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The front cover feature
this month is supported by two very interesting companies, SoloTech and Artisan. While Artisan is in the first year of operation, we have all known the principals and drivers in this company for many years. SoloTech, while being in business for many years, has recently expanded into the United States. So, in essence, this is the first summer of operation in our part of the touring world for both companies. Welcome to both and we wish you good fortune and a minimum of headaches.

Even though we are in the Summer touring season now, we need to keep our sights on upcoming events and gatherings. So, while all of you are busy with your productions, do not forget to plan for the next Tour Link in Mesa, AZ January 24 – 25, 2008. Six months goes by pretty fast, and this is the time to set up sponsored events, hotel rooms and airfare. You can save a lot of money on registrations and flights by booking early, so please give this your attention.

Finally, try to take a little time this season for yourselves, your families and loved ones. Time is fleeting and we may never pass here again!

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ADAMSON RESTRUCTURES

IN LESS THAN A DECADE, ADAMSON SYSTEMS HAS GROWN FROM A “FAMILY RUN” BUSINESS OCCUPYING A MODEST RENTED LOCATION, TO A SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL BRAND MANUFACTURING IN ITS OWN 37,000SQ FT FACTORY. THE DAYS OF BROCK ADAMSON AND HIS SON JESSE MANAGING THE COMPANY WITH THE AID OF ONLY FEW OFFICE STAFF ARE BECOMING DISTANT MEMORY. THE COMPANY’S GROWTH HAS BEEN ACCELERATED BY THE NUMBER AND QUALITY OF SHOP EMPLOYEES, SHORTENED LEAD TIMES, AND LARGER PRODUCTION VOLUME. INCREASED MARKETING AND PRODUCT SUPPORT HAS RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF MORE SENIOR POSITIONS.

Adam MacGillivray’s title ‘Sales & Support and European Liaison’ reflects the recent structural changes in Europe. Adam is the main contact for new worldwide factory direct sales and handles support related matters with ‘European Support’ addition Jochen Sommer, who is currently supporting Linkin Park’s European and upcoming LP’s Project Revolution U.S. Tour.

Benoit Cabot has become a familiar face for many with the increased Adamson ‘Tour Support’. In ‘Product Development’ as a product specialist liaison for the growing Adamson Engineering staff, Ben’s responsibilities include design and R&D under the guidance of head designer Brock Adamson, as well as performing prototype testing, and measurement analysis. Ben has collaborated in developing a new product series titled ‘METRIX’, which makes its debut touring on Disney’s “High School Musical” with Masque Sound and will be officially released in October at the AES show.

Organizing and re-designing Adamson’s trade-show image is long-time Adamson employee Thom Wright, who has been promoted to ‘Exhibit Coordinator.’ He has already added four new international shows to Adamson’s exhibiting calendar and is attending a handful more around the world.
THANK YOU TO THE READERS OF TOUR GUIDE MAGAZINE FOR NAMING SENATORS COACH COMPANY OF THE YEAR!

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THE GENESIS “TURN IT ON AGAIN” WORLD TOUR FEATURES A SHOW-STOPPING STAGE DESIGN BY STUFISH (MARK FISHER) BASED ON THE SHAPE OF A CONCH SHELL, WITH A SPECTACULAR, GENTLY ASYMMETRIC 55 METRE WIDE, 3000 SQUARE METRE BARCO MITRIX SCREEN FORMING ITS BACKDROP. AT THE REAR OF THE SCREEN ARE 7 CURVED METAL “RIBS” OF VARYING HEIGHTS UP TO 28 METRES.

33 Robe fixtures are attached to these seven ribs, with the balance of 17 ColorSpot 2500E ATs sited on the floor, upstage of the band’s performance platform, and providing a powerful back-lighting source.

The towers were a starting point for Woodroffe’s initial lighting design. The idea was that they would encompass the stage architecture, and that lights mounted on special pods would roll up and down the ribs to change the scale of the space.

Fisher developed these ribs (complete with tracking light pods) into the elegant sculpted elements framing the screen’s sweeping curvature. Woodroffe and Fisher once again found themselves collaborating very closely to develop these creative concepts, in the process amalgamating the live show, lighting and video effects a seamless fusion of visual elements.

Genesis and their manager Tony Smith were also very involved in the show aesthetics and stayed in active discussions with the creative team throughout the evolution process. As a band, they are acutely knowledgeable about lighting, and have also played an important historical role in the development of the moving light industry.

On the road, the lighting is being operated by show lighting director Dave Hill using a GrandMA console. Hill comments that the Robes
have proved very reliable so far, and resilient to the weather which has presented plenty of meteorological challenges.

XL Video UK – via Blink TV - is supplying 15,089 Barco 510 O-Lite panels with 270 control boxes, plus 102 panels of Mitsubishi 16:8 high resolution screen in a record breaking 9 million pixel LED surface.

The O-lite makes up a spectacular 13 metre high 55 metre wide set back wall and is surrounded by 7 lighting towers (“ribs”) reaching heights of up to 28 metres, which together resemble a giant conch shell. This was designed by Mark Fisher/Stufish.

The screen provides an elegant 3D curved wall and an elegant architectural back drop immediately behind the performance area. It is an interactive canvass for video playback, graphics images and IMAG which are integrated with lighting (designed by Patrick Woodroffe) effects, helping to create the show’s unique visual identity.

The O-lite pixels are fitted into customised touring frames designed by XL Video and made by Brilliant Stages populated at different pitches to give multiple resolutions across the whole surface. The screen ends at either side of stage with the two elliptical Mitsubishi which seamlessly ‘flow’ into the main screen.

The O-lite screen is by far the most complicated that’s ever been created in terms of engineering and processing according to Stufish’s project executive designer Jeremy Lloyd. It presented a real challenge to the video boffins, namely Richard Turner, who took care of the processing, mapping and programming of the hard drives that feed it with provocative and engaging images.

Blink’s crew chief Stuart Heaney leads a video team of 14, and the IMAG video director is Ruary MacPhie who is taking care of a 5 camera mix which goes primarily onto the side screens and sometimes onto the main screen as windows appear.

Custom playback material produced by Sam Pattinson from OneDotZero is stored on four GV Profile hard drives including a dynamic array of graphics and animations. This is operated live by playback director Bryan Myles using Barco’s Events Manager, which drives the Barco Encore system providing the show’s overall video control.

MacPhie’s mix is coming from 5 Sony D50 cameras, two with long lenses at FOH, one in the pit on a specially curved track & dolly with wide angle lens, one hand-held onstage and a hot-head on the ‘roofette’ above the band performance area centre stage.

MacPhie is using one of XL’s Kayak mixer/switchers. He is running it with a separate Out for the side screens coming from its Aux bus, with one sub-cut, and the side screens run individually on the Programme Bus plus ME1. This allows him to put any band member onto any screen anytime, and using the Aux Bus allows him to take any source to the main screen from the Kayak. MacPhie’s mix is also fed into the Encore system, with some of the IMAG multi-screen effects pre-ordained and programmed into the Events Manager by Richard Turner.

The show also incorporates a few interesting video special effects, one of which is a head shot during the song “Mama” for which the band wanted to replicate an image from the track’s original 1980’s promotional material. This is done live by Collins activating (via foot pedal) a small red head light positioned at his feet while his face is framed with a tight camera shot – giving a ghostly shimmering halo of light around his face. The XL crew has rigged up a little camera in the pit so Collins can see the image this is producing and tweak it to his liking by moving his head in relation to the light.

Stuart Heaney has been involved in the Genesis project since January, and part of the overall video brief has involved the design of special dollies to house and transport the O-Lite sections on tour. These were built by Brilliant Stages, and are an important part of some extremely meticulous pre-planning by Heaney, the XL Video and Stufish teams and tour riggers that is resulting in the video department being ready to roll in 3.5 hours each day …… and out in just 2 hours and 40 minutes!

Genesis is set to continue touring until the end of the year and Tour Guide Journal will bring you up close and personal in an upcoming issue.
PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY LLC (PROTEC), THE REGION’S LEADING EVENT PRODUCTION COMPANY, MADE HISTORY IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WHEN IT STAGED THE MUCH AWAITED CONCERT OF SHAKIRA’S – ORAL FIXATION TOUR 2007, BRANDED AS THE BIGGEST CONCERT EVER IN THE REGION PROMOTED BY THE LOCAL BASED COMPANY MIRAGE PROMOTIONS.

The ‘still being talked-about’ concert engulfed the Dubai Autodrome was witnessed by a crowd of 25,000 to watch what was undeniably the most captivating, ground breaking and breath taking concert ever seen in the region.

The Protec team, headed by Rick Wade, provided and installed the show’s set-up, the show was rigged over a 7 day period with the help of 35 expert crew members in lighting, audio, video, stage and roof.

Shakira’s tour lighting designer, specified his preferred lighting instruments, 43 Clay Paky Alpha Wash 575, 10 Clay Paky Alpha Wash 1200 and 213 Par Cans which was used to light up the 20mx40m stage. In addition to all of this they brought with them 28 Clay Paky Alpha Spot HPE 1200 as part of their touring equipment. All of these were controlled by 1 Full Size Grand MA lighting console running the show entirely to time code.
SCHARFF WEISBERG LIGHTING ACQUIRES DL.2 DIGITAL LIGHTS

ADDDING TO ITS ARSENAL OF CUTTING EDGE CONVERGENCE TECHNOLOGIES, SCHARFF WEISBERG LIGHTING HAS TAKEN DELIVERY OF DL.2 DIGITAL LIGHTS FROM HIGH END SYSTEMS.

The DL.2 is a combination media server, moving-light fixture and video projector. The luminaire comes pre-loaded with stock digital content, a 5.5K lumen, 3-chip DLP light engine, an on-board CCD camera and an infrared illumination system.

The DL.2 mounts like any other intelligent moving unit and controls just as easily using standard DMX cabling and protocols from a moving-light console. The patent-pending Collage software feature enables multiple DL.2 units to create seamless vertical, horizontal or central panoramic media projections controlled from a lighting console.

For a recent celebration of the New York Academ of Art hosted by Gucci design one videotaped sketch artists doing figure drawing from life. When they prepared the raw video for projection by the DL.2s Methot found himself “in a whole new mindset as a lighting designer. I started to think as a moviemaker and graphic artist. The DL.2s allowed me to go to places other than lighting. This was a real new tool.”

Methot says the DL.2 Digital Light “typifies convergence” in its amalgamation of the lighting and video design disciplines, each of which can be limiting on its own. “I tried to approach cueing like storyboarding and moviemaking and but hisfled my approach once onsite allowing my process to be more organic,” he explains. “I saw the development of a drawing over the timeline of the media. I could home in on a drawing, play with speed, contrast, the different relationships of ink to paper. But then I had all the lighting aspects, too – moving the image around in space and toning the image with color.”

Methot notes that the DL.2 “mounts on a pipe like other lights,” they can have content loaded on them via Mac or PC and features ethernet connections. “You can do editing on the fly, selecting videoclips and cueing them. The video inherently loops on itself, and you can change the content as needed.

“There’s no reason, as the technology progresses and we get better lamp life and brightness, why more fixtures won’t be designed this way,” he concludes.

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THIS IS THEIR FIRST TOUR IN THREE YEARS, TRAVIS TOUR, PROMOTING THEIR LATEST ALBUM, “THE BOY WITH NO NAME”. BANDIT CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LESTER COBRIN HAS PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH TRAVIS AND COMMENTS, “TRAVIS IS A BAND OF OUTSTANDING TALENT AND I AM TRULY LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THEM AGAIN.”

Long-time Travis lighting designer Matt Jensen created a crisp, clean style for this show - essentially a theatrical vehicle with some contemporary twists - including lots of soft washes and iris focuses. Lead singer Fran Healy took a relatively active role in the initial lighting brief, and then left Jensen to develop the show from there.

The lighting features a slightly retro PAR can feel - a soft edged, tungsteny affair - and staying true to the design theme, Jensen did not incorporate any gobos.

With extremely limited programming time - just one overnight session at Grimsby Auditorium the day before the first show of the tour - Jensen had his work cut out to get everything recorded into his WholeHog II console. With the great assortment of venues this tour, flexibility was also a key component in the rig design. The floor-based elements, for example, were designed to be taken around the band’s festival dates this summer.

Bandit is supplying three trusses - front mid and back - populated with 36 Martin Professional MAC 2K Washes and Profiles, which Jensen comments, “are great workhorse units.”

There are also seven 4-lite Moles and 3 Dinos on floor stands (6 x 4 way pods of 240V CP61 PARs) complete with scrollers, which are easily one of the brightest light sources of their type available. These are used to provide big, bold blocks of light upstage of the band, creating dramatic silhouette effects. They are also extremely versatile as effects lights, and can be used for 4-lite looks and in combination with all sorts of interesting chase patterns. Also on the floor are 4 vertical sections of A-type truss with MAC 2K washes on top.

Four bars of 6 PARs all feature Wybron scrollers, two located on the rear truss and two on the floor, and there are 3 Source Fours on the front truss for key lighting. Six Martin Atomic Strobes complete the lighting equipment list.

Jensen made the conscious decision not to use follow spots, stating, “[Travis] is not a follow spot sort of show. It’s much harsher than that”.

The dimmers are all Avolites – the Dinos having their own dedicated 72 way rack. ✰
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Look Solutions is pleased to announce the debut of the Tiny-Fogger 2007, the tiniest fog generator in the world. Made in Germany and known as the TINY F07, it is the modified successor of the battery-operated, programmable Tiny-Fogger. Its palm-sized dimensions enable it to be easily incorporated into costumes, props and scenery for use in special effects applications, theater, mega-musicals and movies.

The design of the TINY F07 and some of its components differ from the Tiny-Fogger. The new product features a higher-quality pump and more rugged vaporizer. The PCB is now sealed in an enclosure so fog can’t back up into the machine potentially causing a malfunction. The TINY F07 has a momentary fog switch on the top of the fogger and an efficient Sleep-Mode. It operates with a smaller, lighter Lithium battery half the size of the former lead-acid battery. In addition, the TINY F07 comes in blue metalwork instead of silver.

At the heart of the TINY F07 is a programmable microprocessor, which controls fog emission. Continuous fog output with the battery lasts 10 minutes. Programming a fixed fog amount can be done directly at the machine and can be easily reproduced and/or changed.

The TINY F07 is triggered with a start button integrated into the lid. It can also be triggered with a supplied cable remote or optionally with a radio remote, DMX converter or timer. Warm up time for the TINY F07 is less than one second.

A special fluid ensures that dense fog is produced with the lowest fluid and power consumption. The fluid tank is external and connected to the machine by a thin hose; depending on the application the tank can vary in both size and also distance from the machine. The TINY F07’s battery and fluid tank are so small that they can also be built within sets and costumes.

Lead-acid batteries may be used with the TINY F07 if necessary with the use of an adapter cable.

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LECTROSONICS SUPPORTS

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY’S RELAY FOR LIFE EVENT

Lectrosonics, Inc. recently supported the American Cancer Society’s annual Relay for Life event in Rio Rancho on June 22 and 23 with the loan of two Long Ranger IV systems for audio coverage. The event was held between 6PM and 9AM at the track & field arena at Rio Rancho High School.

Michael Hetmer, event chair for the 2007 relay, contacted Karl Windler at Lectrosonics for help with the sound system. Windler described the system used: “A stage was set up at the middle of one side of the track, where they had a DJ system and, later, a band. We pulled audio off the main DJ console and fed it to a single H175 VHF cube transmitter. The transmitter was powered with a 9V battery eliminator so that it could run all night. We rigged it to hang from inside the tent canopy so that it could run all night. We rigged it to have a clean signal to a single H175 VHF cube transmitter. The transmitter was powered with a 9V battery eliminator so that it could run all night. We rigged it to hang from inside the tent canopy so that it would not get wet if it rained, and would have a clear shot to the two Long Ranger systems. We then set the Long Rangers at each opposite corner of the field pointing in towards where the relay teams and relay walkers would be. They ran off of their internal batteries until night, when the generators were switched on for light. With just these two horn systems and the DJ speakers at the stage, we achieved fairly even coverage across the entire field.”

Well respected within the film, broadcast, and theater technical communities since 1971, Lectrosonics wireless microphone systems and audio processing products are used daily in mission-critical applications by audio engineers familiar with the company’s dedication to quality, customer service, and innovation. Lectrosonics is a US manufacturer based in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

UVLD PROVIDES

VIDEO AND LIGHTING SUPPORT FOR MAJOR NEW DRUG LAUNCH

Unlimited Visibility Lighting Design (UVLD) teamed with The RJO Group to dazzle the sales force of a major pharmaceutical company with the high-impact launch of a new drug. Although the sales meeting for 3,300 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas had a quick, three-week turnaround, under the direction of RJO CEO Robert J. O’Leary, it didn’t shy away from extensive, complex creative direction in general and media content in particular.

After the initial approach by long time collaborator Gregg Hermanson, principal of technical services firm ShowTX, it was clear that the project was going to be driven by its schedule. “The client wanted to make a big splash for its sales force, but time was of the essence,” notes UVLD lighting designer Gregory Cohen. “Instead of the usual two to three months lead time for something like this, we had about three weeks. We had to move fast with staffing and equipment, but RJO and ShowTX trusted us to pull off a sophisticated, media-driven show in a short time frame.”

The Arena’s stage was set with a soft LED curtain upstage, a slanted Versatube HD wall downstage, and two 16:9 VIDEO/IMAG screens flanking the stage. A big, circular lighting truss was centered above the space.

“We wanted to create an energetic and motivational experience for the sales reps,” comments Carolyn Wade, Producer for RJO. “The time challenge was a formidable one, particularly as we intended to focus our creative on the lighting and video elements of the stage and did not get access to the arena until the day before opening sessions. Greg and UVLD were great at producing and testing the elements off site so that we only needed to fine-tune after roll-in. They work very fast.”

RJO’s design was to use the video sources as the medium to carry the client’s critical branding messages being stressed. Giant text on the LED wall was choreographed with animated video graphics on the side screens to convey sales and marketing messages. Cohen notes that “the collaboration with RJO was remarkable — it worked so well; their creative directors were able to give us content and direction while also giving us the free reign to create stuff that was appropriate quickly.”

UVLD controlled the lighting and media from a grandMA console; the media server was PRG’s MBox. UVLD sourced images from its vast clip library, manipulated their color and choreographed their display on the soft LED curtain and Versatube wall in coordination with RJO’s staging. Giant text elements and brand logos were also displayed on the LED curtain, and UVLD projected brand logos from custom gobos onto a giant disk, which was flown in for a dramatic product reveal.

The show’s lighting was designed to give a big-arena feel to the meeting with bold aerial focuses in primary colors. More than 250 fixtures were supplied, including 94 Source 4 750-watt ellipsoidal spots, 34 MAC 2K Profiles, 16 MAC 2K Performances, 42 MAC 2K Washes, 18 VARP*LITE 3000 Spots, 24 Atomic 3K Strobes, and 24 ColorBlast 12s.

In addition to the General Session, the client scheduled 16 hours of breakout sessions in the MGM Grand Hotel supported by a full broadcast studio and remote truck. This enabled video to be fed to smaller meetings via the hotel’s CCTV system. UVLD provided TV studio lighting for this application.

“Everything worked together to fill the room with color, light and excitement,” concludes Wade. “It was an exhilarating process; Greg could clearly understand what I wanted to do and then make it happen. It looked spectacular, we accomplished our goals, and we received tremendous feedback from the client.”

At RJO Group, Carolyn Wade was executive producer for this project with ShowTX’s Gary Ware serving as technical director. At UVLD, Cameron Yeary served as associate lighting designer and programmer; Mark Mead was the show’s production electrician. Robert Cangemi lit the broadcasts with Tom Bagley serving as his electrician. Jeff Newburger of Lionfish Design was the set designer.
Legendary Oak Ridge Boys member William Lee Golden is proving that the sky is the limit with his upcoming world-class art exhibit at Nashville International Airport. The collection of paintings, entitled “The First of Many to Come,” will be on display for 6-months as part of the Arts at the Airport program. An opening celebration for the exhibit is set for Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 10 a.m., featuring a special performance by the Oak Ridge Boys. The event will be open to travelers. A set of commemorative note cards autographed by Golden and featuring his artwork will be given to the first 500 guests.

Airport executives say the paintings symbolize Golden’s unique ability to find harmony and balance through music and art. “Nashville International Airport is thrilled that William Lee Golden has chosen our outstanding facility as the first public exhibition for his art. As the baritone voice of the legendary Oak Ridge Boys, William Lee Golden has already made his mark in the world of music and now Nashville International Airport is proud to showcase his stamp on the world of art. The Arts at the Airport exhibition is, undoubtedly, state-of-the-art. Mr. Golden’s showing will be the first of many more fine artists to come,” says Raul Regalado, President and CEO of the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority.

One of Golden’s most popular paintings, “Bush Garden”, will be featured among the exhibit. The piece was done in honor of President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush. It depicts the garden at their Kennebunkport, Maine estate. Mrs. Bush describes the music icon’s artwork as priceless treasure. “George and I not only love William Lee Golden’s art, but we are the proud owners of “Walker’s Point Vista.” His paintings reflect his love of color. “Bush Garden” is a joy, and we are honored that he has chosen to paint our garden,” says Bush. Golden views painting as a passion and pathway for reinventing himself. For many years I’ve been known for singing. But through my paintings, I’m able to create and enter into a new phase of my career,” he explains. “Thank God for life and visions!”

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When Joe Lennane, Production Manager for Meatloaf, wanted to add pyrotechnic effects to the European Tour, he contacted Pyrotek Special Effects Inc. to bring the concept of his designs to reality.

This being the first leg of the critically acclaimed “Bat Trilogy Tour” includes songs from all three Bat Out of Hell albums. The effects are evident in a number of medleys including Life is a Lemmon, Frying Pan, Rock and Roll Dreams, Break it, and Bat out of Hell. Doug Adams, (President for Pyrotek Special Effects Inc.) utilized a number of custom special effects, to create an onstage sizzle to the design. Working closely with Lighting Designer, William Sheldon, they configured a list of songs incorporating pyrotechnic effects and designated the pyro cues to coordinate with the lighting designs. After managing the placement of customized special effects, Adams worked with pyrotechnic shooter Tristan Ford to put the design into motion.

The effects list consists of four double-headed dragon units to provide large-scale columns and fireball flame effects in a number of combinations. In addition to the flaming fireballs, a simulated waterfall effect, created from gerbs, emits a silver spray of sparks cascading from the upstage trussing and dropping 20 feet vertically by 40 feet wide across the stage. 48 silver and red airburst are cued to a number various drum rolls. A unique effect which resembles a fountain style look illuminates the entire width of the stage as twenty silver gerbs spray twenty feet vertically upwards. Additionally, seven flashes with bang are utilized to create a loud sound blast effect to energize the crowd and emphasize various Meatloaf cues.

A similar design was prepared prior to the tour for the new DVD video that was filmed at the John Labatt Center in London, Ontario, Canada. The European leg began May 10th at the M.E.N Arena in Manchester, England and concluded July 1st at Ashton Gate Stadium, in Bristol England.
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In the ongoing discussion of how the touring world is changing in dramatic ways, Cirque du Soleil’s tour production of Delirium stands as yet another example of how this change is taking place. Indeed, it’s difficult to recall a tour that has ever run like this.

It all started in 2004 when Cirque du Soleil was celebrating its 20th anniversary. That same year the Montreal Jazz Festival was celebrating its 25th anniversary. At that time, Live Nation, which was still flying under the Clear Channel flag, had been interested in doing something with Cirque du Soleil.

Because Cirque writes and performs its own music, the organizers of the Jazz festival wanted to do a tribute to the music of Cirque du Soleil. So everyone put their heads together and developed a show that would serve all of the purposes at hand. At the time, Clear Channel people were in town, saw the performance and agreed that nothing like this had ever toured arenas before.

After more putting together of heads, musical director, producer and arranger Francis Collard and musical content associate producer Ian Tremblay came up with the music for the first ever show wherein the show would be entirely driven by music and play in arenas. There were, however, a few snags. They wanted this show to get to more people than in the past. And while the tent show touring model worked for what it was (and still is), this show was going to be very production heavy and there was no way it could travel in a tent. It had to play in arenas.

This meant that this production company, whose primary mode of mobile production had been the traditional tent show, would now have to travel like a rock show while accommodating the elements of the tent show.

As one could imagine, the result of this marriage of two very different styles of touring came with its own set of challenges that called for some creative solutions and a lot of cooperation. The show is first and foremost a Cirque du Soleil production, which means that it has to have the elements that have become synonymous with the name. But it had to be able to get in and out of an arena with the speed and efficiency of the Rolling Stones.
“For example,” said Production Manager Kirt Wagner, “The performers have a gym that travels with them in order to help them stay in shape. In the tent show, they were used to having it in the same place in every city. In this touring configuration, they had to get used to the fact that it would be wherever we could put it in the arena we were playing in.”

A traveling tent show is a lot like playing a sit down show in the same venue every night. Everything is in the same place on every gig. Rigging, dressing facilities, and production offices are all where they were last week and the week before with little deviation. However, when touring the show in arenas, everything is more fluid. Rigging and backstage space are the biggest variables.

The main premise of the show is a bizarre dream that is being experienced by the main character of the show in which aspects of the dream by way of characters in the show enter from all angles. This sets up some interesting challenges for which the big brains in Cirque du Soleil came up with some remarkable answers.

In this show, the stage runs lengthwise in the room from dasher to dasher. It is 102 feet long by 20 feet deep. It is flanked by huge video screens on either side that vary in size depending on the space available in the arena the show is playing on any given day. In its first touring configuration the stage played down the center of the room. This made for some interesting challenges. The performance had to be designed to work from both directions. This was fine from the perspective of the performers. After all, that is pretty much how a tent show plays anyway. However, this show has massive set pieces and calls for equally massive wing space.

There were three set pieces that had an abstract resemblance of a Venetian gondola. Two of them entered from the offstage wings (right and left respectively) and one flew in from the stage left wing. There was a multipurpose planet drum measuring 15 feet by 39 inches that served as an acrobatic platform as well as a giant drum set comprised of 16 percussive instruments.

The music was performed live by a very talented rock band, which entered from the stage left wing using a motorized drum riser. All of this used wing space that is scarcely the size of a 24’ Ryder truck.

This show made exquisite use of every conceivable space available. There were three hatches in the stage through which many of the elements of the show entered. Because the show was designed to get the audience as close to the action as possible, the stage was only five feet high and there was a real danger of head injury with people running around underneath it. So the logical answer was to use backless office chairs. There were as many as 35 people scurrying about under the stage on office chairs at any given time during the show. The chairs were used to transport crew and performers to various areas under the stage along on a common “highway” that ran the length of the stage.

The highway was so critical to the production before, during and after the show that one of the first things that happened in every town was to post a report of “track conditions.” If an arena had the hockey ice down and there was a covering over it, that covering could stop a chair dead when the chair hit it and cause the person in it to go head over tea kettle.

A number of flying acrobats entered from under the stage. During a black period on the stage, the door would open and the flying gear would be lowered into the hole where riggers under the stage would help the performer to attach to the rig. Once the performer was up above the stage, the door was shut and preparations for the next gag would commence. All the while people were silently whirling by on their chairs.

With all that was going on under, around and above the stage, stage management and direction was critical. This was handled under the close watchful eye of General Stage Manager, Sean Farmer. Farmer calls every aspect of the show from front of house. She has a stage manager on either end of the stage (Jay McLeod and Victoria Shenk) who direct traffic and feed Farmer clearance information regarding rigging and set pieces among many other aspects of the show.

When you think of a show of this nature, you don’t necessarily imagine it having very complicated audio needs. However, this show is as much about music as it is about acrobatics. The show has 80 inputs and wholly half of them are wireless. Needless to say, there is a member of the audio team who is the RF tech.

That being said, there aren’t too many challenges beyond that. The only real issue beyond the number of wireless channels is hitting the audience. Because the show plays across the room instead of lengthwise, the audio system has to hit a much wider spread than would be the case of the standard end-on rock show. But as challenges go, there are much worse in the production world. “The main issue in this show for us is that it’s handled more like a corporate gig,” said FOH Audio Engineer, Renato “Ray” Petruzziello, “They really want this thing be as pretty as possible. They don’t want to see cables and rigging hanging all over the place where they are in plain sight of the audience.”

Lighting was a lot more complicated issue. This show is really all about the visuals. The design is mainly made up of moving lights like any other major touring production on the road today. Although there are an impressive number of conventional lighting instruments incorporated into the show as well. But that’s not the real story with the lighting rig. Once again, as seems to be the pattern with any Cirque du Soleil show, it’s the inventive use of what is there, and the creation of new gear to accommodate the storyline.

There are mole units under the stage that were on rolling stands, which could be moved into position to shoot up through a trap door for one song. The same was done with the one lone Syncrolite on the show. There was one part of the show that featured people who flew through the air under what seems to be bright stars. These stars had to be lighting instruments. But they couldn’t be tethered to anything by a cable given the nature of the free flowing acrobatic maneuvers. They also couldn’t be hit with automated light or follow spots because of the ambient spill that would occur.

The answer was to create a light that had a steel shaft running down through the instrument itself and could be used as part of the actual rigging device that the performer was hanging from. The light was battery powered and controlled via wireless DMX signal. The result was a perfectly lit performer flying through the air with lighting exactly where it was needed and nowhere else. There seemed to be no accidental occurrences in the lighting of this show. It truly was one of the best lit shows this designer has ever seen.

The bulk of the lighting is in the main overhead rig. That in itself creates some minor challenges. This show has a lot of flying gags with no less than four trolleys that run cross stage on two tracks. There are people who do rope acts that are secured to motors. The lighting gear had to be positioned so that all of this action could take place around it and not impede the effect of the light, the motion of the light, or get too close to the heat of the light. The entire rig was a series of trusses that ran cross stage in order to accommodate the movement of the fly gags. This was hung from a super grid above it. In addition to the riggers under the stage there were riggers in the air keeping a watchful eye on everything that flew during the show.
The video portion of the show was nothing short of amazing. While LED video walls are all the rage these days, this show demonstrates that there is still a legitimate roll for projection in the world. As was said before, the stage was flanked by enormous floor to ceiling screens. These were hit with 25k Christie projectors from the front and rear. There was a scrim that closed completely across the downstage line. That was hit with two 25k Christie’s.

There was an upstage scrim that crossed over the upstage line and took the image through the downstage scrim. In the middle was the action happening on the stage itself. The result was much like the multi-paned glass paintings employed on Disney’s Fantasia. While this was happening, the enormous screens on either side of the stage were presenting corresponding images to complement the center. The result of all of this was an overall image that reached from the floor to the bottom of the lighting rig and ran the length of the arena floor.

There was more projection though. The main character of the show was a man who spent most of his time flying back and forth across the stage slung underneath a round inflatable. The inflatable weighed in the neighborhood of 800 pounds and contained two projectors that presented images and light from inside. There were also two roll drop screens that played at about mid stage which were hit by the FOH projectors. Finally there was a tulle screen that faced on screen at each wing. These screens were static with pick points on either side of the dolly track. So when a performer or a set piece came on stage, the screen had to be flown in to allow room for the fly action to take place.

The video unit had five cameras that were blended with images that were coming from eight media servers that are both cued automatically and run off of cues called by Sean Farmer.

The video that was seen on the screens was not the only video being used in the show. While the production aspects of this tour were truly impressive, there was a facet that was much more so. SAFETY!

There were safety measures built into every department of the show, and if that wasn’t enough, there was a health services department. All departments were on the horn with Farmer as she called the show. Lighting cues were built into the show. For instance, there were LED cove lights along the up and downstage edges of the stage. They filled a valuable service to the show. But there was a cue programmed into the board that was a flashing red and white. If this occurred, it was a signal for all action on the stage to stop immediately because there had been a serious accident or mechanical breakdown with a critical part of the show.

There were other safety elements built into the design of the show. “We have to be very careful in all of the lighting aspects of the show,” said LD, Claude Plante. “A lot of the show involves people in very dangerous situations and we can’t be doing anything that might surprise them or blind them.”
Cirque du Soleil

Delirium

Artists
Musical Director: Rickey Pageot
Vocals: Dessy Di Luaro-Pageot, Jennifer Hamady, Amanda Stott
Vocals/Percussion: Elage Diouf, Karim Diouf
Vocals/Guitar: Chad Oliver
Percussion: Raffaele Artigliere
Bass: Simon Dolan
Drums: Phil “Fish” Fisher
Guitar: Alex messier-Durette
Principal Characters: Karl Baumann, Michael Duffy
Character: Elena Tkachenka
Hammock/Dance Captain: Cinthia Beranek
Hammock/Dancer: Alexander Apjarova
Hand Balancing: Andrey Koltsov
Acrobats: Ruslan Kyyanytsya, Sergii Bondarenko, Oleg Kagarlytskyi, Ivan Polezhay
Straps: Ming “Jet” Fang, Rui “Ray” Fang
Aerial Artist: Natallia Egurova

Tour Staff
Artistic Director: Luc Tremblay
Artistic Coordinator: Marjon Van Grunsven
Tour Director: Marty Horn
Tour Manager: Allan Tate
Road Manager: Ralph Viera
Asst. Tour Manager: Rome Reddick
Asst. Artistic Coord.: Natalie Plante
Tour Accountant: Chris Covin
Publicist: Caroline Montreuil
Head Physical Therapist: Anouk Allard
Physical Therapist: Alexis Huakari
Acrobatic Captain: Dmitri Mironov
Asst. to Egurova: Robert Rossett

Tour Related Offices
Tour Promoter: Live Nation/Brad Wavra
Taki Pappas, John Riccardi
Sound: Solotech
Lights: Solotech
Video: Solotech
Freight: Rock-It Cargo
Coaches: Senators Coaches
Trucking: Artisan Transport
Catering: Dega Catering, Inc.
Merchandise: Anthill Trading, LTD.
Credentials: Cube Services
Itineraries: Smart Art
Travel Agency (Hotels): Aspen Travel
Travel Agency (Flights): BTI Travel

Production Crew
Production Manager: Malcolm Weldon
Production Stage Manager: Kurt “Slap” Wagner
General Stage Manager: Seanne Farmer
Stage Managers: Jay McLeod, Victoria Shenk
Prod. Coord./Tour Travel Logistics: Andre Morales
Security Director: Tony “TR” Robinson
Head Rigger: Steve “CB” Olean
Riggers: Russell Glen, Chuck Melton
Acrobatic Riggers: Jon “Jonny K” Koenigsaecker, Lori Voros
Head Carpenter: Gilbert “Pork Chop” Castilleja
Fly Carpenter: Robert Gallegos
Carpenters: Greg Bogart, Mike “Otis” Kinard, Dana Vanella, Heathen “Ling Ling” Rogan, Kerry Rothenbach, Paul Arnold
Props: Christopher Woo
Automation/Props: TK Woo
Automation: David “Davy” Khoury, Jean-Guy Lacroix, Guillaume “Dirk” Tremblay Tardif, Renaldo Gordon
Drums/Percussion Tech: Stephane “Hams” Hamel
Guitar/Bass Tech: Dean Mithcell
Keyboard/Seqencer Tech: Cal Harris
Head Wardrobe: Thomas Wells
Wardrobe: Anne Guthrie, Susan Hokestra, Boaz Sade, Annie Theriault
Hair/Make-up: Dawn Hill
Head Electrician: Doug Eder
Head Audio: Andre “Le Blond” Picchette
FOH Engineer: Renato “Ray” Petruzzello
Monitor Engineer: Yvan “Whyvnon” Suave
Audio: Charles “Captain Chuck” Deziel, Sylvain “Patou” Lemay, Colin St-Jacques, Fred Cantin
Lighting Director: Claude Plante
Lighting: Michel “Pom Pom” Pomerleau, Denis Ayotte, Ian Tucker, Sebastien “The Beast” Cadieux, John Carr, Mathieu “El Gro” Lalavalle
Video Director: Pierrick Ciguineau
Video: David Boisvert, Louis Lefebvre. Mathieu Caoutu, Louis-Philippe “LP” Gaudreau, Jean Francois “Jeff” Rivard
Artist/Staff Bus Drivers: Vince Grecco, Melvyn Markham, Dave Morgan, Geoff O’Connell
Crew Bus Drivers: Kent Hardy, Buzz Blauvelt, Steve Fowler, Raymond Jacobs, Jared Ingram, Brian Harlow
Lead Truck Driver: Steve “Tex” Sallee
Truck Drivers: Marc Andre Gejinas, Dominic Pelletier, Randy “RC” Carlile, Lon Simpson, Joe “Bobby Joe” Reid, Cody Chase, Ed Lester, Mike Garrison, Charles “DJ Chuck” Lamb, Brent Spear, James Honke, Don “Wolfman” Plotz, Neil Bernard, Jeff Swearingen, Dempsey White, Kenny Kidd
WHEN WE LAST TALKED TO BRIAN HIGGINS ABOUT HIS FLEDGLING TRUCKING COMPANY ARTISAN FREIGHT, HE WAS COMING OUT OF THE GATE HOT ON AN EIGHTEEN TRUCK CONTRACT WITH CIRQUE DU SOLEIL’S TOURING PRODUCTION OF DELIRIUM AS ITS INAUGURAL CLIENT. NOW THAT CIRQUE HAS COMPLETED ITS NORTH AMERICAN RUN AND MOVED ON TO EUROPE, IT WAS TIME TO POP BACK IN AND SEE HOW THINGS ARE REALLY GOING.

“Things have been going very well,” said Higgins who was more than happy to talk about the progress this year. “We’ve been real busy here. We’ve been running right at about 25 to 30 trucks pretty steadily this year hauling everything from general freight between tours to actual tour work.”

The primary concern is to maintain control over the growth of the company. Higgins explained, “It’s important that we pay attention to managing our assets. Any time you’re in such a heavily asset based business, you don’t want to get too far extended to the point where you are constantly trying to find contracts to cover idle equipment.”

With asset management and controlled growth being the challenges facing Artisan, one suspects there could be worse problems in this world.

Lest Higgins not be misunderstood to say that he doesn’t want the company to grow, it’s important to note that Artisan has taken on 10 trucks since January and more growth is definitely on the way.

“It didn’t hurt to have an 18 truck contract right out of the gate,” says Higgins. “That proved that we can handle that kind of work in the future which is definitely something that we want to be considered for.”

On the other side, a very contented crew who feels confident that coming on with a new company so much smaller than the competition was the right move to make. Lead driver Steve “Tex” Sallee was happy to explain, “We’ve [Artisan drivers] all been running pretty hard since Cirque first went out. We could use the break. But we can’t wait to get back out.”

Tex is an ardent fan of the new company he works for. “It’s always a good thing to get in with a new company on the ground floor. In this case, there was no apprehension at all. These guys take great care of us. It’s a lot of little things like weigh station pre-passes that don’t cost much but they’re nice.”

Tex went on to tell us that one of the best things about working for Artisan is the opportunities offered to a lot of drivers to get out on the road and get in on something new. The only real challenge he spoke of was the “David and Goliath” nature of a company this small going up against the well established giants of the industry.

“We’re doing just great, just great!” he said. “I plan to retire from the road with this company someday and hopefully become office personnel.”

Currently Artisan is doing a lot of work with Rockit Cargo and has trucks out with Chris Cornell and Deloris O’Reardon with preparations in the works to start the upcoming Marilyn Manson / Slayer tour. As is always the case with Brian Higgins, there is future work in the hopper, which he was not interested in talking about. However, there is no doubting that we’re going to be seeing a lot more purple trucks on the road in the future.
Artisan is a transportation company dedicated to serving the touring needs of the entertainment industry. Founded by Brian Higgins, 20 year industry veteran, Artisan incorporates state-of-the-art technology with an uncompromising service to produce results that exceed expectations.
IN THESE DAYS, WHERE SO MANY COMPANIES (ESPECIALLY MID-SIZED COMPANIES) ARE SET UP TO BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE WITH FULL RANGE PRODUCTION SERVICES, IT IS RARE TO EVER SEE ONE COMPANY HANDLE ALL ASPECTS OF A TOUR. INDEED, IT IS DIFFICULT TO RECALL WHEN THIS WRITER HAS EVER SEEN THAT ON A MAJOR TOUR.

That being said, such is the case with Cirque du Soleil’s Delirium tour. Every phase of the production (including overall payroll) is being handled by Montreal-based Solotech. “It’s what we do up here,” said Solotech International Rentals Development Vice-President, Richard Lachance. He continued, “We find that it is easier to customize the technical aspects of a tour if it all comes out of the same shop. We were asked to do a lot on this one and we answered the call. It also offers production management the ease of only having to deal with one vendor instead of one vendor for every department on the tour.”

Solotech started working for Cirque du Soleil back when Cirque started in 1984 and had no money. As time went by and the show grew, Solotech grew along with it. However, there came a time when Cirque began to spread its view and began creating sit-down shows and it became less profitable to lease gear. That didn’t lock Solotech out of the game though. It did, however, change the way the relationship worked.

“It simply doesn’t make sense for them to rent gear on a project that might be in the same room for ten years,” explained Lachance. “But in a touring situation, if the tour is going to last long enough and we have enough faith in the project, we are willing to invest in the tour.”

In the instance of Delirium, such was not the case. There was a wild card on this particular tour in the name of Live Nation. The capital investment for the production system for Delirium was in the area of $10 million and Live Nation wasn’t willing to capitalize the production cost of the tour.

However, the tour had a promising feel to it and it turned out to be worth the investment. While Solotech is not the only production contractor on every Cirque show in the world, it does have a sizeable presence with them and is the sole provider for the new Cirque shows going into Macao.

Lest we not give the impression that Cirque du Soleil is the only client Solotech has, it is important to note that the most important part of the story of this company is the massive footprint it actually does leave across the overall entertainment industry.

“Because we are French in nature, we have an extensive operation in France,” Lachance told TGJ. “We also have an office and warehouse space in Holland because we tour 150 days a year with [the Dutch artist] André Rieu.”

Solotech has also had a storefront operation in Las Vegas for some time now. However, it has leased warehouse space that figures to house a full blown stand-alone light, sound and video business by 2008. This, of course, is justified by the large volume of work that it is doing with its Cirque du Soleil shows there, as well as other projects going on between Vegas and Los Angeles. Those projects are not limited to stage productions. Solotech is heavily vested into television, holding a virtual lock on the lion’s share of lighting for Canadian television, as well as having a significant amount of work in the US television market.

Lachance was specific about mentioning that Solotech’s American office will be a wholly owned and operated American company. “All of the money that is made in America will stay in America.” He explained, “We are not looking to take anything out of the country. We will pay American taxes and operate by American laws. We want to do this the right way.”

Solotech also has a very large retail, manufacturing and installation business. This company has grown steadily to the point of having 500 employees. Owners Dennis la Francois and Francois Menard partnered in recent years with the Quebec Pension fund which resulted in making the company more financially capable than ever before.

With the enormous growth that this company is experiencing, it is important that Solotech be understood as a company that is achieving its growth through relationships and not conquest. “We remember when major deals were cut by two people sipping coffee over a flight case backstage at a show somewhere,” says Lachance. He went on to say, “We believe that the best way for us to maintain our success rate is to maintain the ‘relationship’ basis of the company. You don’t have to go through layers of receptionists to get a hold of any one of us.”

Future Solotech projects include the upcoming Celine Dion World Tour as well as a video shoot at the base of the Pyramids of xxxx (An Egyptian-born Canadian singer). These types of projects, as well as all of the work it is doing with the ubiquitous Cirque du Soleil, continue to keep the company very busy. It is impossible to cover the entire scope of Solotech in the space allowed for this story, however, the complete picture can be seen at www.solotech.ca.
Staging world-class events has given our team of professionals a unique expertise, blending ingenuity, innovation and talent. Supported by cutting edge technology and the very latest equipment, they work behind the scenes to deliver an unforgettable performance.

A Spectacular Experience

We do what we say we’ll do.
We deliver as planned, no matter what.
And we put on shows which shake the rafters!

A record number of 42 countries participated in Helsinki. Lighting and screen designer Mikki Kunttu presented to the estimated 100 million viewers on TV a visual voyage into mythology as well as rock and pop culture: “My goal was to create an exciting, powerful and organic show architecture based on LED screens and moving lights. As the physical set was based on ideas originating from Finnish mythology, it actually was general enough to give me a lot of freedom to create my own ‘show mythology,’ if you like, outside of that,” said Kunttu. To control about 430 moving lights, consisting mostly of Robe moving lights and a few VL3500Q spots, and nearly 400 square meters of LEDs 10 x grandMA full-size, 2 x grandMA light and 20 x MA NSPs, including backups, were used. “The grandMA system worked like a clock,” commented Kunttu. “We’ve gathered a lot of experience during the last Eurovision Song Contest in Athens,” recounted MA programmer Marcus Krömer. “What was special this year was the use of Timecode in a multiuser session. Timecode, which is integrated into every grandMA console, gives you the huge advantage that you can concentrate on the essential, while everything is run by the console automatically. Additionally, it was possible for the programmers to run the rehearsals and simultaneously do changes. Sometimes the changes were done before the actor on stage had finished his song.” The multiuser functionality of the grandMA enabled the programmers to split the huge system of moving lights on stage and work on the songs in parallel and therefore much faster.

During the preprogramming in Helsinki, grandMA 3D and six MA mediaPCs helped to prepare this unique show. “The operators were working with grandMA 3D to help them with the programming. Additionally we used ESP Vision as a designers reference,” narrated Kunttu. 37 x W-DMX Generation 3 BlackBox units, manufactured by Wireless Solution Sweden AB, were used to send wireless DMX signal to moving trusses and other equipment during the show, eliminating the need for excess cable. W-DMX controlled a total of six universes of wireless DMX, including moving trusses containing Syncrolite B-52s and the Robe moving lights. It was also used on a 120cm large prism mirror ball suspended from the ceiling, custom assembled mobile fog machines, and a Cyberhoist-rigged fogscreen that descended from above the stage during the interval act.
Spectra Stage & Event Technologies AB, Sweden, and Eastway Sound & Lighting, Finland, were the technical suppliers for lighting and video technology solutions. Finnish public service broadcasting station Yleisradio Oy (YLE) worked in conjunction with European Broadcast Union (EBU) to produce and transmit this year’s edition of the Eurovision Song Contest. Ola Melzig of M&M Production Management from Sweden was the production manager: “It’s been a great pleasure to work with MA. The support was fantastic and the results were stunning.” Tobias Åberg was crew chief and Jussi Kallioinen was local production manager.

COMPANY PROFILE
MA Lighting International, based in Paderborn, Germany, is the dedicated sales, support and service entity for the renowned grandMA control systems, digital dimming systems, networking tools and media servers of MA Lighting Technology, based near Wuerzburg (GER). The product range offers cutting-edge solutions for control and dimming and contains the award-winning grandMA consoles, the renowned Light- & Scancommander, but also the reliable digital dimmer racks and packs. With its media server grandMA video MA bridges the lighting and video worlds and integrates media servers like a fixture into lighting control.

Today, MA Lighting is well known for its technical know-how and has achieved a unique international reputation for its operational philosophy. The company looks back with 25 years experience and some 18,000 worldwide sold control-desks. MA Lighting strictly follows a professional user-centric approach and is getting as close as possible to the market via its own competence and support centres in the UK, North America, Latin America, the Middle East/India and Asia – supported by an worldwide distribution and service network.
Lighting for the event was supplied by leading Irish rental company Just Lites and project managed for them by Ian Smith. In conjunction with Irish promoter MCD, this was the first time Red Bull has staged an X-Fighter event on a completely greenfield site.

Slane – the backdrop to countless memorable rock ‘n’ roll events - was the spectacular setting for the second leg of the Red Bull X-Fighters tour 2007 which saw ten of the world’s most respected freestyle motocross riders battle it out with their ingenuity, acrobatic skills and nerves of steel, launching themselves up to 12 meters in the air at high speeds as they completed the course.

The Robes were arranged on eight 15 meter high towers, strategically positioned around the perimeter of the arena, each rigged with 32 fixtures.

Just Lites has the largest stock of Robe fixtures in Ireland, and has used them for all types of shows, events and installations. When they were confirmed for this project, they immediately knew that Robe would be exactly right for the job – although this meant persuading X-Fighter’s LD/DOP Manfred “Ollie” Olma to use the brand for the first time.

“We needed fixtures that were really incredibly bright to cover the arena” explains Smith. It’s approximate dimensions were 120 x 60 metres, and in addition to that, the towers were located between 70 and 35 metres away, so some of the throw distances were really challenging.

“There are not many fixtures that could have done as efficiently as this,” says Smith, adding, “We have had a real result with Robe – it looked great on TV and everyone was extremely happy”.

They also needed lights that would not break down however harsh the weather conditions became – all of them were experienced and realistic enough to know how unpredictable this can be in Ireland! True to form, the weather offered up rain and high winds. Custom rain hoods that Just Lites has designed for the 1200s ensured that the bases were protected and kept dry and working throughout. “The Robes had a 100% record,” confirmed McCarthy, “most impressive”.

Smith and crew chief Liam McCarthy did the initial site visit and decided where they needed the towers in and out the seating layout to achieve optimum lighting of the action. Apart from the fact that the events were televised, requiring a smooth and even lighting field, it was critical that the riders could see where they were going at all times, specially as darkness fell. One wrong move and the consequences could have been fatal!

Just Lites and SGB designed the towers together. The 32 units were attached on eight 5 meter trusses per tower, flown up into position on motors, and then clamped in place on ledges. They also worked very closely with MCD’s site manager Padraic Boran.

An additional 40 Robe ColorWash 575E ATs were positioned on the floor around the edges of the arena to illuminate at lower levels. There were another twelve 1200 ColorSpot 1200E ATs on the stage, which featured performances from Ash and others. Just Lites also supplied lighting for the Castle walls and the bike preparation and press areas - a mix of conventional and other fixtures.

McCarthy led a lighting crew of 12 who got in a week before. Power for each tower was provided by a 150 KVA generator sitting at its base, and all lighting was controlled from the bottom of Tower 2 via two GrandMAs, operated by Manuel da Costa. While Just Lites has an extensive Robe stock, amassing enough lights to complete the X-Fighter project was also a huge undertaking. Units were supplied from Nicklen in Germany, HSL in the UK and directly from the get-out of the Eurovision Song Contest in Helsinki, Finland.

The X-Fighter Freestyle Motocross event was watched by a live audience of 35,000 enthusiastic spectators.
KOOL & THE GANG FOUND A SPECIAL SOUND AT THE UNIQUE JUNCTION OF JAZZ, R&B, FUNK AND POP. THEIR MUSIC HAS BEEN CREATED BY THE SAME CORE OF PLAYERS FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS: ROBERT "KOOL" BELL, HIS BROTHER KHALIS BAYYAN, THEIR LONGTIME FRIENDS DENNIS "DT" THOMAS AND GEORGE "FUNKY" BROWN, AND PAST MEMBERS ROBERT "SPIKE" MICKENS, THE LATE CHARLES SMITH, RICKY WEST, AND WOODY SPARROW. KOOL & THE GANG'S STORY STARTED IN THE JERSEY CITY PROJECTS. THEY WERE TEENAGERS, STUDYING MILES DAVIS ALBUMS AND JAMES BROWN SINGLES, JAMMING IN BASEMENTS, PART-TYING FOR THE PEOPLE IN A SWIRL OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS. THEIR SONGS HAVE BEEN FEATURED IN FILMS LIKE ROCKY AND SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER.

Kool and the Gang show in Torino, Italy took place at the Olympic Sports Arena with Lombardi Service S.R.L., presently on the road with Gigi D’Alessio, providing an Adamson Yaxis system for the event. Toni Soddu, Gigi D’Alessio’s new FOH engineer, was there as the stage manager and John Ryan, CHIC FOH, did the shooter design and gave Luca Libraro a hand with the system setup. “The nice thing is that I had received a CAD drawing of the arena because the rigger there needed to know ahead of time where I wanted my hanging points. I did a first shoot at home with a CAD plot and when I got to the arena, I decided not to change anything…and it was rockin’!!” commented John Ryan.

The stage took up half of the arena, as there was another stage set-up, back-to-back, for the conference. There were about 1200 people, all invitees for the corporate meetings. The local production manager insisted that everyone would stay on the floor and kept all seating off limits.

A total of 24 Y10’s with 12 Y10 Subs were used. John Ryan calculated the shoot by fixing the maximum distance, right behind his head before the glass that separates the first seats from the hockey field, and the response was really amazing. “I had practically no reflection from the empty Plexiglas seats and flat surfaces. The sound was evenly distributed throughout the floor”.

The subs were stacked in a “I,” position to minimize the off-center lobe and ended up working pretty well. During the middle part of the concert John checked out the inputs on the crossovers and even though they were barely moving: “The SPL out front was more than excessive for a ‘bunch of black suits’…The same system could have easily done an audience of 3000 standing in the same place, with no loss at all,” continued Ryan.

Gigi D’Alessio will be in the same arena during his tour, but occupying the whole venue. Toni Soddu is still a newbie on the Adamson system, but he heard it at the Kool & the Gang show and was really happy about how it sounded. After his first few shows with Gigi, he’s already admitted that he’s never heard such an omnipresent voice. “It feels like the vocals follow you wherever you are in the venue and wherever it is in the mix, it’s never sacrificed”.

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Successfully Hosts Independent Meeting

For several years, the International Association of Assembly Managers’ (IAAM) District 1 teamed up with Districts 2 and 3 for its meetings. For the second time in eight years, District 1 hosted its own meeting and an exciting weekend in Philadelphia, PA. The conference took place May 9-12, 2007 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in downtown Philadelphia. During this conference, District 1 proved that it is able to have a thriving meeting after so many years of nearly non-existence. Nicholas Langella, Vice President of District 1, feels this meeting was successful and was very pleased with the attendance of ninety-eight.

Langella continues, “The speakers we were able to draw from the Philly area — Peter Luu-ko, President/CEO Comcast Spectacor, and Mike Stiles from the Philly’s — were outstanding. I’m exceptionally pleased with the host committee lead by Dittie Guise and David Bianco. Thanks to their efforts, the meeting was a huge success, especially financially.”


The next District #1 meeting will be in Providence, Rhode Island during May 7-9, 2008. The host hotel will be the Westin, and events will take place at the Rhode Island Convention Center.
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“IF the worst thing happened today at your facility, what would you have wished you had done? That is what you must be doing now. There’s nothing more important than pre-planning, because of the seriousness of what we are trying to do. Empower your staff to understand and give them the education to do their jobs. AVSS is a major component of that preparation.”

Larry B. Perkins, CFE
IAAM President
Assistant General Manager
RBC Center
Raleigh, North Carolina
TWO DIE IN ROLLING STONES RIGGING MISHAP

by MICHAEL A. BECK

Once more the industry rumor mill could be counted upon to allow sensational exaggeration to get in the way of facts. The details of what happened are simple, straight forward, and horribly tragic. The only version of the incident which should be repeated, of no less than six that this writer has heard, is the one that came directly from Stageco representatives. On June 29th in Madrid’s Calderon Stadium, two people lost their lives in a post-show rigging accident.

The day after the Madrid Rolling Stones show, Benno Goldewijk (working for Stageco as a sub contractor), Alfredo Pecina Matias, José Benavente Sobrino and one other person were removing a pyro platform about ten meters off the ground. In error, they disconnected the platform before securing it to the waiting crane and everyone fell.

Goldewijk and Alfredo were killed instantly when they hit the stage. Sobrino landed on some gear on the stage that broke his fall. He was critically injured but will survive. The fourth person on the platform (whose name we could not acquire) hit the tower on the way down where a quick thinking rigger was able to catch him and save him from injury or death.

Stageco president Hedwig De Meyer issued a statement expressing the company’s best wishes and sympathy to the loved ones of the dead and injured saying, “We herewith express our sincere condolences to the families, acquaintances and colleagues of Benno and Alfredo, the two workers who died and our best wishes that the injured person makes a full and speedy recovery.”

De Meyer went on to say, “As you understand, it is impossible for us to give more details and/or conclusions of the accident at this time as the investigations from the local authorities in Madrid as well as our own internal investigations of the accident are still ongoing.”

Stageco officials have told Tour Guide Journal that the moral of its personnel on the tour is as good as it can be. “They are doing the right thing. They are pressing on and trying to put this tragedy behind them as we all are.”

The safety record for Stageco and the industry in general stands well intact despite this tragic accident. We at Tour Guide Magazine wish to offer our prayers and condolences to those affected by this misfortune. ☀
The main character of the show had a headset mike that he used in the show, only seldomly. The rest of the time it was used to communicate with the crew in the event of a malfunction as he spent most of the show in the air.

The video team had POV cameras all over the place that are never used in the show. They were used for safety and security so that people under the stage and in many other areas could see critical parts of the production.

All of the stage managers as well as seven other members of the crew are trained to be first responders. This is headed up by Health Services Supervisor, Anou Allard. Allard is an athletic trainer and a qualified EMT. Her assistant, Alexa Hukari, is a physical trainer and she too is a trained first responder. Their primary job is to keep the performer in shape and when the odd injury happens, they evaluate the injury and, along with the performer, decide whether the performer should go on or sit it out.

In the event of a catastrophic injury (something which has never happened), the team is qualified to board the victim and get them off the stage and have them ready to be transported when an ambulance arrives. However, the injuries that have occurred are what one would expect with a performance of this nature; bruises, sprains and the occasional fracture.

Such injuries (and the possibility of such injuries) figured into the list of challenges of the show and how it is cued in real time. Sean Farmer explained, “The most challenging part of this show is that it is like a train. Once it starts it can’t stop unless the worst possibility happens. If someone sprains an ankle during the show, we have to figure out how to continue without them. The same is true with mechanical breakdowns.” She continued to say, “There is as much choreography going on offstage as there is going on onstage. It’s definitely live.”
HEART BREAKING NEWS CAME OUT TELLING OF THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF 46 YEAR OLD CORPORATE PRODUCER, STEPHEN BISSETT. BISSETT WAS A PRODUCER FOR CORPORATE PRODUCTION GIANT, RAY BLOCH FOR MANY YEARS AND HAD JUST RECENTLY GONE FREELANCE.

While information is sketchy, it is known that Stephen and his wife Sheila were attendees at a convention in California for the Shriners, an organization in which they were heavily involved. During a function of the convention he told his wife that he wasn’t feeling well and went up to their room for some rest. Some time later Sheila went entered the room and found him dead of a heart attack.

Kevin McGarty of Atlanta based Staging Directions had become a close friend of Bissett’s over the years and was one of the first notified. “He wasn’t just a good client; he turned into a great friend. We did a lot of work together and he took real good care of me.”

Ray Bloch Market Manager in Creative Services, Wayne Picard was among the many who were well stunned by the news of Bissett’s passing. “He was a brilliant producer. He was one of the most creative people I have ever worked with. We’re going to really miss him.”

Stephen Bissett is survived by his wife and two teenaged sons.
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