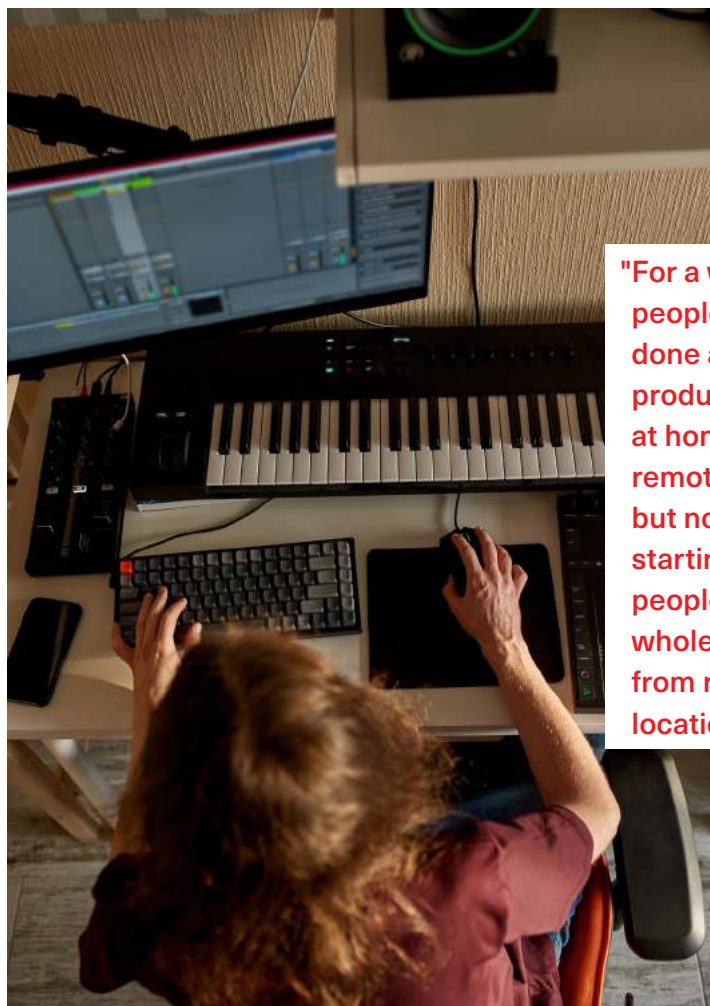
With a potential economic downturn on the horizon, coupled with rising interest rates and severe cost of living issues, businesses are reconsidering their spending patterns and priorities. In the foreseeable future, a downturn would likely mean less gigs and more scaled-back events, and while it may still be true that some corporate gigs can be used largely as tax write-offs by end-client companies, they still must have money to invest to begin with.

Crew shortages are not likely to go away anytime soon, either. The problem has already started to push up wages, and the law of supply and demand would seem to indicate that it's inevitable and set to continue. Couple this fact with the needs of companies to cut material costs wherever they can, labour is fast becoming their biggest expense.

The only way crew numbers will improve in future is by an influx of new faces, and now seems like the perfect time for new people to enter the industry. Crew training

and development will be a big part of future planning; those who can build an adequate training and support network into their business model will have more quality assets at their disposal. Moreover, companies that can hold onto loyal, experienced crew will be far more likely to prosper moving forward.

Prior to COVID, large corporate events with big budgets and big expectations were awash throughout the country, but for all the obvious reasons, those days haven't come roaring back, nor are they likely to in the foreseeable



"For a while now, people have done a lot of pre-production work at home, or in remote locations, but now we're starting to see people operate whole events from remote locations."

Sometimes it all gets too much...



The *Support Act Wellbeing Helpline* is a free, confidential counselling service that is available to anyone working in Australian music who needs to talk to someone about any aspect of their wellbeing.



THE SUPPORT ACT WELLBEING HELPLINE IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



ROMANI AGED CARE

MURRAY BRIDGE



A Textbook AV Experience Thanks to RTI, XILICA, Newline, Australian Monitor and Wyrestorm

Nestled in the suburbs of regional Murray Bridge by the banks of the Murray River in South Australia lies the residential aged care facility, Romani Aged Care. A state-of-the-art, RSL Care SA facility address with 72 resident beds, Romani has multiple gathering and activity spaces and a stunning garden.

Objectives

Management and staff at Romani Aged Care requested an audio-visual system that complemented the elegant and sleek design of their aged care destination. With multiple individual rooms and areas requiring attention, Romani engaged Chris Henderson Electrical in Adelaide, who were already on site assisting with lighting requirements. Paul Langley of Chris Henderson Electrical quickly contacted Amber Technology's South Australia account manager Brenton Eckersley, and together they shaped a system that would cater for all of Romani's needs. As a brilliant additional provision to the end-user, Romani



management and staff were even invited to see the system's full working potential when Paul had the system up and running 'on the bench', and were invited to offer their own suggestions about the system's functionality.

The Results

Paul and Chris Henderson Electrical have delivered to their client exactly what an audio-visual system should strive to provide:

maximum functionality with minimal visual impact. All of the hard-working backbone equipment is neatly hidden in the rack location, with only the stylish RTI touchscreens, AVer cameras, Newline displays (beautifully mounted inside recessed wall cavities) and standard audio necessities, such as speakers and microphones, actually visible. Optoma QuickCast wireless HDMI transmit/receive kits were also supplied to enable BYOD users to connect to the Newline displays.

The Solution

Amber Technology's control brand RTI KA11, KA8 and KX2 touchscreens are located in high-priority spaces, with control processing provided by a single XP6S processor at the headend. Video distribution is handled by Wyrestorm's NHD (AV-Over-IP) 4K resolution 400 series, and audio distribution and processing are controlled via Xilica's FR1D Dante-enabled digital signal processor, across the site. These key headend solutions are all linked through a Pakedge MS series network switch. AVer PTZ cameras, Newline 4K displays, Australian Monitor ceiling speakers, JTS ceiling-mounted and UHF microphones, and Australian Monitor FLEX30W speakers in the garden area round out a seamless AV solution.

Installation completed by:

Chris Henderson Electrical:
www.chelectrical.com.au

Paul Langley:
paul@chelectrical.com.au or 0417 720 938

Amber Technology:
www.ambertech.com.au



"Maximum functionality with minimal visual impact."





CHARACTERISTICS OF CORPORATE LIGHTING

There are so many different types of events out there: theatre, ballet, expo, corporate, rock 'n' roll, TV and film, just to name a few. All these event categories have their own quirks, unwritten rules and general lighting requirements, but when you drill down into any of them, you realise there are countless variations to the work; no two gigs are exactly alike, and each has its specific requirements.

The field of corporate events, a loose umbrella term that covers everything from a gala dinner to a conference, a town hall to a staff awards night, is no different. There are countless types of 'corporate events' each requiring their own individual lighting solutions.

Generally, the subject of a corporate event is not typically centred around a light show or an entertainment act, although for some events both can be the case. Whether it's a presentation to shareholders, recognition of staff at an awards night, or a milestone birthday party for a company, there are usually very clear expectations around what needs to be achieved at a corporate gig.

The lighting for these types of events usually serves a complimentary, functional role within the event, rather than acting as the 'star of the show'. That said, the difference between an average gig and an amazing one is often down to how it's lit. Sticking to the event brief is very important, of course, but it's also critical to bring your own flavours, concepts and ideas to the table at any of these events.

In a nutshell, lighting for corporate events is a balancing act, and while each is different in its detail, they do share common characteristics.

Here are a few principles that characterise a corporate gig from the perspective of lighting:

Colour Temperature and Stage Wash

While not as important as it might be for a broadcast or film gig, the stage lighting at any corporate event still needs to be well considered. Most corporate gigs have cameras rolling at some point, and in some cases even a film crew involved in proceedings. Particularly when the latter is true, it's critical to work closely with the director and camera operators for the best outcome. A nice even stage wash is required for both the camera and the audience in the room.

Light the Room, Not Just the Stage

Most of the action at a corporate gig will take place on the stage, so it's important as a lighting technician to give that area the time and attention it well deserves, but don't forget about lights in the audience too. Chances are there will be tables to pinspot, banners and other activations to highlight, Q and A mics to account for, as well as other random

elements. But remember, don't forget to give the room an overall look too; you're not just setting up a random collection of lights. The whole environment needs to feel like one event, not five. Where possible you should be incorporating the entire room into your overall lighting aesthetic.

Colour Palette Over Effects

The choice of primary and secondary colours is critical at corporate events, but as the lighting operator, sometimes this decision is not yours to make. Colour choices may be dictated to you by the company's colours for example, and in this situation the trick is to pick a good complimentary colour (or colours) to make things pop.

Levels Over Brightness

When it comes to corporate events, don't just put all the lights at 100%. Play around with the levels to come up with something that looks good. Glare, halation and reflection are three things that always need to be well considered when picking your levels, all of which can affect



Every light serves a purpose. Don't just use lights for the sake of using lights. Sometimes less is more. The lights become more meaningful when you use them with specific intent. Using too many lights can lead to a cluttered, busy room that can ultimately detract from your look or message.

For corporate lighting, there are usually a handful of key moments from a lighting technician's perspective where the looks can make or break the show. It's good to know about these well in advance, so you can prioritise your programming time. There will likely be different cues for each of the different events. Some will place emphasis on a certain camera shot, for others it will be all about the awards, or maybe the band reveal. Another client may want to see the walk-in state as being the most important lighting state. Then of course you will have other clients who say every lighting state is the most important!

Although all corporate gigs are different, here are a few key moments, lighting states and looks you may want to consider:

The Room, Walk-in State

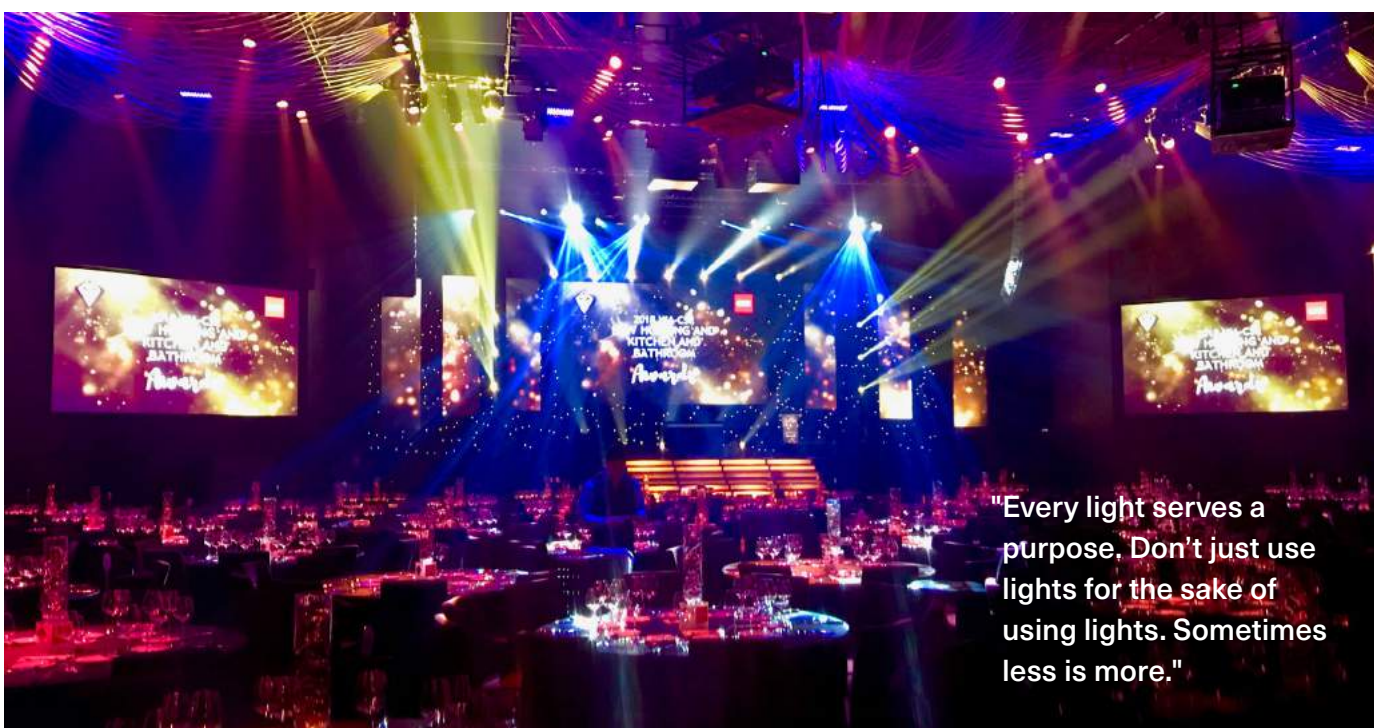
The room's look is the big one. This is where you create your first impression, and we all know how important a first impression is. The room look and walk-in state really set the tone for the whole event. Ask yourself the question: "What am I trying to communicate here?"

The room needs to be well lit, not washed out. It needs to have colour, but not be overly saturated and the colours themselves can't clash. The room needs to be imbued with the right mood and feel for the event, to create impact without being overwhelming. This is a skill more akin to art than science.

the overall visibility at the event. Subtlety is key here; you will likely need to spend a bit of time playing around with levels to make things look great. This takes intuition and a keen eye, which you presumably have if you're a lighting technician. Work the lights to polish a look and feel that suits the occasion.

Remember, what you don't light is just as important as what you do; not everything needs to be lit all the time, nor do you need to

use every light for every cue. Leaving certain objects and spaces dark to help build contrast can create far more interest, depth and impact inside a space. What you don't light helps draw the eye towards what's important at that particular moment. Although adequate light is often very important, particularly if people are doing things like eating, or needing to read a document etc, at the same time you don't want to wash the room out.



"Every light serves a purpose. Don't just use lights for the sake of using lights. Sometimes less is more."



and is usually run in sync with a musical cue. You may need to change this one up a little each time since people are easily bored and are often quick to notice when the same visual cue fires off every time an award is announced.

For the winner of the major prize on the night, this particularly significant moment needs to be highlighted with something a little more extravagant than what has been witnessed by the audience thus far. There might be some pyro, some form of build-up beforehand, and it might also go for a little longer than the standard award ballys.

Hide the Rig Wherever Possible

As for the setup for corporate lighting, the rig and its purpose will change depending on the nature of the gig. Priority leans towards presentation whilst still maintaining function. There are a few common elements though that most corporate events share:

First and foremost, cable runs need to be out of sight whenever possible. The ones that can't be avoided need to be neat, gaffed down if they're on the floor, and taped properly with a tape colour that matches the truss if the lights are being hung. While we are steadily moving more towards a hybrid model, we're still lighting for the punters in the room most of the time.

We're also starting to see more battery-powered fixtures and wireless DMX options utilised on corporate events these days, given how much neater a cable-free set up presents. We will almost certainly see this trend continue as the quality and longevity of these lights improve, and wireless lights becomes a more financially viable option.

Roadcases and storage elements are some of the other objects that need to be kept out of sight at every corporate gig, and unless they're a feature; lights, cables and trusses are other elements we generally don't want to see. Obviously, this isn't always possible or practical at every event, in which case every effort must be made to draw the eye away from them by setting the rig up as neatly as possible. As for trusses, black is best, and skirted is the next best option. The extensive use of draping around the stage and room is another thing that helps establish a decent lighting vibe, especially in situations where the room itself leaves a bit to be desired.

One final thing to keep in mind is that every corporate event is being used by a company or organisation as a promotional tool. While different events have different purposes and messages to convey, ranging from the fun of a product launch to the seriousness of a bank shareholder presentation, you can bet that all of them appreciate a setup that reflects quality, tidiness and professionalism.

Video State

The video state is quite simple, but not one to be overlooked. As the name suggests, this is the lighting state used whenever there's a video roll on the LED wall or projector screen. In this state, the lights are dimmed, set somewhere from blue to blue/purple and static: no movements, no rotating gobos. All eyes and everybody's attention for this setup should be solely focussed on the content on screen; a relatively easy setup perhaps, but important to get right, nonetheless. As the lighting operator, what you're trying to communicate here is that all eyes should be focussed on the screen, and there's nothing else happening that needs your attention.

drink and socialise. You want the room to be a little on the lighter side, as people will be moving around with food and drink, but you don't want to push the lighting so far that things become harsh and mood-less. Two good rules to stick with here are: don't use green on the tables, and try to minimise movement, as these can be a little off-putting for some when they're trying to eat dinner.

Sometimes there might be a band playing background music during dinner too, and if so, try to match the music's overall vibe and intent. If the music is toned down to a background level, make sure the lighting on stage reflects a similar vibe. There's no point drenching the band in blazing light if musically they're trying to be unobtrusive.

The Dinner/Meals State

Depending on how you present your walk-in look, you may be able to do something similar for your dinner state. Here, you're trying to communicate a friendly, light-hearted atmosphere that encourages people to eat,

Award Ballys

If your corporate event includes any kind of formal awards ceremony, a bit of movement, colour chase or flash can be run here whenever award winners are announced. This draws people's attention to the stage



What is Sound Masking



and How Does it Work?

Sound masking technology has become increasingly popular in recent years as a way of improving privacy, productivity and comfort in various settings, from offices to hospitals to public spaces. But what is sound masking, and how does it work?

At its core, sound masking is the process of adding a low-level, unobtrusive background sound to an environment to mask or reduce the impact of other sounds that may be distracting or disturbing. This is accomplished with speakers strategically placed throughout a space, which emit a consistent sound at a level that is barely perceptible.

The generated signal used in sound masking is specifically engineered in the audio spectrum similar to air being pushed by a fan. This sound is carefully selected to be non-distracting and non-intrusive, so that it can effectively mask other sounds without itself becoming a distraction.

The science behind sound masking is based on the concept of the 'Speech Privacy Index' (SPI). The SPI is a measure of how well speech can be understood in any given environment and is influenced by factors such as the background noise level and distance between speakers and listeners. By adding a low-level background sound to a space, sound masking technology can help reduce the SPI, making speech intelligibility harder.

In addition to improving privacy, sound masking technology can also have other benefits. For example, by reducing the impact of distracting speech, sound masking can help improve focus and concentration, leading to increased productivity. It can also help create a more relaxed and comfortable environment, reducing stress levels and improving overall well-being.

Sound masking technology is typically used in a variety of settings, including offices, hospitals, schools, and public spaces (such as libraries and health centres). It can be tailored to the specific needs of each environment, with different levels used depending on the size and layout of the space.

Overall, sound masking technology is a powerful tool for improving the comfort, privacy, and productivity of various environments. Whether you're working in a busy office or using services that require a good level of privacy, sound masking technology can help create a more pleasant and functional environment.

Five Benefits of Sound Masking for Productivity

In a busy office environment, distractions can be a major hindrance to productivity. From the sound of nearby conversations to the constant hum of equipment and machines, it can be hard to stay focused and get work done. However, sound masking technology offers a solution to this problem. Here are five benefits of sound masking for productivity in the workplace:

- 1. Reduces Distractions:** By adding a low-level background sound to a space, sound masking technology can help reduce the impact of other noises that may be distracting or disturbing. This can make it easier for employees to concentrate on their work without being disturbed by the sounds of their colleagues or the surrounding environment.
- 2. Increases Privacy:** In open-plan offices, privacy can be a major concern. Sound masking technology can help increase speech privacy by reducing the ability of others to overhear conversations. This can be especially important in industries where confidentiality is a priority, such as finance or healthcare.
- 3. Improves Focus:** When there are fewer distractions in the environment, employees can focus more easily on their work. Sound masking technology can help create a more relaxed and comfortable environment, reducing stress levels and allowing employees to focus on their tasks at hand.
- 4. Boosts Productivity:** By reducing distractions and improving focus, sound masking technology can ultimately lead to increased productivity. Employees can get more work done in less time, leading to greater efficiency and better outcomes for the business.
- 5. Enhances Comfort:** Finally, sound masking technology can help create a more comfortable and pleasant environment for employees. The low-level background sound can help mask unpleasant or irritating sounds, leading to a more relaxed and enjoyable workspace.

How to Implement Sound Masking in Your Open-Plan Office

Open-plan offices have become increasingly popular in recent years, offering a more collaborative and flexible working environment. However, the open design can also create a noisy and distracting workplace, leading to reduced productivity and morale. Here are some tips and strategies for implementing sound masking in your open plan office:

Evaluate your space: Before implementing sound masking, evaluate your space to determine the specific needs and goals. Consider the size of the space, the types of activities that take place, and the specific noise issues you want to address.

Select the right system: Select a sound masking system that is designed to fit the specific needs of your space. Consider factors such as the type of sound used, the volume, and the placement of speakers. For example, if you have a lot of glass meeting rooms, you may need to select a system that can be adjusted to account for the reflective surfaces.

Placement of speakers: Consider the placement of speakers to ensure that the sound is distributed evenly throughout the space. Speakers should be positioned to provide optimal coverage while also minimizing the impact on nearby workstations or meeting rooms.

Optimal sound levels: Select optimal sound levels that are neither too loud nor too soft. Sound levels that are too high can be distracting and may create a feeling of discomfort, while sound levels that are too low may not provide the desired masking effect.

Test and adjust: After implementing the sound masking system, test and adjust the sound levels to ensure that they are providing the desired effect. Listen for any areas where the sound is too loud or too soft and adjust the volume as needed.



Implementing sound masking technology in your open plan office can provide a range of benefits, including reducing distractions and improving productivity. But you don't have to do this on your own. We have certified consultants to help you with evaluating your space and selecting the right system to help you to create a more comfortable and productive working environment for your employees.

Are Sound Masking and Speech Privacy the Same Thing?

Sound masking and speech privacy are related but distinct concepts in the realm of acoustics.

Sound masking involves the use of low-level, ambient background noise to reduce the intelligibility of other sounds in a space, such as conversations or other distractions. The goal of sound masking is to make unwanted sounds less noticeable, rather than to eliminate them. This can improve privacy, comfort, and focus in a given environment.

Speech privacy, on the other hand, specifically refers to the ability to prevent conversations from being overheard or understood by others in the same space. This can be achieved through the use of sound masking or other techniques, such as acoustic barriers or sound-absorbing materials, that reduce the transmission of sound from one area to another. Speech privacy is particularly

important in settings such as healthcare, legal, or financial offices, where sensitive or confidential information is often discussed.

While sound masking and speech privacy are related, they serve slightly different purposes. Sound masking is more of a general solution for reducing unwanted noise and improving acoustic comfort, while speech privacy is a more specific solution for protecting confidential conversations from being overheard. In some cases, both sound masking and speech privacy may be used together to create a more comprehensive solution for acoustically challenging spaces.

How To Create a Calm and Comfortable Office

In an office environment, sound masking and biophilic sounds can be used together to create a more effective acoustic environment.

Biophilic sounds are used to create a more pleasant and calming acoustic environment. They are natural sounds, such as the sound of water, birds, or leaves rustling, that can have a positive impact on well-being.

The concept of biophilic sounds is based on the theory of biophilia, which suggests that humans have an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. Studies have shown that exposure to natural sounds can have a calming effect on the mind and body, reducing stress and promoting relaxation to improve overall productivity and job satisfaction.

Sound masking, on the other hand, is used to reduce the impact of distracting noises in the environment by creating a more consistent background sound level. By using sound masking to reduce the impact of distracting noises, biophilic sounds can be introduced to provide a more pleasant and calming acoustic environment. The two approaches complement one other well, helping to create a more productive and comfortable workspace for employees.

In summary, biophilic sounds and sound masking serve different purposes, but complement each other well to create a more harmonious and productive workplace.

For more information, please visit: www.jands.com.au



FORTRESS SYDNEY LEVELS UP

with the Might of NEXO and Quest



With over 50 years of dedicated experience in the audio-visual landscape, The Avit Group deploys industry-leading technology in the design of comprehensive systems for hospitality and entertainment venues nationwide. The company's reputation for compelling solutions is due, in part, to their affinity for well-crafted hardware.

Tasked with the installation of a premiere audio system for the exhilarative Fortress Sydney, The Avit Group chose state-of-the-art offerings from French loudspeaker brand NEXO and a selection of systems from Australia's very own Quest Engineering.

Located in Chippendale's Central Park Mall, Fortress Sydney is a ground-breaking gamer's haven. The expansive new site now holds the title of largest eSports complex in the Southern Hemisphere, drawing crowds like a modern entertainment mecca. Housing a slew of colourful arcades, streaming booths, a themed tavern, sci-fi-inspired bar, PC LAN lounge and

a colossal custom-designed eSports arena, Fortress Sydney has been designed from the ground up as the unparalleled capital of the city's gaming community.

Sponsored by high-end PC gaming titan Alienware, Fortress is by nature, a hub for the tech-savvy. Packed with myriad elite gaming PCs, peripherals and addressable lighting, the word 'performance' was on the lips of every supplier involved in the project. Faced with providing a loudspeaker solution befitting its technological pedigree, The Avit Group selected NEXO's P15 point source system for the Alienware Arena.

The Avit Group's Operations Manager, Adrian Davis, outlines Avit's role in realising the venue's grand vision:

"For the Fortress eSports project, we were given the brief to create a dynamic, immersive, and technologically advanced AV system, which sits somewhere between an entertainment venue and a broadcast studio. The vision was to set a new benchmark for eSports venues, not only in Australia but across the globe. It was essential to provide seamless and high-quality audio experiences that would engage audiences, whether they were on-site or connecting digitally. Our goal



"Fortress Sydney has been designed from the ground up as the unparalleled capital of the city's gaming community."

was to ensure that the AV infrastructure was flexible and robust enough to accommodate a variety of events and broadcasts without compromising on quality or user experience."

After careful review of a variety of speaker options for the Arena, NEXO's P+ system was deployed in a L+R hang configuration, made up of a P15 loudspeaker and L18 sub on each side. Dotted throughout the rest of the entertainment complex, 60 Quest MX601 speakers partnered with nine Quest MXS10S subs provide coverage for the enormous collection of spaces. Describing the choice to combine NEXO and Quest for "both brands' unparalleled performance and adaptability," Adrian reveals that, "NEXO's reputation for delivering pristine sound quality, combined with the versatility of their P+ series, made

it a clear choice." Adrian goes on to explain that, "Quest speakers, on the other hand, offer surprisingly exceptional sound reproduction and coverage, at a lower budget, making them a perfect fit for this diverse and dynamic venue as both brands complement each other so well."

Proving NEXO a worthy contender for the Alienware Arena, where gaming tournaments are rendered into a thrilling spectator sport, Adrian champions the capabilities of the P+ Series:

"The obvious standout features of the NEXO P15 speakers and L18 subs are their impeccable sound quality, high output, and compact design. The P15's asymmetric dispersion pattern provides excellent coverage to everyone in the arena, while the L18

subwoofers deliver powerful and accurate low frequencies, crucial for an immersive gaming and entertainment experience. The quality and SPL level of these speakers was very surprising. We were first presented this option on paper from the team at Group Technologies and it was only when auditioning that we realised that the unbelievable specs were no lie – they exceeded everyone's expectations at The Avit Group, especially our audio nerds. Both the speaker and subwoofer components are robust and reliable, ensuring that Fortress can operate smoothly during high-stakes eSports events."

Designed around affordability without compromising on sonic performance, Quest's high-fidelity monitors and compact subs were equally impressive, as Adrian explains:





The arcade

“The Quest MX601 speakers and MXS10S subs were also surprises in their own right, and are integral to the AV setup at Fortress. The MX601 speakers deliver flat, clear, musical and detailed sound across a wide frequency range, ensuring that every detail is heard, no matter where you are in the venue. The MXS10S subs complement these speakers by providing a deep, punchy bass response. Their compact design allows for flexibility in placement and ensures that they can handle the demands of a bustling eSports venue. When commissioning the system, I was blown away at how little processing was required to make the Quest speakers shine.”

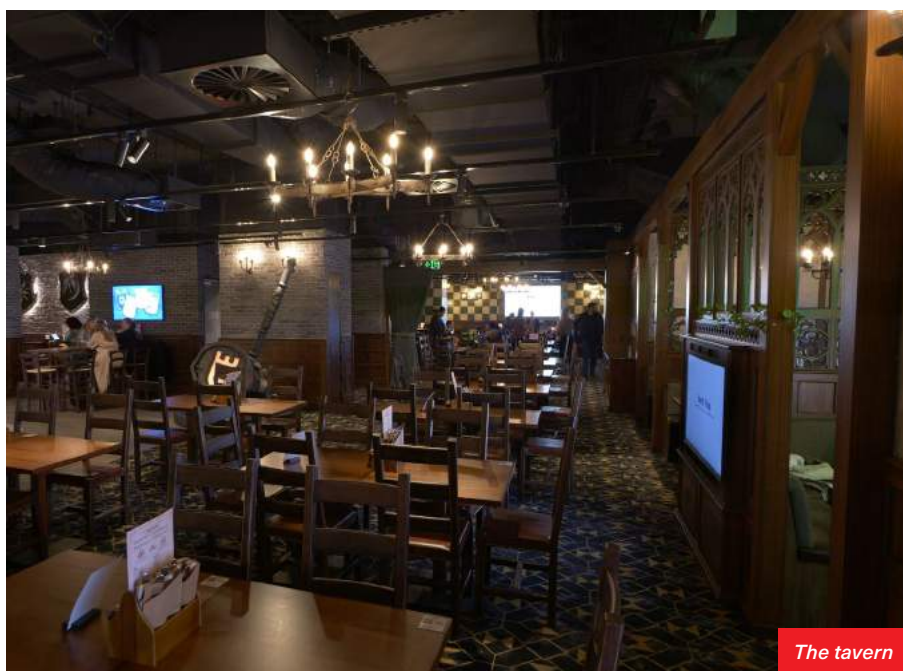
With an extensive history utilising NEXO and a newfound fondness for Quest, The Avit Group's Managing Director, Brad Magri summarises:

“The reason we went with NEXO is that we have always been so pleased using the brand for years. I have a bit of a passion for the product range thanks to the quality of output, and high-end sound and aesthetic, in such small-form cabinets. Plus, we really loved the recommendation of Quest from Group Technologies, the relationship we have has always led us to the best quality solutions, and we now have an abundance of Quest speakers and subs energising the whole Fortress venue.”

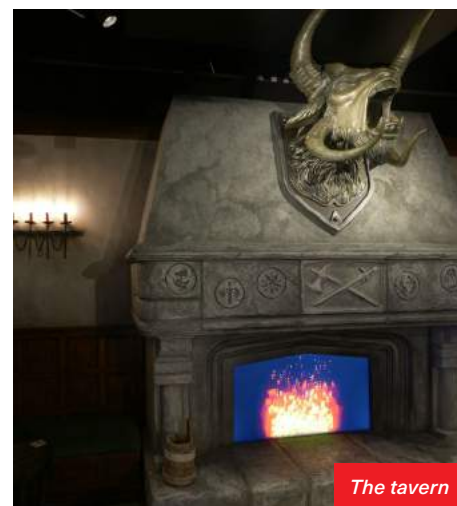
Leading the charge with a meticulous level of premium-tier technology throughout, Fortress Sydney's uniquely eSports-driven capabilities have placed it firmly on the map for gamers across the country and beyond.



The bar



The tavern



The tavern



DEAR REALITY EXOVERB

The immersive audio experts at Dear Reality recently released a couple of plug-ins with very little in common: a pristine stereo reverb called Exoverb and a maniacal distortion algorithm called MIYA. This issue we'll be taking a closer look at Exoverb and next time around we'll offer some insights into Dear Reality's unique take on wavelet distortion synthesis... which doesn't seem to have much of a grip on reality at all! For now, to Exoverb.

Exoverb must have been an odd plug-in for the 3D-spatialists at Dear Reality to develop. Given their immersive audio background (which is also true of its parent company, Sennheiser) a stereo reverb must have seemed like a decidedly retro, almost quaint two-dimensional plug-in to bring to market.

Perhaps that's what prompted Dear Reality (unconsciously or otherwise) to base its UI on a combination of Emmett Brown's Flux Capacitor and the targeting computer of an X-Wing fighter. We'll get to how Exoverb's Triangular pad matrix works in a moment.

But first, what does Exoverb offer a market so crowded with plug-in options that it's hard for end-users to differentiate between them?

A few things. Apart from great sounding impulse responses (which Dear Reality prefers to call 'acoustic scenarios'), Exoverb's user interface is an intuitive workspace that allows you to customise a reverb of your

choosing without getting lost in a maze of menus and parameters, all while resisting the temptation to become an oversimplified, and thus ineffective, control panel. It doesn't have photos of cathedrals in France or topographical RT60 waterfall plots. It's a deceptively simple, two-dimensional layout that produces fast results in several unique ways.

At Exoverb's heart are 50 reverb types grouped under four classic categories: Ambiances, Rooms, Halls and Plates. Again, nothing new there, nor is this the biggest collection on the market, but it's substantial enough to provide a large variety of spatial options.

The user interface consists of three basic sections, the main feature of which is the Triangle pad that gives you interconnected mix control over the reverb's wet/dry signal on its Y-axis, and early reflections and late reverberation on its X-axis. This all happens by moving a point source anywhere with the

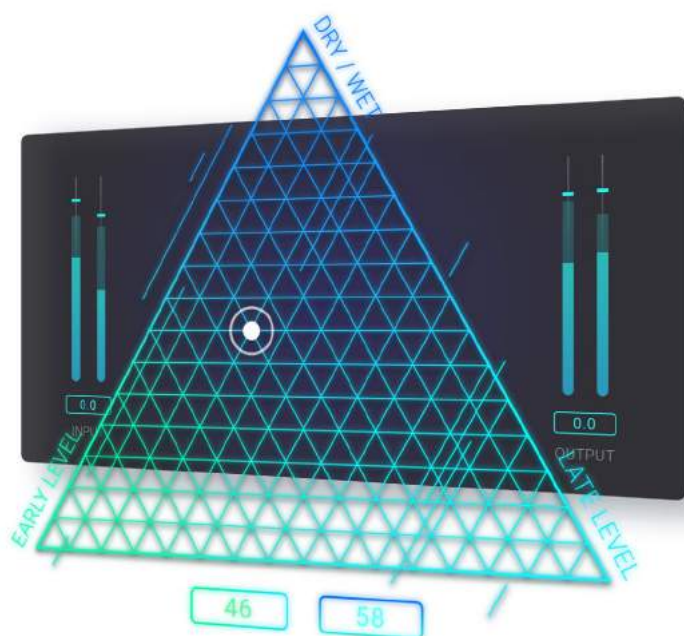
TOTAL CONTROL
Input and Output gain

GO BEYOND TWO-DIMENSIONAL STEREO SOUND
Direct access to Decay, Width and Depth

INTUITIVELY HIT THE SWEET SPOT
Unique Triangle Pad

ENHANCED SPATIAL PERCEPTION
50 acoustic scenes

MAKE IT FIT YOUR MIX
Versatile EQs



triangle, the top peak of which represents dry signal – no effects. Anything below this apex prompts a response from the reverb: down and to the left gives you more early reflections; to the right, more late reverberation. Put the control marker on the floor of this triangle and you're generating a 100-percent wet signal. Fully to the left on this bottom line represents 100-percent early reflection and zero late reverberation, and vice versa.

Initially, this idea might seem like a gimmick, but soon thereafter it becomes a perfectly intuitive way of modifying at least three parameters simultaneously. All three: the wet/dry mix, early reflections and reverb volume are tethered to this single gesture, which allows you to find the right blend quickly using only your ears.

Unlike the behaviour of most plug-in reverbs, below the Triangle pad are floating Pre-delay, Size, Decay, Width and Depth parameters, which function independently of any menu-based reverb selections. So, if you're working, let's say, with the 'Drum Ambience' reverb and then decide to change over to a 'Jazz Hall' setting, the five floating parameters remain unmoved. Some users will find this a little odd at first, but once you're used to the idea that these controls are more akin to those of a small mixer than the parameters of an individual patch, you quickly grow accustomed to it. If you want all the parameters to be saved together, it's a simple matter of saving a preset.

The same logic applies to the third and final section at the bottom of the interface, the EQ controls, of which there are three: one for the overall summed output, one for the early reflections, and one for the reverb. All three EQs can be turned on and off independently of one another, and each consists of top and bottom shelving EQs, and a midrange parametric. These also remain unaltered by any changes of reverb sub-category inside the menu.

One final point to add here is that two of the controls mentioned earlier: Width and Depth, really pack a punch in Exoverb. Unlike so many other reverbs on the market that have historically offered similar, yet grossly ineffective, versions of these parameters, in Exoverb these controls have a clear and obvious impact on tone, width and depth. Shallow and wide, or narrow and deep spaces are vividly rendered by Exoverb, making for shaping of reverbs an almost visual experience, rather than a guessing game.

If you're into plug-in reverbs and looking to add to your collection, Exoverb is well worth a gander.

Exoverb runs on Windows 10 or 11 and macOS X 10.9 or higher; Intel and Apple Silicon processors are both supported. The plug-in is available in VST3, AU and AAX formats, the latter requiring Pro Tools 2019 or higher.

BATTERY-POWERED UPLIGHT

SHOWPRO HERCULES LED

The ShowPro Hercules LED is a small battery-powered LED light that's capable of receiving wireless DMX, meaning that it can be run and controlled without cables. Hercules can change colour through the control panel and via DMX, and be manually tilted and focussed. But its key attribute is that it's fast, simple and easy to set up.



The Case and Charging Station

The Hercules LED uplight comes with its own charging station on wheels; a road case with a powerCON input that's capable of charging up to six lights at a time. Hercules LED lights are typically sold in groups of six with a charging case but they can also be purchased individually. The case easily fits in a standard passenger elevator, but up a flight of stairs it's a genuine two-person lift.

The Light's Construction

The LED light itself is sturdily built, weighing in at about 5.5kg. It has a handle on top, making it easy to carry, and being a sealed unit that's IP44-rated, the Hercules houses no internal user-serviceable parts. Maintenance therefore consists only of cleaning the lens and dusting

off the light. Though a little bulky and chunky due to its battery size, the Hercules is a very portable and durable unit that can withstand being placed in high-traffic areas like foyers and entry corridors. It sits well on the floor but also has brackets on its underside, allowing for a clamp to be added so it can be hung from a truss.

Optics, Colour, Brightness

The Hercules LED is an RGBW fixture; each light containing 4x10w LED chips. It has a zoom range of about 2:1 and a beam angle from 15° to 30°. While you may not be able to use these lights to wash a stage, you can certainly use them to uplight drapes, banners, act as truss warmers, or function just about anywhere you would otherwise use an LED par.

Wireless Control

With on-board genuine wireless DMX receivers and battery-powered operation, Hercules LED uplights can be run in a completely wireless configuration, saving huge amounts of setup time as well as providing for a far neater finish.

The Hercules can operate in wireless DMX (W-DMX) mode up to 300m (900ft) from the transmitter, although this can be interrupted or inhibited by liquid masses such as water, snow or people between the transmitter and receiver. For best results, it's therefore preferable to keep the area between the transmitter and receiver clear of any liquid masses. Wireless DMX isn't always as reliable as running a cable, of course, but it's easier, neater, more cost-effective and vastly more convenient.



Battery Life, Charge Time

Running at full intensity, ShowPro claims you can get up to nine hours out of a Hercules LED, which in my experience seems about right, give or take specific usage. The colours you pick can sway battery life somewhat, but this is of no great significance. Full bottom-to-top charge takes about six hours; not bad if you're doing gigs during the evening. You can charge them during the day while you're setting up, and drop them out and turn them on right before doors. The same goes for daytime gigs: charge them overnight and you're ready to go in the morning.

There are a few precautions to keep in mind, however, when using the battery-powered fixtures, but nothing too extreme or unreasonable:

- Recharge the battery within three days from last use
- Recharge the battery to full capacity before storing the product
- For best results, charge the battery in a temperature between zero and 35°C
- When charging the battery, keep the product at no less than one metre from any open flame or hotplate
- When charging the battery inside the road case charger, keep the road case cover open
- When charging ensure there is sufficient airflow in front of the air vent
- Always charge the battery with the product in an upright position

· Do not charge the battery for more than 24 hours

· Perform a full discharge/recharge cycle every three months

You should factor in a battery replacement when the lights are about five years old, even if you follow the above precautions.

Menu Features of the Light

For those of you familiar with ShowPro's other products, the menu of the Hercules LED reads much like that of the rest of the range. Colour values for R, G, B and W range from zero to 255, giving you a much wider spectrum of colours. While much can be said about the wireless capabilities of the light, you can also power and control Hercules uplights the old-fashioned way; with a powerCON connector and five-pin DMX. They can also be run in 4-channel, 6-channel and 10-channel mode.

Verdict

What ShowPro has produced here is a light that's very simple to set up and easy to pack away. Its robust construction and simple features make it a very durable light, while the battery-powered and wireless-DMX options make it incredibly versatile. Every venue and production company should have several cases of Hercules LEDs up their sleeve to act as 'get-out-of-jail-free cards'. They work perfectly as last-minute additions to an event in situations where a client rocks up with a banner or that extra bit of stage depth needs to be created by uplighting a drape. They're also perfect for high-traffic areas, given that there are no cables to be run, or tripped, over.

Moving forward, it will be interesting to see if ShowPro decides to develop and build on the Hercules concept. Will the company look to make an IP65 version perhaps, or a brighter version, or maybe even one featuring more controls such as pan and tilt? One figures that a top-selling light in the future could be an IP65, wireless DMX-controlled, battery-powered moving head fixture. While that brief sounds expensive, ShowPro has already covered a good portion of this idea with the Hercules LED; a light that weighs 5.5kg and sells at just over \$1,000 each when you buy six and a charging case.

Product Info: www.showtech.com.au

Distributor Australia and New Zealand: www.showtech.com.au

TECH SPECS

Optics

LED Specification: CREE WW 2700K 3W

LED quantity: 4 PCS

Field Angle Zoom from 20° to 40°

Beam Angle Zoom from 15° to 30°

Output: 1736 lux / 3m / 15° 625 lux / 3m / 30°

Control

Control method: WDMX or DMX

WDMX Compatibility Wireless Solution

DMX Channels: 4, 6, 10, HSV and HSI

Dimming Curves: Four Modes

Dimming Resolution: 16-bit

Data Connections: five-pin DMX, Built-in Wireless Solution

Electrical

Power: Lithium Battery, Neutrik powerCON input

Battery Specifications: Lithium Battery, 14.8V, 13.2AH

Working Hours: Nine hours at 100%

Charging hours: Six

Charging flight case and built-in powerCON

Charging during use: Yes

Input Voltage: AC 110V-240V AC 50/60Hz auto-ranging

Power Consumption: 50W

Fuse N/A

Physical

Hercules Weight: 5.5KG

Hercules Size: 312 x 250 x 108mm

Cooling System: Fan-free

IP Rating: IP44



When the Suit Fits



I never wanted to 'work for the man'. The thought of spending a lifetime shuffling from home to office, slowly grinding up the ranks until hitting a ceiling of mediocrity filled me with dread.

The upsides of regular, stable income; of benefits like super, WorkCover and sick days are a great thing. But the fear of endless repetitious commuting, of soulless corporate workwear, and just 'being a number' in a faceless, uncaring setting led me to trying all other options possible. The prospect of watching the clock all day, every day, filling in the blanks of time until knockoff seemed like such a waste of potential.

Draw Your Own Line in the Sand

Maybe decades climbing the ladder to the ultimate boardroom is your thing. Cool, go for it, Mr Roy. Let your children squabble over your ashes. But maybe you have ethical or social concerns about the company that's dangling a fat carrot. Should I, shouldn't I? It's entirely up to you to balance life needs and choices.

I chose to work in concerts, starting with dingy pubs and scungy trucks. At that level in the industry, two of the great attractions were the lack of dress code and the seat-of-the-pants nature of the work. Moving up the ranks to better gigs saw conditions and pay improve markedly, but the insecure road life ultimately wore me out.

Next move from dirty rock 'n' roll to a more sanitised business life was also a choice. I liked the people in the company but didn't like that their main client was spending over a billion dollars building a burden on society – Crown Casino. I sucked it up by reasoning that A: I desperately needed the money, and B: most of my career to date was involved in entertaining and distracting punters from the mundanity of their own corporate existences. What was so different about this?

The gig turned out to be a major vocational stepping stone for me. Successfully project managing a multi-million-dollar AV install was an awesome feather in the cap. I had a great boss who has become a lifelong friend. Karmically, that same venue bit me on the arse not long after when my housemate repeatedly lost his rent to their sparkly bandits and nearly got us evicted. Said boss was then shafted by sharks in suits and lost his company. Pros and cons folks.

The next gig trawled near the bottom of my career. AV hire technician is an okay job, but I felt like societal flotsam in this company. Forced to wear a tie for the only time in my adult life, I chose the ugliest one I could find. Forced to wear cheap (company supplied) nylon trousers and shirts, I felt uncomfortable before even walking in the door. Above all, I hated this company's culture. Why did I stay for 12 miserable months? Because I was out of good options, in debt and seeking some normality after years on the road. I gave it a good crack, but it got me so down that another major life change emerged.

Going back to university for two years aged 35 was a poverty-stricken roll of the dice on my future. It didn't exactly go to plan, but it did bear professional fruit. The next seven years working in AV control and integration paid for a major dream goal.

Do it on Your Own Terms

Some things, like branded uniforms and neat hairdos, are a requirement for a ticket to this ball. Unless you're the CEO, you may have to conform to required conditions or stay wedded to Centrelink. A broke martyr might hold the moral high ground, but they're still broke. Tattoos are increasingly acceptable but FTW across your forehead might limit the options a bit. Your call on both.

Alternatively, become the CEO of your own corporation. Start a business and grow it big enough to employ an army of suits. Even cooler, build a whole battalion of inked, dreaded, dyed, and pierced characters of all backgrounds and persuasions. Make that into a sustainably profitable venture and I will salute you.

Or you could get in on the ground floor with a savvy entrepreneur and become a key player as their business expands. One of my brothers did this and recently retired at 55, the beneficiary of several generous bonus payments. Yeh, he worked hard for decades but deserves every bit of the spoils. He also had the good luck of backing the right business horse.

Get in, Get What You Want and Get Out

This is one example of corporate life not being a 'forever' thing. Personally, I used it just enough to achieve long-held goals of buying a bit of dirt and building a house with my own hands. As soon as the numbers added up, I was out of the office quicker than Usain Bolt and off to re-construct my life outside of branded-suit-world. Jeans and T-shirts forever, baby!

For the 0.1% who end up in the C-suite like my brother, well done. Even more kudos if you did it without compromising your ideals too much or shafting too many people in the process. There is some luck involved but it's mostly hard work, graft, and a heap of air travel.

Like me, many see the whole corporate process as predatory, shallow, and self-serving. It tends to enable white, cis alpha males to the disadvantage of all others. Many organisations encourage a competitive hard-headedness and can have a 'join the wolf pack or get eaten by it' environment. Some are more inclusive and supportive; these can be a joy to work at.

It's worth remembering that corporate entities do not exist in isolation from humanity. If anything, they rely on it. Robots and A.I. do not staff boardrooms, nor perform the bulk of tasks involved in business life. Each entrant into the game-of-suits is human.

There are reams written about corporate climbers and their empire-building skulduggery. To mitigate that tendency, it's up to all of us to bring some humanity to our roles, with whatever influence we can muster. If you can do so with flair, personality, and integrity, I reckon you've won. With luck, you made your workplace fun and productive for others too.

Hopefully, you also got the big bucks along the way. That was the point of the exercise, wasn't it?

entech 10 - 24 October 2023

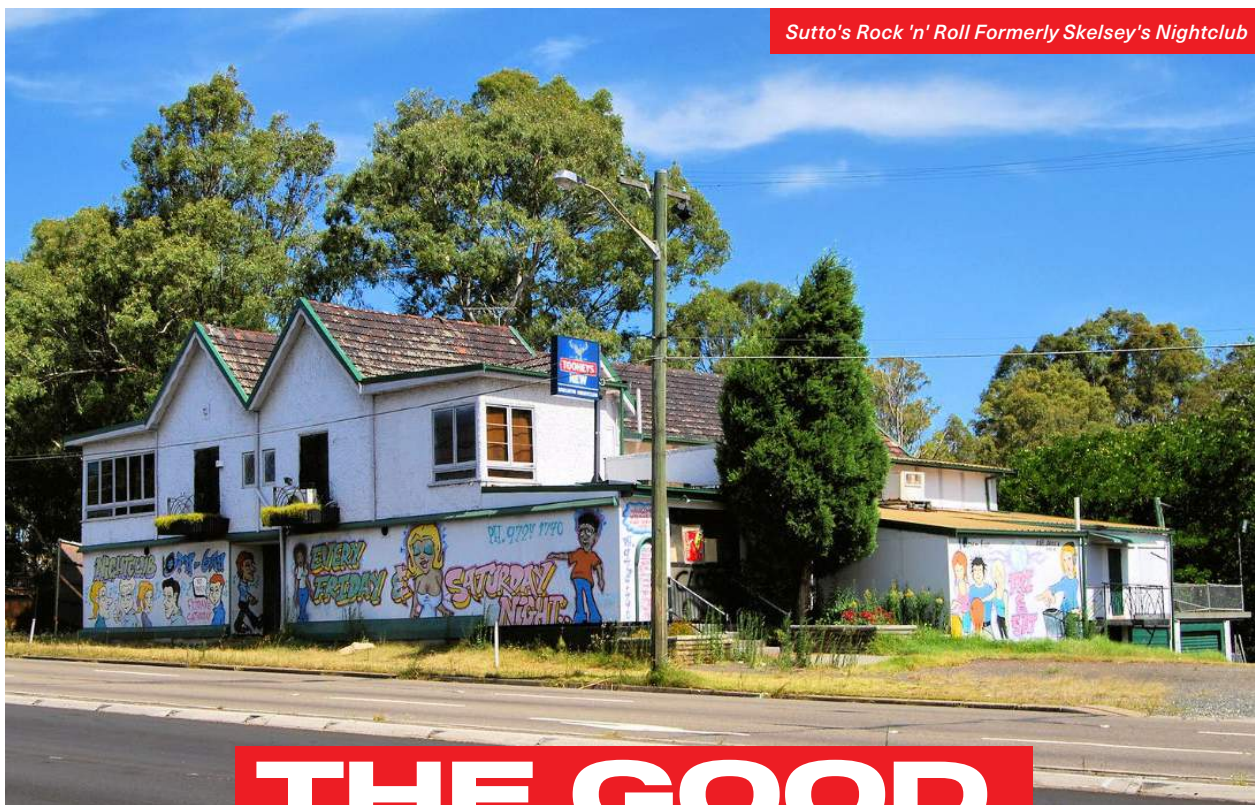
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Sutto's Rock 'n' Roll Formerly Skelsey's Nightclub



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UNPAID GIGS

Snippets from the archives of a bygone era

Some of my early band performances weren't quite up to speed, but there was a lot of work around in the '70s, even for garage bands, and you got paid! Then there were those unpaid support gigs that bands did just to get on the card with the more notable bands so as to get some exposure and attract agency attention. And the most extreme debacle for my second band unfolded at one of these unpaid support gigs.

The Stage Door Tavern was a basement venue close to Central Station, Sydney. The venue featured headliner acts and was run by the legendary Pat Jay, whom we approached personally in 1978 for a booking. I recall Jay boasting about packing 600 people into the venue, which was only licensed to accommodate 200. I can't remember the main act but we were treated with disdain, even to the point where the sound operator demanded

a payment before allowing us to use the PA. Being unpaid we refused and a bitter quarrel ensued, before Jay intervened and we were reluctantly allowed the privilege of playing without paying for the PA.

The mix was terrible and the foldback barely audible. So, half way through our act I thanked the lighting guy and sarcastically omitted the PA guy, who then pulled the plug. However, I continued singing through a megaphone, which was one of our props, and of course I directed a few taunts to the PA guy. We got little sympathy from Jay who was more aggrieved about my diatribe than the PA guy terminating our act.

The Stage Door Tavern was shut down two years later in 1980 for breaching licensing laws, with Midnight Oil playing the final gig. A poster for the final performance read, "Midnight Oil Destroy! The Stage Door Sat April 12." Inside, the place got trashed while outside riot police were waiting, some on horseback, expecting the worst in light of Jay's provocative poster.

Not all support gigs were painful. In 1977, one year prior to the melee at the Stage Door Tavern, we got a support gig in Wollongong, NSW with Finch. Mark Evans had just left AC/DC and joined the band. This was also the

time when guitarist Bob Spencer left to join Skyhooks, and later, The Angels.

We were already big fans of Finch and AC/DC, but there we sat gobsmacked in the band room while Mark Evans told us tales of touring with AC/DC on the same card as Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow; and to us Ritchie Blackmore was a guitar God.

After our set we watched Finch from the wings, then with only a limited amount of gear to lug out, we made our way to the stage door exit where there were girls waiting to greet us. Once again my caustic wit couldn't be contained. "Sorry girls, but you've got the wrong band."

"No, we've been waiting for you guys," said one of the girls.

Prior to plunging headfirst into the PA hire business, I'd purchased 8 par cans to light our band, and when the band eventually broke up I began taking them out for other bands for a minimal fee. I was unaware at the time that this would serve as a kind of work experience for my future PA and lighting hire ventures.

One of those lighting gigs was at The Grand Hotel, Broadway, Sydney in 1978 for The Clones, who were at the time a '60s covers



Bayview Hotel Woy Woy, NSW

These were the original el cheapo gels that came with the lights, not the flame retardant Lee gels that I was yet to learn about and would exclusively use in the ensuing years.

The '70s was an era where you took your life into your hands playing at certain venues. At the Bayview Hotel, Woy Woy, NSW a full schooner of beer spilled into our mixing console during a drunken brawl sending the poor Canary mixer to its frothy grave. And for the evening's encore, during the load out we were treated to the spectacle of an amalgam of three punters and a German Shepherd in a cartoon-like brawl, rolling around in the carpark.

I mostly have good memories of my last band, Main Earth. We played most of the regular venues like the Stardust Hotel at Cabramatta, Penrith Panthers, Enfield Boulevard Hotel, and lots of western suburbs hotels. However, our most loyal fans came to see us every Saturday

band managed by David Keogh. I'd met Keogh some months earlier. He wasn't a musician but had a psychology degree and aspirations of putting together and managing the first Beatles tribute band in Australia. I auditioned and got a part in the hapless venture, which fell over after only a few rehearsals. Keogh went on to manage The Clones who had a chunk of Beatles songs in their covers repertoire.

The Grand Hotel was a punk band venue that could barely pack in 120 people. The stage, which was made of wooden pallets and packing crates was graced by bands such as Johnny Dole and the Scabs, and Tommy and the Dipsticks. Entry was \$2.00, which included a meal, usually akin to prison cuisine slopped onto a paper plate.

So, here were The Clones, a '60s revival band booked into a punk venue where they were spat on by the punters. Being spat upon in such venues was by no means an unfavourable response. In fact, it was as well-intentioned as the beer that some of the regular punk bands spat back at their beloved patrons.

During the performance, where members of The Clones had to continue playing, some

of them with spit dripping off their faces, the venue manager approached me. "Something's burning," he said. Whilst pleading innocence I noticed that one of my lighting gels was on fire.



The Clones

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night for the best part of a year between 1980 and 1981 at the Brooklyn Hotel on George Street, Sydney. The fee was \$80 for the entire band. We played on the floor as there was no stage and the only mishap I remember was a punter falling into my wedge monitors, which had no grille protection and were subsequently destroyed.

By the early '90s a lot of venues either closed down or became gaming establishments, which mostly catered to duos, trios and one-man-bands. I followed Main Earth's lead guitarist, Joey D, in doing a one-man-band act. However, with the lack of band camaraderie I found most of the work depressing, with the worst of these gigs being at a trendy rugby union club somewhere on Sydney's north shore. It was one of those haunts where the club kowtowed to a group of regular patrons who considered themselves above management (we've all seen this). "We don't like live music here, so just keep it down," was an instruction from such a group even before I started playing.

During the performance I was constantly taunted by these buffoons with one of them even mounting the stage area and shouting his disapproval over my microphone. My complaints to management were ignored, so to piss everybody off I not only turned down the sound but I dialled my Roland sequencer down to roughly half-speed. My 60s rock 'n' roll repertoire must have sounded absolutely ridiculous at 74 BPM, but nobody even noticed!



My very last gig with other musicians was a one-off performance circa 1991 at Sutto's Rock 'n' Roll (nicknamed Slutto's), formerly Skelsey's Nightclub on the Hume Highway, Lansdowne, NSW. I joined a singer/guitarist, who arranged the booking, and a female keyboard player to form a trio for the grand reopening of the venue under new management.

Whilst it was fun to play with people instead of a sequencer, we performed to an empty house. Not one single person came through the door. As the manager gingerly approached us I remember the keyboard player asking, "Are we still going to get paid?" Fortunately, we did, and we could well have been the last act that ever performed at the historic venue. The

'landmark site' was sold at auction in 2009 and subsequently demolished.

In 1986 at Now Studios I ran into ex Finch member Bob Spencer, whom I'd briefly mixed in 1982 when he did a set at a Gold Coast venue where I was mixing the Chet Reynolds Band. Now Studios had engaged me to mix The Booze Brothers tribute band at one of their gigs. Prior to the booking I was given a tour of their rehearsal studios where I saw Bob Spencer rehearsing with a band. We began to chat but it was obvious I was holding up rehearsals. "So who's this band you're with now, Bob?" I foolishly asked.

"Ah, these are The Angels, Brian," he said.



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