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ON the COVER
NORTHEASTERN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS, INC. 24
LEPRECON 28
EVENT OPERATIONS GROUP 16
ALICE IN CHAINS 12

BITS & PIECES
2 PUBLISHER’S NOTES
4 SOUND
Lectronsonics
Misson Services Made Easier
5 Worxaudio Technologies
Introduces M80i Install Line Array
6 ACS Productions & 5-STAR Productions
Team Up for Annual Festival

8 LIGHTING
Donny Osmond
Lights It Up

11 VIDEO
Scharff Weisberg

16 SERVICE
Event Operations Group
Customer Service Redefined

18 CAUSES
Our Sacrifice
Unites Music Superstars for Troop & Family Support

20 INDUSTRY PROFILE
Dennis Brennon

30 HEAR & NOW
HOSA
American Music & Sound

32 INTERNATIONAL
Take That Europe
takes to the international scene
33 Bowling For Soup
34 Joe Cocker
in Europe

36 FX
Lasers are Justified

38 THIS JOKES IN
The Things People Do For Their Kids

44 ADVERTISERS’ INDEX

BREAKOUTS & EVENT PHOTOS
12 Alice In Chains
We have always prided ourselves on providing coverage and support to regional production companies. Celebrating Northeastern Production’s 35th anniversary with the cover feature is just another example of that support. In keeping with our philosophy of focus on individuals as well as issues and technology, we hope to continue to give our readers a balanced approach to the industry. Certainly, there are a lot of other companies deserving this type of coverage, and we will attempt to shine our editorial spotlight on as many of these tried and true warriors as possible.

Internally, we are proud to announce the promotion of Chris Cogswell to the position of Editor-In-Chief of our magazine. Many positive changes are coming to our company in the first quarter of 2008, but we felt the time was right to promote Chris to this position. He is the longest-serving staffer on board and has guided us faithfully through tumultuous times. Those of you who have had first-hand dealings with Chris will understand this promotion. He is a stickler for organization, scheduling and accuracy. These are qualities that are essential in the editor’s position, and we are fortunate to have him as an integral part of our team. We will all be watching as he guides our publication through the evolution we are planning next year.

Finally, I would like to continue to invite our readers to send contributions of press releases, ideas for features and comments on any issues of importance to our industry. It is the continued interest of our industry readers that fuels this publication. We are responsive to anyone who has relevant input and we appreciate the collaboration we have enjoyed with all of our clients.

LARRY SMITH

Retraction

Oooops! We made a mistake!

In last issue’s Toby Keith feature, we mistakenly referred to LD Eddie “Bones” Connell as Guitar Tech Sammy Bones. A “bone-headed” mistake for sure.

Sammy Bones
Guitar Tech
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Sammy@SammyBones.com

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Few things are more frustrating than bad sound, and for church leaders at Mission Basilica San Juan Capistrano, a Catholic Church a short hop North of San Diego, the inability to consistently obtain clear audio at manageable levels was an issue that could no longer be ignored. Designed to coincide with the installation of a new and incredibly ornate, gold retablo (an artistic wall or surface) altar, all of which were hand crafted in Spain for the church—officials decided an upgraded sound system would also be deployed. To ensure freedom of movement and consistent audio performance from a setup that runs largely unattended, the new sound system incorporates wireless microphones and automated mixing capability from Lectrosonics.

Grand Rapids, MI-based MuSonic’s acoustics consulting firm, handled the design of the church’s new SR system, which was installed and completed in July 2007 by Audio Associates of San Diego, CA. According to Peter Borchard, MuSonic’s A/V systems designer, “The church was in dire need of a new automated mixing system. It was too easy for well-meaning, but uninhibited people to change the old automixer’s settings and inadvertently make matters worse. Church officials were eager to find a solution that would enable them to circumvent this problem and obtain good, repeatable audio performance.”

To rectify this situation, Borchard specified a Lectrosonics DM1612 Digital Automatic Matrix Mixer. With its patented proportional gain auto mixing and automatic digital feedback eliminator capabilities, combined with intuitive programming via a laptop computer running Lectrosonics’ LecNet2 setup and configuration software, Borchard was able to establish the optimum sound system parameters and lock them into the mixer’s memory—thus ensuring consistent, repeatable settings every time the system is used.

To facilitate freedom of movement for church leaders, Borchard also specified wireless microphone setups consisting of four Lectrosonics LM Digital Hybrid UHF Belt Pack Transmitters plus a single Lectrosonics UT Digital Hybrid Wireless™ Handheld Transmitter, all of which feed into a Lectrosonics VR Venue modular receiver system stocked with five VRS receiver modules.

“The four belt pack transmitters are used with Countryman E6 over the ear microphones,” said Borchard, “while the fifth wireless microphone is a handheld model that can easily be passed from one person to another during services. By using the Lectrosonics Venue receiver system, which is modular and, hence, expandable, the church still has the capacity to add another channel should it be necessary at a later time.”

“The ability to expand the system was an important design consideration,” continued Borchard, “and this is yet another reason we went with the Lectrosonics DM1612. In addition to the five wireless mics and two hard-wired mics for the ambo and cantor (the church’s song leader), the mixer also accommodates a CD player and the outputs of a small tabletop mixer that is used for the small contemporary musical ensemble. Even so, there remain several open channels for future expansion.”

With the new wireless microphones and automated mixing equipment in place and operational, Borchard reports the new system has made a dramatic impact on the church’s services. “Quite simply,” says Borchard, “everyone at the church is thrilled with the equipment’s performance. My main contact at the church is Father Arthur Holquin. We spoke just the other day and, once again, he reiterated how pleased he is with the equipment’s performance.”

Borchard is equally upbeat about Lectrosonics as a company. “I’ve been extremely impressed with both the performance and build quality of Lectrosonics equipment,” Borchard said. “Of equal importance, whenever I’ve had operational questions and needed to contact the company’s tech services department, everyone I’ve spoken to has provided prompt, courteous, and knowledgeable service. In my mind, Lectrosonics is a perfect example of what every American company ought to be.”
This loudspeaker incorporates a medium format, one-inch exit compression driver coupled to a stabilized proprietary FlatWave™ Former (wave shaping device) that delivers clear but penetrating high frequencies over a predictable and controlled coverage area. Dual 8-inch cone transducers coupled to the A.I.M.™ Acoustic Intergrading Module minimize cone filtering throughout the entire operating range and provide a rich, fully balanced sound with a frequency range that spans from 300 Hz to 18 kHz.

The new M80i’s construction is the result of painstaking attention to detail. The loudspeaker enclosure is constructed from sturdy multi-ply Baltic Birch and is heavily braced for cabinet rigidity. Protecting the enclosure is a multi-layered, catalyzed polyurethane finish — available in black or white — designed to withstand the most demanding conditions. A 16-gauge, perforated, cloth-backed, powder coated steel grill with a high transmission ratio protects the transducer complement.

Characteristic of WorxAudio Technologies’ TrueLine Series loudspeakers, the new M80i ships with a first-rate complement of fully captive rigging hardware. The M80i’s custom designed, black or white powered coated, aluminum TrueAim™ rigging hardware with 1-degree increments enables the user to easily array the system to the desired coverage area in flown or ground stack mode.

WorxAudio Technologies introduces the M80i Install Line Array. A member of WorxAudio Technologies’ TrueLine™ Series, the new M80i is a two-way, high efficiency, ultra compact line array loudspeaker system designed for the most natural sounding reproduction of speech and music program material. This new loudspeaker system excels at a wide variety of sound reinforcement applications, including corporate / industrial presentation venues, performance venues and clubs, houses of worship, theaters, and AV production.
ACS Productions Sound and Lighting, Inc. of Ontario, Canada recently deployed their new M.LINE compact line array rig for Toronto’s version of worldwide festival of the Lady of Lights, or Senhora de Luz.

Working with local provider 5 Star Productions, the two companies teamed up for the four day event. This was Steve Ferreira of 5 Star Productions first experience with the ACS M.LINE rig. He was blown away with the sound quality of the McCauley Sound M.LINE system set up for the event. “We’ve been doing this celebration about 8 years. What’s great is that it’s free to the public and goes on for about four days,” says Steve. “St. Matthews Church throws the event for the parish every year, but this is the first year we decided to use a line array system to reach all in attendance.” I contacted Carlos at ACS and he helped me put together the right rig for the festival.” He continues…

“Our event coordinators were beyond impressed with the results of the show and have confidently booked next year’s festival with the same set up.”

Carlos set up 5 Star Productions with a total of 18 M.LINE cells for the show. With 9 boxes per side, Steve was working with 14 M90’s and 4 M120’s. “I also supplied Steve a Midas Verona 36 channel console, with a DBX 482 drive rack and Crown 3600’s to power the whole system. It was truly amazing to see how such a small box could cover an outdoor event so well.”

Liberato “Lee” Correia, Sound Engineer and Event Photographer for ACS, had this to add on the coverage of the outdoor venue, “Everyone seemed to really enjoy the show a lot. The McCauley M.LINE really threw the sound very well and with 9 boxes per side, it really helped the coverage factor.”

Carlos started ACS around the same time Steve and Five Star got started. Being known in the Canadian community as installation gurus, Carlos specifically purchased the M.LINE system for ACS to start taking on a different direction. “I originally heard the set up at a demo in the United States,” reflects Carlos. “Immediately I fell in love with it, and when I got home to Canada, I knew it was the right purchase decision for my intent on saturating a different end of the market.”

Part of the decision to purchase the M.LINE Array in particular was the amount of time it takes to set up. “Not only does it sound phenomenal, but you can’t beat the price, you can’t beat the rigging and you definitely can’t beat the quality for the price, period. To fly the whole array for this event, took about 15 minutes as soon as the stage was set up. I can’t do that with any other rig. It was absolutely mind blowing on how little time was spent in getting this ready for the show,” said Carlos.

“She had never used McCauley Sound full speaker systems before, I was really pleased with the performance of the box,” stated Lee. “I always knew that McCauley made fantastic drivers, but it was really great to hear the whole set up in action. On top of that, as a sound engineer, I can really appreciate the amount of time it takes to fly the hardware. The efficiency of using the Line Array Calculator to get set up is great. All you have to do is get the holes lined up and in a matter of minutes you have flown the whole array.”

“What really impressed me,” remembers Steve “was when the main headliner on Saturday night played traditional Portuguese guitar. It just sounded so crisp, so clean and so warm that I couldn’t believe my ears.
Portuguese guitar is hard to mix clearly indoors; it was truly incredible to hear it so clearly at an outdoor event. On top of that, I mixed the whole event, all four days. Regular people would come up just to tell me that it was the best year for the festival. The sound quality and the stage set up were much better than years past. Not only was the public input heard, but the performers as well.

Performers from all over the community and even as far as Brazil came to participate in the Senhora da Luz of Toronto this year. “I got some good feedback from performers during the sound check,” says Carlos, “Even the local papers knew what I was going to use to upgrade the show’s quality this year. The “wow” factor for me was when I realized I was using 8in drivers in the McCauley M.LINE. They were performing like they were 12’s with the response down to 60 Hz and it was as clear as day. I still can’t get over the fact that they were only 8’s! There’s not an 8 inch driver on the market that I feel can perform like the McCauley Sound M.LINE. And someone really ought to get an award for the rigging design. I love the rigging!”

Since the Lady of Lights festival, Lee has gotten some contact from surrounding production companies regarding the system. “It’s interesting, other people in the industry have contacted us to talk about how well the concert was dialed in and how great all the gigs have sounded since we’ve been using this line array system for production. After the Lady of Lights, the M.LINE has really started generating a lot of interest.”

With the success of the system’s performance at the Lady of Lights Festival, Carlos has begun looking into other product lines provided by McCauley Sound. “Since we already have the drop on the installation market, we have plans to start using the iDESIGN series up here.”
DONNY OSMOND LIGHTS IT UP

Lighting equipment and crew for Donny Osmond’s recent UK arena tour was supplied by Bandit Lites UK who, along with Bandit Lites Inc. in the US, have enjoyed a long relationship with the artist.

Bandit UK’s Chief Executive, Lester Cobrin comments, “Donny Osmond is one of the most legendary pop artists and a consummate entertainer. He also takes a keen interest in the technical aspects of his show; so production values are always high on the agenda”.

This was lighting director, Jimmy Hatten’s second major tour with Osmond, and the first in the UK. The set, designed by Michael Cotton, featured four large truss-framed video screens giving a shrinking perspective look to the stage.

The lighting design on which this tour is based was created by Mike Frogge – Osmond’s long term LD - for a DVD shoot in Wales earlier this year. Hatten and Frogge have collaborated on many shows and projects over the years. They speak the same imaginative language and work extremely well together. Frogge asked Hatten to take this over as he had other commitments, and so approximately 50% of this lightshow was based on that Welsh DVD shoot, with the other 50% programmed from scratch by Hatten.

The upstage overhead lighting trusses covered the sides and rear of stage, with a total of four trussing fingers running front to back, the centre two of which also supported the overhead video screen. These were joined by a 50ft front truss.

Frogge and Hatten chose Martin Professional MAC 2K spots for their profile moving lights. For wash lights, they stuck with High End StudioColors – primarily because they were used on the Welsh video – and revisiting them on this meant they could retain some of the programming from that show.

A total of 20 MAC 2Ks and 20 StudioColors, along with 8 4-lite Moles, rigged on the front truss were used for audience illumination and 6 bars of ACLs, spread over all the trusses. The truss warmers were PAR 64s with narrow bulbs and Lee 202 gel, to give them a nice crisp, frosty zing. Bandit also supplied 5 Lycian follow spots and two DF50 hazers.

Video was a big element of the show – and one in which Osmond takes a personal interest and produces much of the content, so the lighting also had to be sympathetic to that. The first half was titled “Love Songs of The 70’s” in keeping with his latest album. This segment featured a lot of moody, deeply saturated colours and diffused gobo looks, a personal favorite of Osmond.

In the second half of the show was rock, finishing with a great flourish on the signature Osmond’s anthem, “Crazy Horses”, where Hatten comments that the effects engine on his WholeHog II console really came into its own!

Hatten worked alongside Peter “Fats” Parchment and Merrick ‘Mez’ Storrod, who were both specifically requested after he worked with them on Keith Urban’s European tour earlier in the year.
Lighting designer Haydn Cruickshank used 28 Robe ColorSpot and ColorWash 700E AT fixtures on leading UK dance act Underworld’s “Oblivion With Bells” recent UK tour.

The fixtures were supplied by Cruickshank’s west London based rental company Colour Sound Experiment, which now has over 80 Robe moving lights — all supplied by Robe UK. The 700s were newly purchased this summer for Colour Sound’s busy 2007 festival season.

Underworld’s lighting rig was based around four trusses – three flown overhead and the fourth ground supported at 5 ft above “floor” height at the rear of stage - and rigged with fixtures that would normally have been scattered across the floor. This was designed to contain the floor lighting and keep the deck area tidy for a 16 large inflatable tubes which joined the visual equation two thirds of the way through the set.

The 16 ColorSpot and 12 ColorWash 700E ATs were spread all across the 4 trusses in a balanced but not totally symmetrical manner. They were effectively “The Light Show”, creating the main dynamics for a classic ravey lightshow in the true spirit of Acid House, keeping feet grooving, bodies moving and minds spinning for two hours.

Working with Cruickshank - on Underworld’s fabulous lighting crew were Stuart “Woody” Wood and Richard Gilson.

Cruickshank ran the Robe’s via his WholeHog 3 console along with a sizable generic rig including Moles, Strobes, Profiles and PARs plus LED lighting in the form of i-Pix Satellites and JTE PixelLines.

Underworld’s live video mix is produced by Toby Vogel. As always, he and Cruickshank worked closely to ensure that both mediums, video and lighting, fused seamlessly into a coherent, exciting and complimentary visual experience.

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VH1’s Storytellers lets singers/songwriters sing, play and tell the stories behind their songs. But rapper Jay Z wanted some imagery to back him up. When the network had a last-minute need for large-scale video projector, they called on Scharff Weisberg.

Says Josh Weisberg: “VH-1 wanted a very large, very wide projected image to be the main backdrop behind Jay-Z. After quickly exploring screen options, the most practical alternative was to use the studio cyclorama, a 28’ tall wall that wraps 160 degrees around a corner of the studio.”

“It was a very complex projection configuration, because, not only would it be a blended image, it would have to blend and curve around a 90 degree turn.” Weisberg continues, “We only had a week in which to do it, which included coordinating with the production and content-creation people.”

Five pairs of Christie Roadster HD 18K projectors with the optional Christie TWIST modules were utilized to provide adequate brightness and resolution in the brightly lit environment. The projector configuration was developed by Weisberg, in collaboration with Kyle Anderson of partner firm, Video Applications. Anderson, who has extensive experience with complicated blended projector arrays, was also the lead projection technician. James Sarro of Video Applications managed the project.

The Christie TWIST module allows you to reconfigure the geometry of the image and bend, curve and warp surfaces from within the projector set-up application. The ten projectors were controlled via an IP network, which enabled adjustment and alignment from Anderson’s laptop. The systems were fed by 5 Mboxes and blends were done in the projectors.

Explains Ronelle Benck, technical manager for MTV Networks, “This was something that Jay-Z’s people conceived along with VH-1 producer Patty DiMaria. They wanted a cinemascopic look where he is engulfed or wrapped in a huge picture. The artist had a 12-piece band behind him, and told stories of his life and songs – songs that take a chronological path. The content footage shows his roots in Brooklyn.”

“We were talking about coming up with custom screens,”adds Benck, “because the project was coming together so quickly. Then we found Steiner Studio. They have a huge cyc. Naturally, we chose Scharff Weisberg to work with us.”

“Josh worked with us from the beginning, determining angles and how to work with the artist,” Benck says. Scharff Weisberg worked seamlessly with Video Applications, who I have also had good experiences with before. The show, in HD, is going to be amazing!”

“The video material was composed by Williams Heins and the Mbox programmer was Drew Finley. They worked very collaboratively with us to design content, and Tom Kenny, the LD, bless his heart, worked hard to keep lighting off the cyc,” states Weisberg. “The whole show looked great and everyone was really happy.”

Scharff Weisberg and Video Applications, firms with extensive histories in the presentation and staging markets, recently announced a co-ownership agreement. While continuing to operate independently, the two companies work together strategically to provide clients with state-of-the-art audio, video and lighting equipment and services. With a strong presence on both coasts, Scharff Weisberg and Video Applications are able to deliver a large array of cost-effective services on a national level. For more information, call 718.610.1660 or visit their website at swnyc.com. For more information on Video Applications, visit videoapps.com.
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Tour Manager Chuck Randall

Jay Weinberg is the production manager for the acoustic show

Guitar Tech Tim Dawson

Lighting Director Marty Postma

BAND
Guitar: Jerry Cantrell
Vocals: William Duval
Bass: Mike Inez
Drums: Sean Kinney

TOUR OFFICES
Management: Core Entertainment/Susan Silver Management
Business Manager: David Wise & Associates
Travel Agent: In House Travel

CREW
Tour Mgr: Chuck Randall
Security: Val Bichkas
Videographer: Todd Shuss
Production Mgr Acoustic Shows): Jay Weinberg
Production Mgr (Electric Shows): Erik Leighty
FOH Engineer: Tom Abraham
Monitor Engineer: James Leonti
Lighting Director: Marty Postman
Guitar Techs: Freddie Kowalo, Tim Dawson
Drum Tech: Tavis Lemay
Bus Drivers: Uncle Donnie White, Terry Girourd, Chris Rudin
Merchandiser: Donick Laviolette

VENDORS
Sound: Clair Bros/ Showco
Staging: Accurate Staging
Radios: Road Radios
Lighting Design: Mike-O-Matic/Mike Baldassari
Buses: Ziggy’s Custom Coach
Trucking: Artisan Freight
Merchandise: Anthill Trading
Passes: Entertainment Ink
Itineraries: Smart Art
ALICE IN CHAINS just concluded a short run of acoustic shows after an opening stint of amphitheater dates with Velvet Revolver. The intimate configuration of the fall acoustic tour is quite a different animal than the full-on rock shows with Velvet Revolver. *TGJ* spoke to a few AIC crewmembers about their challenges (there were a few) between the shows and venues.

“On the VR tour, as with any support slot, you are limited to what you can do,” explains Production Manager Erik Leighty. “You are really playing by the headliners’ rules. We were very fortunate with VR, as they really let us push the boundaries of the support role. I think we had more gear on deck than they did. We were able to incorporate a full video show into our set, projecting onto a backdrop as well as onto our amp line. When we were heading onto the acoustic dates, we were losing a semi and going with a trailer behind the bus, but the band wanted to keep the aspects of the full rock show.” Leighty continues, “Marty Postma, our LD, who used a Whole Hog III throughout both tours, was able to find some amazing video to replace some of the portions of the show, which gave the acoustic set its own unique look. The biggest challenge was usually getting the DL.2 projectors into some of the smaller venues. We had them on balconies, truss, you name it, we have tried it to get those into the venue.”

According to Postma, Production Designer Mike Baldassari deserves a lot of credit for the look of the shows. Taking cues from the band members themselves, he worked closely with Postma on the design. The duo worked closely together during pre-production as well as rehearsals to actually create the looks for the shows, with Postma’s primary role, as he put it, “…a programmer, custom content provider, video operator, and show operator!” His official-unofficial title was “lighting and video director.” The video was projected on a scrim, with it all played back on the on-board media servers inside the DL.2 fixtures. They were in turn controlled by the DMX signal from the Hog III. As Martin elaborates, “Both the AXOM and the DL.2s were controlled from the Hog. They are all very powerful on their own, but combined they make for the most innovative set of tools on the market.”

The stage was sparse but well lit, as all band members could be found laughing and carousing during the show. The video presentation was perfect considering the “intimate” surroundings with a slew of off-the-shelf living room lamps from IKEA sharing the stage with the band.

When asked by Martin after the gig if I enjoyed the show, I replied, “I got chill bumps man!” “Then we did our job,” he countered. Truer words were never spoken.
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Event Operations Group began 12 years ago as a company hired to manage large festivals and professional sporting events, as well as act as security consultants for major venues. After 9/11, owner Mike Jones, who left a 13-year law enforcement career to start EOG, initially created the company to provide patron protection and emergency procedures for venues across the country. This includes everything from WMD/bomb threat response plans, incident command, and emergency evacuation planning, to patron flow planning and venue liability protection. The company then expanded to provide executive protection services to the entertainment, music and motion picture industry. They also provide celebrity and asset protection services to artists on tour, filming, appearances, and events.

In addition, their employees are cross-trained to perform in several different job classifications as required per event. This led to their latest expansion to provide event staff for their venue and festival clients. They have the ability to provide event security, ticket takers, ushers, customer service representatives, parking personnel, traffic operations, production services, stage hands, catering, concessions, waste management and transportation. They even have a limo and bus fleet.

Event Operations Group has now expanded the management and staff to provide services across the US by forming the sister company, National Event Management. The company has (3) mobile command centers able to be placed at any event in the country. These command centers are equipped with full radio and CCTV capabilities, as well as event equipment. “Our clients enjoy the convenience of placing one call to fulfill all of theirs specific event and venue needs,” explains Jones. “By contracting Event Operations Group, the venue receives a full time corporate office staff including division managers, regional support supervisors, security and operations consultants, Director of Operations, Accounting/Payroll, Director of Training, as well as a full time venue manager assigned to supervise the EOG staff at no cost to the venue!”

Jones continues, “A lot has changed in the industry in the past ten years, as far as not only venue protection, but actually protecting the patrons themselves, before and after they come to the venue. It used to be that once patrons came through the turnstiles, we were concerned with protecting them against slipping on a spilled drink or tripping over a cord.”

“Those were major issues then. But now, it has changed to the point that you’re actually thinking about traffic to and from the event. This includes parking, traffic direction for patrons crossing roadways, outside venue safety, lighting, transit or tram systems, ticketing, patron lines, ushers and customer service representatives, as well as the event / venue security personnel. Having your parking and traffic planning outside the event is just as important as moving the crowd through those turnstiles, and making them happy,” enthuses Jones.

According to Jones, that’s the other 50 percent of the customer service that is required in this day and time. Planning ahead makes all the difference. “The reason you pay attention to the parking outside the venue” he continues, “is because all of that affects security, bottom-line. If you take the steps to plan what’s going on outside, along with what’s going on inside, and you do have to evacuate (for example), you have a plan…a map of the region.”

Jones says, “A happy patron makes more money for the venue. They want to come back! Most local staffing companies are too small or inexperienced to handle large venues, crowds, or events. Many national providers fail to take the time to provide proper training for the large staff they employ. Attention to details and management issues often arise from both.”

During our conversation, we touched on the fact that many times, on a concert tour, there are not proper security personnel set up venue to venue. TGJ asked Jones if he felt that many times venues ‘take the cheapest way out’, so to speak, by hiring “warm bodies” as opposed to trained security and event staffing professionals. “Sometimes the cheapest way out will cost you more money than a trained, licensed, and bonded event staffing agency,” explains Jones. “Once someone is injured, and a claim is made, the lawyer’s first step, is to go back and review the venue liability issues. They want to see what kind of training the staff has.”
The Event Operations Group is a national event staffing, management and security provider. We are proud to offer premium services for all events including: concerts, festivals, collegiate and professional athletics, and more. We offer venue management and staffing for stadiums, amphitheaters, arenas, performing arts, and convention centers. The staff and management includes: security, ushers, parking, ticket attendants, full production and talent buying services.
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Our Sacrifice Unites Music Superstars for Troop & Family Support

The compelling power of the song, video, and efforts of Our Sacrifice continues to inspire major music stars and equipment manufacturers to contribute to the ever-growing list of collectible instruments. This has resulted in a national fundraiser that will run into 2008, and benefits key soldier and family support charities and organizations.

Star-power has connected with Our Sacrifice through donations of autographed guitars, amplifiers and memorabilia. Patriotic Americans now have an opportunity to make charitable donations to help our troops and families, PLUS, earn a chance to own highly prized, collectible music equipment through regular drawings that started in 2007.

New contributions include Reba McEntire from this years CMA awards show, The Police, Garth Brooks, Faith Hill, Joe Perry from Aerosmith, Velvet Revolver & Alice in Chains, Van Morrison, Cheap Trick, LeAnn Rimes, President Bill Clinton, Bono & The Edge, Diane Sawyer and everyone from Good Morning America, Daryl Hannah, Jewel, and three multi-autographed guitars from this years Farm Aid concert: Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp, and Dave Matthews. Contributing autographed guitars already available are: The Eagles, Bon Jovi (pictured right), Michael Anthony (of Van Halen fame) (pictured center), Sammy Hagar (pictured left), Ozzy Osbourne, Buddy Guy, Kenny Chesney, Sugarland, Alan Jackson, Toby Keith, Gretchen Wilson and Johnny Hiland. Also available is a star-studded, multi-autographed Peavey guitar and a 9/11 tribute autographed racing helmet from Al Unser Jr. Other signed guitars have been supplied by the Jonas Brothers, Shakira, and REO Speedwagon.

Equipment manufacturers joining us include Fender Guitars, who donated “The American Patriot Stratocaster,” Peavey Musical Instruments, Dr.

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Z Amplification, Taylor Guitars, Ernie Ball & Music Man Guitars, PRS Guitars, Takamine Guitars, Gregg Bennett Guitars by Samick, Boulder Creek Guitars, Morgan Hill Music, and Wedgie. All are joining together to help in the fund-raising efforts in support of our military families.

“We’ve been very blessed,” explains Our Sacrifice song and project creator, Mark Reis, “to be able to help great military support groups and at the same time give something back to Americans doing their patriotic duty in support of our troops and their families. My hope is that the American public embraces Our Sacrifice as a national rallying point. These great entertainers have recognized the tremendous need in our country to show our military and their families that we support them.”

Vocalist Frank Camp states, “There’s no political agenda. These tremendous musical patriots see past the politics and want to help our brave service members and their families who are making the supreme sacrifice in our Nation’s defense. We welcome other artists, entertainers and sports stars, as well as, corporations to participate with us.”

Organizations that will benefit are: Stars for Stripes, who takes major entertainers to military theaters abroad, Operation Pinecone, a group that sends much needed items to troops abroad and has received Presidential recognition at the White House, Sew Much Comfort, a network of people customizing apparel for soldiers injured in battle, The 9/11 Help America Foundation and the 1st Lt. Rob Seidel Fund will also receive proceeds.

Our Sacrifice is also featured with America Supports You, a Department of Defense nationwide program that helps showcase Americans’ support for the men and women of the Armed Forces. To learn more about how you can support military personnel please visit americasupportsyou.mil

All contribution/register-to-own entries and more info can be found on-line at sacrifice.net. The fund-raiser runs through 2008, with monthly drawings of two autographed guitars.
Earlier this year we did a story on Josh Groban’s tour. In the process of setting up the tour through the proper channels, the first contact made beyond Production Manager Roy Bennett was Tour Manager Dennis Brennon. Within a very short time it was apparent to this writer that this guy is someone to pay attention to. At 40 years old, he is one of the youngest Tour Managers working major shows. He is aggressive while maintaining a sincere sense of humility. He is kind and accommodating while being all business. Apart from being a Red Sox fan (something this writer chooses to overlook in light of all of his other attributes), there simply isn’t anything not to like about this guy and a career that has been all about relationships from that point on.

Tour Guide Journal: Straight away, how did you get into this thing?

Dennis Brennon: My best friend in high school had a band that got signed to Epic Records, so it was a choice between college and touring the world. I decided to do this.

Tour Guide Journal: Looks like the decision paid off.

DB: Yeah. Now he’s home with four kids and a great job. He’s got a real good life and although he’s not doing it anymore, I still am.

Tour Guide Journal: What kind of music was that band?

DB: It was hard rock. The band was called Mariah Rage. I met him in the 10th grade. He was the only kid in school with long hair and ripped jeans. He came up to me and said, “Man you’re cool. I want to hang out with you.” He taught me how to party and turned out to be one of my best friends of all time.

Tour Guide Journal: So were you a tour manager for them?

DB: No. I started out as their guitar guy. I was humping equipment and learning the ropes. The first big tour we did where we got on a bus and traveled around was in ’89. We were on tour with a band called Metal Church. I got to know a guitar player who used to work with Metallica, John Marshall. He sort of took me under his wing and said, “This is how you do guitars and this is how you do all this other stuff and you seem like you really want to learn.” So I looked over his shoulder. I learned real quickly that it was all about relationships from that point on.

Tour Guide Journal: What happened after your inaugural touring experience?

DB: I bounced around for while getting work where I could and trying to hold down steady work. It wasn’t until about ’93 that it became a steady full-time thing where I went from one job to another to another consistently. From there it kept picking up until it got to the place where I am now. I’m out with bands that will go out and tour for a year at a time.

Tour Guide Journal: When did you break as a tour manager?

DB: I was working with a band out of L.A. called, you’re going to love this one…SNOT. They were kind of a ‘punkish’ band.

Tour Guide Journal: Really, you think?

DB: The drummer and guitar player were friends of mine who I’d known for years. The guitar player called me up and said, “I’ve got this band and we’re on Geffen Records. I want you to come out and work for us.” I was supposed to go out there to be his guitar tech. Well, when I got out there, I was the only one who could read a map and count money. So the band’s manager, Lou Adler’s son Nick, said, “Listen, you’re the only one with half a brain, so I’m putting you in charge.” It just all transpired from there. That was in ’95.

Tour Guide Journal: And from that point on you were a Tour Manager for hire.

DB: Yeah. I didn’t really want to do it at first, but I really fell in love with it.

Tour Guide Journal: Who have you worked for as a tour manager?

DB: Them, Sevendust, Fuel, Evanescence, System of A Down, Disturbed for six years, and now Josh.

Tour Guide Journal: Is this your first serious ‘A’ class arena tour?

DB: Disturbed was kind of like that, but nothing on this scale.

Tour Guide Journal: It’s hard to put Josh Groban in the same room in my head with bands with names like SNOT and DISTURBED. That’s a big jump.

DB: Well actually it’s not when you hear how it happened. Disturbed was a Warner Brothers band and I’d been doing a lot of stuff with them. Having worked with Disturbed for that six years allowed me to get to know a lot of the Warner Brothers people. They said, “Hey, we’re going to hook you up with some of the ‘A’ top level bands.” When this came up, Nick Light threw my name in the hat and kept pushing me for it to Brian Avnet, Josh’s manager. It just so happened that one of the managers for Disturbed was good friends with Brian so he called him up and said, “This is your guy.” So my name kept popping up to Brian and finally he said, “Who the hell is this guy?” I went in for three interviews and the last one was with Josh. We went out for lunch, got along great and he said he definitely wanted to work with me. I know on face value it seems a little strange, but when you see how it all happened, it really isn’t.

Tour Guide Journal: At the end of the day, it’s all about getting the show down the road and counting the money.

DB: Right
TGJ: That being said, there still must have been a huge culture difference.

DB: Well yeah. I think it’s a more mature scene. Instead of getting an assistant when you call someone, now you get the person who you were calling. You get a lot of dignitaries coming out to the shows. I’m dealing the best in the business now. Everyone from my Production Manager down to the lowest position on the tour is absolutely top notch. Now I’m working for someone who has the money to bring in the people who don’t make mistakes.

TGJ: In a conversation I had with Josh, he told me that he was very happy to finally bring in a designer of the caliber of Roy Bennett.

DB: Exactly. Working with Disturbed, they always did the best they could, but it always came down to what they could afford.

TGJ: Was it difficult to make the jump from the shows you toured with before to this where it’s dealing with a more cultured crowd?

DB: No, not at all. It’s more about having pressed pants, having your hair cropped and looking nice for the people you’re meeting. But at the end of the day, it’s like you said, it’s still about getting the information out and getting the show down the road. I’m loving every minute of this!

TGJ: Probably better food.

DB: Yes. Four to five stars.

TGJ: Josh has a pretty big machine wrapped around with you and Brian and Liz and Roy.

DB: It’s impressive.

TGJ: It’s really impressive. Is it present in your mind that you’re riding the crest of a really big wave?

DB: To a degree. I have a feeling we’re going to be doing this for a long time to come. It’s all about Josh and what he wants. If he wants to be doing this when he’s 80, he’ll be doing it and I’ll be there as long as he’ll have me.

At the time this interview was conducted, Josh Groban was 26 years old. His voice won’t mature until he is 40. He has a huge career ahead of him and so do the people who he chooses to work with. Dennis Brennon has the gig that people on the road dream of. It’s the kind of gig that pays for college tuition and mortgages. To get the gig that Dennis has is to be truly blessed, and it couldn’t happen to a nicer guy. If he calls you about work, TAKE THE CALL!
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In 1967 Ray DiBiase was the kid who got called out to the auditorium to turn on the sound system for assemblies at Bishop Kearney High School in Rochester, New York. After high school, he went to R.I.T. (Rochester Institute of Technology) for a couple of years, during which time he worked in the Post Office to make extra money. Still, he never took his eye off the career path that had originally caught his attention.
"During that time I would do little lighting gigs here and there with fixtures and cables I would beg & borrow to use. I didn't have anything of my own," he recalled. Then in 1972 he created Northeastern Production. "At the time it was just sound." says DiBiase, "We did quite a few gigs in the Northeast through a couple of agencies out of New York City that did college shows. They used to get gigs for me all over the place. We'd do jobs sometimes at five different colleges in a row and drive back and then figure out how to get more shows."

Things broke open for the company in 1975 when Ray caught the eye of jazz trumpeter, Chuck Mangione, for whom he did 23 dates that year. In '76 Northeastern picked up K.C. and the Sunshine Band for a national tour while hanging onto the Mangione gig, which was picking up steam as well. It seemed like it was 'off to the races' for Northeastern.

In '77 the company bought a tractor-trailer and began supplying full production for Mangione which lasted through 1989. During 1976 through '78, the company handled the east coast production calls for Heart, doing gigs as far west as Salt Lake City.

As time went on, DiBiase, now with a daughter and son, the road started to lose its appeal. "It got to be a little awkward being on the road as much as I was," he recalls. "I really didn't want to do it anymore, but we got through it." Then in 1989, an audio engineer died in his hotel room in Torrance, California. Chuck Mangione came to the point where the road was wearing him a little thin as well. Soon, it all came to a close.

The problem for Northeastern was, that the company had relied primarily on the Mangione gig for a lot of years. So with all of its eggs in that one basket, when it all came to an end, there was a huge void. DiBiase remembers, "Things were a bit uncomfortable in the first few months of 1990 because I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I tried a few remodeling jobs thinking I might want to change careers after having never done anything other than this in my entire life."

However, after his second remodeling gig he decided that he'd rather deal with the entertainment industry than homeowners. With roughly $200,000.00 wrapped up in Northeastern Production, it was probably a good call. So, in the summer of 1990 he decided to get serious about the idea of being a regional production company. But the new rule was that there would never again be one primary client of the company upon whom its fate would rest.

Later that year the decision to stay in the production business paid off when the company began a long-standing relationship with Quad/Graphics, the world's largest privately owned printing company that is still going strong today. With that, the life of the company took on a new direction. Suddenly touring wasn't the bread winning concept.

Now, with an eye on all things production in the northeastern region, be it concerts, festivals, corporate or anything else, Northeastern Production has a firm handle on the market. Since the restructuring of the company's goals in 1990, DiBiase has spent several million dollars on lighting, sound, video gear, staging, outdoor roof systems, backline, generators, barricades and just about anything else needed to get the job done in any environment.

One thing DiBiase is insistent upon, is that when a client hires Northeastern Production to handle an event, they get Northeastern, and not another company that has been subcontracted to handle the overflow. While the company still does some install work, DiBiase likes to keep the business aimed at the production market.
which has a work schedule just shy of crazy for most of the year, and certainly all of the summer. Proof of that is found in the fact that Northeastern Production did just over 90 gigs in July of 2007.

One of the more interesting gigs Northeastern worked on this year was something that just happened on November 24 in Buffalo, New York. It was billed as “The Worlds Largest Disco,” and was actually certified by the Guinness Book of World Records. It had a total of 510 moving and conventional lights hung out over a total of 850 feet of truss. It used 17 mirror balls ranging from 16” to 5 feet. Northeastern also provided sound and barricade for the massive area the event covered. All of this, for an event that sold out two months in advance, for 7,000 people.

When people talk about the landscape of the production market, there is a tendency to talk only about companies in the big leagues. The idea that there are regional companies out there like Northeastern Production seems to get lost. But one could argue the case that these companies are the foot soldiers of the industry upon whose shoulders the rest of it all stands.

Northeastern employs eight full time people, and in 2006, DiBiase sent out 93 W2’s. Those 93 people (including Local 25 stagehands) are, without a doubt, the most important assets this company has. During the hour that TgJ was able to sit down with DiBiase and chat, many things were discussed. In such an exchange, everything that is said colors the tone of the story, even though not all of it gets into the piece. As the conversation was drawing to its end, Ray said, "There is one thing that I really want to be said in the story about my company."

Beyond that comment there was nothing else. He just sat there, his face became red and deep emotion washed over him as tears welled up in his eyes as he fought valiantly to muscle out two words, "My people."

Finally he found his strength and said, “I love my people.” The two names that he was able to get across were Timm DeBruyne and Jack Hereth. This is a guy who truly knows who signs his paychecks. During the interview, he used the word “family” many times, referring to the team at Northeastern Production and the clients the company faithfully serves.

This year has marked the 35th year of the existence of the family known as Northeastern Production Systems, Inc. This family has a father who would do anything for it. There is no doubt that his devotion to this company is the reason why his career has lasted as long as it has. He will continue to flourish as long as he wants it to.
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LEPRECON OFFERS EASE AND FLEXIBILITY with its New Interface

by MICHAEL A. BECK

Leprecon has been around as long as anyone can remember. There really isn’t a part of the lighting industry that this company hasn’t touched, having been seen in theatres, ballrooms, auto shows and even the world’s largest party in the world in Mexico.

The company started in the concert industry and evolved through time into what is now the largest part of the Leprecon world, the fixed installation market. As time has passed, the technology of lighting has become more and more sophisticated. This progression has been witnessed by church leaders, hoteliers, school administrators and architects everywhere.

The average church service runs through as many 10 lighting cues in a service. The issue with putting complicated lighting systems into the hands of people who aren’t experienced, is that they aren’t trained lighting operators.

That being said, there was still the issue of people running the lighting system of a house of worship, convention hall or banquet hall who don’t have a lot of experience with programming and operating a lighting system. With limited time for training, time to learn a system with a steep learning curve is out of the question.

To that point, Leprecon has designed several products that take away the trepidation a novice might feel walking into a room faced with changing the lighting in a live situation. For about a year-and-a-half, Leprecon has had a product on the market called AI-512, which is a Linux-based software system that allows the Leprecon Litescape wall panels to interface with any DMX controlled lighting system in a new or existing structure.

Leprecon Sales Manager, Ed Cheeseman explained, “With the advent of the AI-512, the integrator can now have an easier way to configure the house lights and theatrical lighting system in a house of worship.” Cheeseman added, “This is achievable because you can now plug your laptop into the system and have a more stylistic interface than your typical two-line, 16-segment LCD seen on most dimmers in the industry.”

As the AI-512 began to move through the market, dealers and customer alike began to offer feedback on what they would like the system to do beyond its initial design parameters. The project began to snowball from there.

The latest software release, version 1.4, will now allow users the ability to access up to 24 different looks in the system as well as map any dmx channel on the control console to any button or fader located on a remote wall panel. The “lockout” function can even be triggered from the console.

The system also has an astronomical clock with which you can set your local longitude and latitude, and the clock will know when the sun is rising and setting and will control the lighting of the facility accordingly. There are other features that are able to stack lighting looks on top of pre-existing looks or give lighting cues a solo function that cancels out pre-existing ones.

But wait, there’s more! A separate application is also available which runs in conjunction with the AI-512 software that will allow the entire system to be Ethernet based and therefore networked throughout any facility. Let’s say that a worship band wants to work out in the sanctuary on a Friday when there is limited staff in the building and needs light. There is also a need for some work to be done in the gym. One person can sit at their desk and pull up the different interfaces for those zones and set the room lighting without ever leaving their desk.

A sleek 15” touch screen is just one option that allows the operator to use an iconic system to recall lighting cues. The icons used in the system can actually be photographs of the look designed for that room.

To an experienced lighting theatrical or concert lighting operator, this is nothing all that new. But to the person in a church, who is a layman, and who just happens to be leaning on the wrong post when the pastor looks around and says I need a volunteer, it truly is a “godsend.”

As was said at the top of this story, Leprecon has been around for a long time and has worked across the spectrum of the lighting industry, from entertainment to architectural. Julie Sanders, Marketing Director for Leprecon, is quick to say that while the largest thrust of the company’s efforts is in the architectural industry, it still has an impressive array of control solutions that apply to the entertainment market as well.

For further information on the dimming and control applications presented by Leprecon you can visit their website at leprecon.com.
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Hosa Technology, the leading innovator of analog and digital connectivity solutions for the modern musician and audio/video professional, has introduced the company’s latest additions to its highly popular line of power cords and accessories — the PWC-408 heavy duty power cord and the PWA-486 right-angle NEMA (National Electrical Manufacturers Association) AC adapter.

Designed to help musicians and other stage personnel to connect their gear directly to the power source without using a garish orange extension cord, the new PWC-408, like all Hosa PWC Series power cords, features 14AWG conductors protected by a robust black PVC jacket while the PWA-486 right-angle adapter facilitates easy connection in tight spaces.

Hosa’s new PWC-408 is the result of customer requests for a direct replacement of standard issue OEM IEC power cords. Consumer-grade OEM IEC power cords typically feature 18AWG wire (standard wire gauge) and measure 8 feet in length. The PWC-408 is a professional-grade, 8-foot, 14AWG, 3-wire power cord featuring an IEC C13 receptacle to a NEMA 5-15P plug. The benefit of this design lies in the power cord’s ability for more current to be conducted from the power outlet to the equipment as a result of the heavier gauge wire. Like other members of Hosa’s PWC Series products, the PWC-408’s black color blends seamlessly into the surrounding of both stage and studio.

Hosa’s new PWC-408 heavy duty power cord carries the additional benefit of being available in multiple lengths. In addition to its standard 8-foot length, the new power cord is available in 1.5-, 3-, 15-, 25-, and 50-foot lengths — making them ideal for maintaining a clean, uncluttered look on stage or in the studio. Additionally, the longer lengths enable one to eliminate the need for extension cords.

Adding greater ease of use not only to the new PWC-408 power cord — but to the entire line of Hosa PWC Series power cords and PWX Series extension cords and power accessories — is Hosa’s new PWA-486 right-angle NEMA adapter. Protruding a mere 1.75-inches from the wall, the PWA-486 facilitates easy connection of power cords to the wall socket in tight places, such as behind furniture. By using the new PWA-486 adapter, one can safely and easily adapt a standard plug to a right angle and save precious space. Of particular note, the use of Hosa’s new PWA-486 adapter is also demonstrably safer than bending — and stressing — a power cord at a right angle.
Richard Markus has accepted the position of Division Manager of the Music Instrument division of American Music & Sound, a California Pro Audio and Musical Instrument distributor.

Markus was most recently president of EMD Music, Inc. from its inception in November 2002. Prior to that, he was president of MAPEX® USA and had previously held sales and marketing management positions at LP Music and REMO, Inc.

Markus will be responsible for operations of the AM&S/MI Division in addition to managing the sales and marketing for their proprietary guitar and bass brand Jay Turser®, the distribution scheme for Hagstrom® guitars, Walden® Quik Lok® instrument stands and other current and future brands to be distributed by the division.

To quote Lynn Martin, President of American Music & Sound: “We are excited to have Dick bring his diverse sales, marketing and operational experiences to our organization. These combined with his general passion for music and the Musical Instrument industry make him ideal for the task at hand.”
Thirteen years after its first top ten hits, Take That has returned to the international scene with a European tour of 50 dates in 10 Countries which confirms the ongoing popularity of one of the biggest phenomenon in the pop music world in recent years.

The LD Simon Tutchner chose to use 160 projectors, of which 68 Alpha Spot HPE 1200 Clay Paky and 40 Alpha Profile 1200 Clay Paky, supplied by PRG Europe. “They create the most excellent graphic effects, both quantity and quality wise” - he says. “I had little time to prepare the show and the alternatives that these projectors give me seem truly endless! I chose the effects that could interact best with the scenography, which entails a huge curtain and 7 mega led video-walls, on which fantasy images and close-ups of the four singers were alternated.”

The Alpha Spot HPE and the Alpha Profile 1200 are installed on the three stages, two of which in the background and a third, circular, in the middle of the audience, and connected to the other two by a self-propelled bridge. The HPE are primarily used for front and angle lighting, and the Profiles mainly for back-lighting. The same set design is used for all the dates of the tour, except two, where the structure did not permit us to mount all three stages.

The tour production team travels with an average of 4-6 dates a week, and moves all the material by itself, without using local rental companies, and uses 24 trucks and a huge group of people who travel Europe together with the artists.

Simon Tutchner tells us he has a theatrical background, where he attended Drama School, and this reflects in his light design ideas: “I often try to reproduce a ‘theatrical’ atmosphere in my light shows, putting the artists in the centre of the scene. I frequently use spotlights to highlight the star, I use slow movements of the projectors and I don’t make an intrusive use of graphic effects. The world fame of Take That, and also the type of music that they perform, are ideal for a light interpretation of this kind”.

The show, as I said, extends over three stages, one of which is circular and in the middle of the audience. “This characteristic allows the fans to surround their idols, to embrace them in their imagination, and at the same time it offers a different solution of set and lighting design.” The exhibition on the main stage has a more intimate atmosphere: the motorized trusses that overhang the stage are coloured, they are lowered onto the stage and they rotate concentrically on two axes, whilst a large LED sphere reflects the colours throughout the whole environment.

“Besides being extraordinarily bright, the Alpha products also have perfect focus, on any surface and at all distances” – Simon Tutchner adds. This characteristic is particularly important when one operates on different projection surfaces, and when it is necessary to combine the artists’ plan with that of the musicians and the guest-vocalists.

The Take That tour will end this winter in Manchester, native city of the group, where there will be an incredible 11 consecutive dates. The success that the tour in Europe is having, and the love shown all over the world by so many fans, has clarified once more that this group still has so much to offer to the musical world in the future.
Lighting designer Hadyn Thomas is using Robe ColorSpot and ColorWash 575E AT moving lights and a Robe DigitalSpot 5000 DT on Bowling For Soup’s current UK and European tour.

The Texas based comedy-influenced punk-pop band are enjoying the success of their “Get Happy 2” tour and latest “When I Die” single, along with their largest production tour to date. Thomas has worked with them since 2003, and was left to come up with a lighting plot that would match the fast-paced energy and action happening onstage.

He wanted to get a wide dispersion of light sources all over the stage area at different levels, so the rear truss consists of 5 box trusses bolted together, measuring a total of 12 metres long by 2.5 m deep, with the top edge raked forward.

Six Robe ColorSpot 575E ATs are rigged onto this, with another 4 mounted on top of four vertical truss sections stood on the floor, two either side of stage at the back.

The front truss features 6 ColorWash 575E ATs and the DigitalSpot 5000 DT, which is rigged in the centre.

The Robe fixtures are used to create lots of “big open looks, gobo effects and audience sweeps” he explains, adding, “The 8 – 50 degree zoom on the Wash is awesome! It’s effectively like having double the amount of lights on the front truss as I can use them as either a Spot or Wash effects”.

He uses the DigitalSpot to project digital backdrops over the top of Bowling For Soup’s two backdrops during the set, utilizing the fixture’s onboard media clips. “It’s well bright enough to be visible even against the rather dark backdrops” he comments, adding that it is great to have this extra layer of texturing at his creative disposal.

Colour wise, the show is strongly accented with red, white and blue - standards of the Texan flag - to reflect Bowling For Soup’s loyalty to and love of their state, combined with some ‘yellow moments’ which are striking when they occur.

Freelancer Thomas works regularly with Leeds-based lighting equipment contractors Zig Zag.

Thomas is working alongside lighting technician Graeme Moya. Sound is being supplied by Stage Audio Services from Birmingham.

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Bandit UK’s Chief Executive, Lester Cobrin comments, “I am thankful to be able to work with such a talented and experienced lighting designer. The show is extremely busy with over 1000 programmed cues & 300-400 flash buttons. One song has 223 cues alone! This is my first time working with Production Manager, Mark ‘Wolfie’ Wooliscroft and it has been an absolute pleasure and breath of fresh air. He is a true gent and I am very humble.”

With the intention of giving the stage a “dignified” and elegant look and feel, Halpin has designed three architectural trussing arches upstage, with screen material stretched across them. Halpin also designed 9 custom chandeliers built by Specialz. Each chandelier contains multiple 150W and 300W light bulbs. The combination of these two elements fills out the stage, adding form and depth to the space without being distracting.

The lighting rig is hung across 4 trusses. The moving lights include 28 Martin Professional MAC 2K Profiles, 8 MAC 2K washes and 22 MAC 600s – arranged across all trusses.

Six MAC 300s are positioned at the base of each arch, fulfilling the dual function of illuminating the screens and also toning the surrounding trussing frames.

Rigged inside the arches themselves (manufactured by Total Solutions) are 18 Pulsar Par36 ChromaCan LED fixtures, each containing 80 LEDs and the size of a standard P36 can, which fits neatly inside the 12 inch dimensions of the truss.

For the projections onto each arch, Bandit purchased 3 Catalyst DL2 moving projector fixtures, operated through the lighting console.

On top of the moving and digital light-sources, there’s also a sizable generic rig. It starts with eight 8-lite Moles on the back truss, complete with ColorRam scrollers which are lighting the rear scrim. Eleven 4-lite Moles on a sub-hung truss (that fly in and out towards the end of the set) bring a rockier look as the set builds to an energetic crescendo.

Nine bars of ACLs are spread over the rig, adding some very cool looking ‘beam technology.’ There are also twenty-four 2-lite moles positioned on the front and mid trusses for audience highlighting.

The visuals are completed with a mid-stage centre opening tabtrack system. This carries an 80ft wide red velvet drape. At the end of the show, the tabs close and the tour credits are projected onto the drape which is a very nice touch. On the upstage truss there are two 60ft wide shark-stooth gauzes (black & white).

Bandit is also supplying the entire rigging package as well as 4 FOH Lycian 2K follow spots.

The show is being run on tour by lighting director, Hunter Frith using a WholeHog II console which he and Halpin programmed.
together during the 2 week rehearsal period in Nice. Frith comments, “There are 19 songs, 13 with video content and the screens are removed from the truss arches for the last 3 songs in order to give the stage a completely new look. This works really well. The footage is from Joe’s past, stills also and archived material from past tours.” The Hog is also triggering two Catalyst media servers that stores and plays back all the video content (which was commissioned by Halpin and produced by Anthony Willis).

Bandit’s crew includes Roy Hunt, Martin Garnish and James “Jam” Such - all of whom are enjoying the relaxed and happy touring vibes under the direction of Production Manager, Wolfie. Additional key contributors include Manager, Roger Davies and Tour Manager, Clay Shell.

Audio is being supplied by Concert Sound (FOH engineer is Chris Madden), Transam is providing trucking, Eat Your Hearts Out is supplying fantastic catering and Beat the Street is providing buses.

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Due to Justin Timberlake’s Future Sex/Love tour’s success, a recent HBO documentary was filmed during Timberlake’s back to back showings at Madison Square Gardens in New York City. In preparation for this HBO shoot, Timberlake approached head laser technician Chris Blair, of Laser Design Productions, requesting a heavier laser look for the televised broadcast. Laser Design Productions furthered its effects list with two additional, 3-watt DPSS Yag lasers to the design. This brought the effects list to a total of; four 4-watt DPSS full color air cooled white light diode lasers, two 12 watt red DPSS lasers, two 3 watt micro DPSS KTP NdYag Lasers, six fiber-optic fed remote scanners, eight laser Projectors, fourteen different sources are used to create atmospheric scan effects, over 60 bounce mirrors are positioned in the round stage and trussing, and the laser show is programmed and controlled with Pangolin software.

After two circuits around North America and one through Europe, the tour is headed off to Australia and New Zealand throughout October, November and has recently announced an additional date in Abu Dhabi Dec 6.
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This JOKEs In

Leo Lakits – Video, Grand Potentate
Bryan Beck, Greg Beatrice – Audio,
Ray Hinkel – Site Logistics / Security
(off in the shadows)
It’s hard to imagine a parent who doesn’t give all they can for their children. And if a little ‘showing off’ for them and their friends can be added to the mix, all the better. Such was the case for Bryan Beck this past September. Beck is the Lighting Director for Atlanta based corporate production company Staging Directions. In September his twin daughters, his son, and a friend, all celebrated their birthdays.

Beck had the day off, and there was a good amount of gear in the shop that wasn’t working either, so he decided to put on a little show. The main part of the celebration was for the girls, Hilary, Emily and their long time friend Chelsea Hinkel. His son Ethan, who actually celebrated his 15th birthday the day after the party, was a little too busy to get into the festivities. He was heavily involved in the technical set up of the show, specifically with staging.

The first thing that had to be done in preparation for the event, was the addition of a 60 amp service to the outside of the house to support what Beck was going to use for the gear he was bringing in. That was done a week in advance of the gig. But then, there were the inevitable scheduling issues that invariably plagues producers of Beck’s magnitude.

The first and biggest thing he was looking at was weather. This was an outdoor gig. However, given that the event took place in Buford, Georgia, an area that has had less rain this year than the Sahara Desert, it was a good bet that rain would not be an issue.

“Everything was looking good when I got a call to go do a site survey in Detroit on the Friday before the show (which was the next day). That kind of threw off my schedule,” Beck recalls. “So I made the call to set the stage and the ground support for the lighting rig on Thursday.”

Because the location of the event (the back yard of the family estate known as Beckberg Manor) is sloped, there was a fair amount of landscaping to be done in order for the stage, and more importantly, the lighting towers to sit level.

Once all of that was taken care of, it was time to load the rest of the show. With the aid of his trusty son Ethan by his side, the truck showed up. The stage was a basic rectangle stage for a band with a drum riser. The stage was lit with a “V” shaped truss on the upstage providing back light. In the center of the truss was a circular truss containing a video screen that was projected upon with the DL-2 from the FOH position.

Video was directed by high profile corporate video director, Leo Lakits. “Brian came to me and asked me if I could put together some video content to run while the band was playing.” Lakits told TGJ, “I said ‘Why do that?’ I had lots of content on my iPod so I just brought that and ran it straight into the DL-2.”

Lakits also brought a camera to record the event for future reference (as this gig will no doubt be studied in event production classes for many years to come) and made it possible for Beck to access the camera through the Hog 3 console he used to run the show.

CONTINUED ON page 43
In civil law, the abundance of evidence wins the case, as Jones knows all too well. “If it can be proved that you, the venue, didn’t have a qualified and trained staff with the proper liability issues covered, or that your staff gives improper information or directions, or they do not provide adequate support or response to liability issues and injuries, you open up the venue to a lawsuit.” He continues, “On the other hand, by bringing in a professional staffing agency, with licensed and trained personnel, it covers the venue, promoters, city, county, state, and employees from negligence. In addition, the professional agency will also cover their own personnel with liability insurance.”

“The larger, national providers that are out there now have gotten to the point that they are providing more ‘warm-body’ type positions and that’s not what we’re about,” continues Jones. “We are in the business to cut client expenses while growing the clients overall profit line, and in return, count on their volume business. Staffing companies make their money providing personnel paid per person per hour. EOG are a management-staffing firm who counts on the volume business provided by the client. We meet the specific needs of each event and staff accordingly. We take care of our clients and they take care of us. That is how we have grown the Event Operations Group. We, ‘Makes it happen.’”

The Event Operations Group has built the highest general liability protection program in the industry by far, at 5 million dollars. This actually reduces the liability coverage the venue pays on its insurance by an estimated 60-70 percent. The EOG management in turn, provides its staff with advanced training courses offered every week. Not only does this pay for itself but it also protects the venue, management, and employees from incidental lawsuits. “Consequently, the venue is making more money than what they were making, even hiring out a volunteer type staff,” adds Jones. “In most cases, the Event Operations Group is able to absorb the most valuable volunteer or house staff members, provide uniforms, equipment, management, payroll, and training and still save the venue a ton of money.”

“The best case scenario for EOG, is to come into a venue and provide them their full staff,” Jones continues. “That way we can be accountable to that venue for everything that goes on, from the artists, to the parking lot, to the traffic planning, to the gates, ushers, security…everything, from beginning to end. Our company has the ability to provide everything from transportation and executive protection for the artist to parking and venue event staff,” he explains.

The industry has quickly come to realize how important the services of EOG can be. “This is the best move we every made, by expanding the company, because it’s not just an event staff that you’ve hired, you’ve hired a management firm and it’s not costing you a dime more,” reiterates Jones. “We have created a partnership with the venues and events we serve. We have a vested interest in their overall success.”

Apparently customer service is being redefined by Event Operations Group. They have thrived on word of mouth in the entertainment industry thus far, because they have continually produced. Jones finishes with this, “We invite anyone seeking tour support or venue event staff to give us a call to see how we can create a superior staff to meet your needs.” The ultimate event-quality staffing company, if you will.
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A fiber-optic drape was hung from the upstage truss, which, when set against the trees behind the stage, set a magical image. The truss was hung with a smattering of Martin Mack 2K Profiles, Altman SpectraPARS and Star Strobes. The Key lighting was provided with more LED fixtures set in trees in the FOH area.

Audio was handled by Greg Beatrice, who had his hands full. While the back estate is massive indeed, it is still in a neighborhood, and the neighbors have to be cared for. Beatrice had to walk the thin line between making it loud enough to be heard and creating legal issues. Needless to say, he, being yet another member of this serious, high profile crew that only someone like Beck could attract, did a great job.

Legal issues were more of an issue than just sound and lighting. There was the matter of dozens of cars coming into this quiet bedroom community for something this glorious in scale. Site logistics and security expert, Ray Hinkel, comes from years of experience in covert operations in places no one has ever heard of (and will most likely never hear of again). It is no surprise that Hinkel (if this really is his name) was not available for comment.

At the end of it all, the evening was a tremendous success aided by the incredible sounds of rock band “Sons Of James.” Bryan Beck was crowned the coolest Dad in six of the planets of our solar system. Beck seemed to be unaffected by this. However, when asked if he would do it again next year, he was immediately moved to projectile vomiting and screaming something like, “the mere thought of it all!” between heaves.

Now there’s a man who loves his children!
ADVERTISER’S INDEX

AAA Communications............................................44
Accurate Staging..................................................21
All Access Limo....................................................43
All Access Staging Productions..............................14
Arie Crown Theater.............................................39
Artisan Transport..................................................21
Beaver Guitars.....................................................19
Celebrity Coaches................................................14
Clearwing................................................................7
Coach Quarters Ent. Transportation......................3
Complete Logistics..............................................7
Creative Stage Lighting.........................................4
Crew One............................................................30
Cube Passes........................................................21
D & S Classic Coach.............................................35
Dewitt Stern Group..............................................40
EBTECH - Sound Enhancement.............................43
Entertainment Coaches of America - IBC................
Event Operations Group....................................17
Florida Coach......................................................IBC
In Tune Rentals....................................................8
Jumbocruiser.......................................................33
Le Parc Suites.....................................................15
Leprecon............................................................29
Motor Coach Industries (MCI).........................IFC
Music City Coach...............................................9
Nitetrain Coach....................................................19
Northeastern Production Systems....................FC, 27
On Tour Software................................................7
PLA Media........................................................14
Powersource Transportation...............................31
Precise Corporate Staging....................................19
Prevost...............................................................BC
Production Air Services (PAS)..............................22
Roadhouse Coach...............................................7
Roadshow Trucking............................................43
Robert Mangum Trucking....................................40
Roberts Brothers Coach......................................23
Sammy Bones.......................................................2
Sedan on Demand...............................................10
Sound Image.......................................................36
Soundcheck Nashville.........................................37
Stage & Effects Engineering.................................18
Star Gift Alliance...............................................10
Strictly FX..........................................................36
Superior Coach....................................................40
Syncrolite............................................................11
Taylor Tours.........................................................5
Tyler Truss Systems............................................35
UpLight Technologies............................................19
Ziggy’s Custom Coaches......................................21
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