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FROM THE Publisher



Dear Readers,

What a strange year we are experiencing. January & February were hectic, but despite a strong start up, the season seems to be stalling. Summer tours are late and several companies and touring personnel are scratching their heads in confusion. The industry appears to be searching for a direction. As we look into our crystal balls searching for an answer, the obvious reasons of higher fuel

costs and a recessionary economy do not seem to be the culprits. Rather, it may simply be that we are experiencing a lull before the storm. All indications are that tours are going to be exploding out of the gate soon, but the pre-planning is being kept very quiet and guarded. Do not hold your breath, because this may very well be a shift in scheduling that will catch everyone off guard.

Our cover feature this month features **Linkin Park**, headed by two of our favorite people, Tour Manager Mike Amato & Production Manager Jim Digby. Although they possess very different personalities, these two are a formidable team. As many times as we have been backstage at a show or an event, I am always amused at the way the personalities of the two head "honchos" dictate the mood of the tour. This tour has the earmarks of a tight, professional crew that knows what they are doing and where they are going. That is a tribute to Mike and Jim and their very complementary styles of management.

Also in this issue is a break-out on the **Spice Girls Tour**. Again, great people doing a great job and an innovative Tait set to boot. The old saying that "If it's Tait...it's great" is on display with this show. Hats off to Winky and the boys for another stellar achievement despite the time crunch and hurdles. Some day we should find out what those guys are eating and go on a Tait diet.

Finally, you will note that we have initiated a **new section in the magazine** called a **Market Profile**. This feature will enable us to review select markets on a regular basis and profile various venues, service companies, hotels and support services in different cities. We intend to expand on this type of coverage so that we can identify interesting destinations for events of all types. Our initial goal is to avoid the large markets and look rather to the secondary cities that seldom gain any national or international publicity.

Larry Smith

HOME OFFICE STAFF

ph: 615.256.7006 • f: 615.256.7004

email: info@tourguidemag.com

tourguidemag.com

750 Cowan St • Nashville, TN • USA 37207

Owner: Larry Smith

lsmith@mobileproductionpro.com

Editor: Chris Cogswell

ccogswell@mobileproductionpro.com

Advertising Coordinator / Contributing Writer: Deslee Gonzales

dgonzales@mobileproductionpro.com

Chief Writer/ Photographer: Michael A. Beck

grockit@comast.net

Contributing Writer: Mike Wharton

wharton8317@bellsouth.net

Contributing Writer: Bill Abner

bigolbill@comcast.net

Contributing Writer: Jessi Wallace

jess Wallace@tourguide.com

Art Director / Graphic Designer: Kristin Searcy

kristin.tourguide@gmail.com

ksearcy@mobileproductionpro.com

Webmaster: Michael Stalcup

mstalcup@mobileproductionpro.com

TOUR LINK BOARD OF ADVISORS

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Bobby Schneider, Jay Sendyk, Seth Sheck, Jim Digby,

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ADVERTISING SALES OFFICE

Jessi Wallace • Nashville

jwallace@mobileproductionpro.com

ph: 615.256.7006 • f: 615.256.7004

Luther Beckett • Nashville

luther@mobileproductionpro.com

ph: 615.525.1781 • f: 615.256.7004

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A multi-billion dollar investment in its tourism product has provided Milwaukee with a number of must-see destinations. Riding into town this summer to join the line-up is the Harley-Davidson Museum. Located on a 20-acre parcel of land near downtown Milwaukee, the 130,000-square foot Museum will serve as a showcase for the legendary motorcycles, passionate riders and unforgettable stories that have made Harley-Davidson famous around the world. Special event space is available.

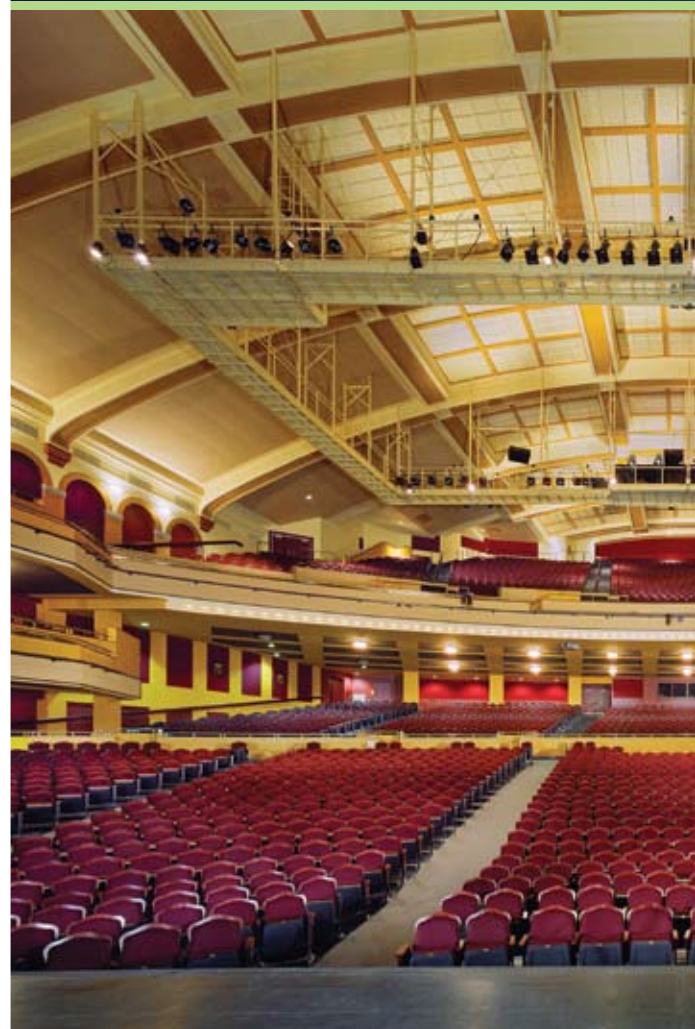
Located just down the street from the Harley-Davidson Museum, the area's number one visitor attraction, Potawatomi Bingo Casino, will complete its \$240 million expansion later this year. The expansion will triple the current footprint of the facility with an additional 500,000 square feet of gaming space, two new restaurants, a center lounge and a food court. Try your hand at lady luck, enjoy dinner at restaurants that range from a sports bar to 4-diamond elegance or take in a Vegas-style show featuring national acts at The Northern Lights Theater.

For additional info. on all Milwaukee has to offer
visit: visitmilwaukee.org
call: 1.800.544.1448

Milwaukee is known as the "City of Festivals." Stop by Henry W. Maier Festival Park along Milwaukee's lakefront to find out why. Here, a procession of ethnic festivals will take you on a global journey, exploring the arts, history, recreation, cuisine, music and genealogy of a new culture nearly every weekend. The grounds are also home to Summerfest, the world's largest music festival. Eleven days of continuous music on 10 grounds stages and the 23,000-seat Marcus Amphitheater offers diverse musical lineups of regional and national entertainment including everything from classic rock and cool jazz to world music and country.

At the heart of all this development is our convention center campus. Made up of three unique venues, the Midwest Airlines Center, Milwaukee Theatre and U.S. Cellular Arena, these state-of-the-art convention facilities are perfect for hosting meetings, assemblies, trade shows, consumer shows, sporting events, concerts or theatrical productions.

More than two dozen museums reflect the city's diversity, offering patrons of any age the chance to explore their areas of interest. Milwaukee's restaurant scene offers diners the chance to experience everything from the traditional to the exotic and the performing arts includes one of the top symphonies in the country, a world-class ballet, two opera companies and cutting-edge as well as classical theater. ☺



Wisconsin

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Welcomes You

Touring production staff and crews who book one of downtown Milwaukee's Wisconsin Center District (WCD) facilities will be pleased at the way the organization's three venues – the Midwest Airlines Center, the Milwaukee Theatre and the U.S. Cellular Arena -- are equipped to handle all kinds of show needs. With a century of professional experience behind them, the WCD staff is prepared to provide seamless service at the highest professional level.

The Midwest Airlines Center

The Midwest Airlines Center, a \$175 million convention center that opened in 1998, is at the heart of the trio's technological capabilities. Though there's rarely a stop for stand-alone stage productions, the Midwest Airlines Center's 37,500 square-foot ballroom is often the site of banquets and assemblies with live entertainment or corporate theater. The ballroom is built and equipped like a concert hall, with over 600 amps of show power, a theatrical-quality sound system, built-in rigging points in the ceiling, and a 10-foot by 14-foot drive-in door. ●

The Milwaukee Theatre

The historic, renovated Milwaukee Theatre is a 4,100-seat theater built within the shell of the 1909 Milwaukee Auditorium. The Auditorium was a model for scores of municipal auditoria built across the country in the mid-20th century, most of which have since been razed. The same fate was considered for the Milwaukee venue, but its historic status and a community interest in a large concert, assembly and theatrical facility, led the WCD to undertake a \$42 million renovation that gutted its flat-floored arena and rebuilt it as a modern "destination" theater.

The "new" Milwaukee Theatre opened in 2003 with sloped, tiered seating, the flexibility to become a smaller house of about 2,500, several large and spectacular ancillary spaces and a host of features and amenities that enhance patron comfort, facilitate move-in and accommodate a wide range of performer and crew needs.

Back-of house functionality is often an afterthought in theater construction, but the Milwaukee Theatre instead offers easily-accessible docks, a continuous flat





floor to the stage, spacious and well-lit backstage areas, and ample production office, rehearsal, catering and storage spaces. Its massive stage and superstructure are equipped with all-new rigging, drapery, lighting and high-performance sound technology supported by over 2,400 amps of show power. Over 20 large and

nicely-appointed dressing rooms offer performers exceptional comfort and privacy. A host of telecommunications services are available, and internet speed is unparalleled – because the whole WCD campus is wired for more signal capacity than many technology firms. ●

U.S. Cellular Arena

Next door is the U.S. Cellular Arena, which opened in 1950 and has undergone some \$15 million in improvements in the past decade. The first venue of its kind built for the needs of television, it later found fame as the MECCA Arena, with a vivid basketball floor design. Today the U.S. Cellular Arena has a capacity of 12,700, or about 9,000 for a typical concert configuration. The U.S. Cellular Arena offers productions drive-on floor access, over 3,600 amps of show electrical power, a 29,200-watt house sound system, restored ice-making ability, refurbished dressing rooms and a carpeted catering or press room.

The U.S. Cellular Arena's raw strength remains one of its most outstanding assets -- the ready-to-rig ceiling boasts a live-load capacity of 450,000 pounds or, as WCD staff phrase it, "enough to hang a tour motorcade of five loaded tractor-trailers and a five-ton merchandise truck."

From excellent in-house catering by Levy Restaurants to detailed knowledge of the three venues and the industry, touring productions who come to the Wisconsin Center District will find the staff easy to work with, highly attentive to detail and always professional. ●

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Milwaukee Theatre



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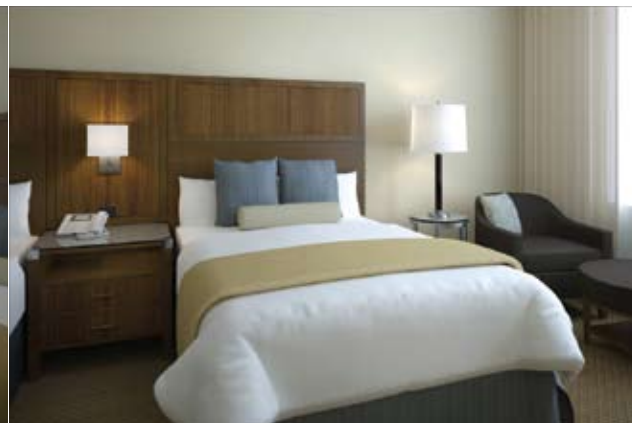
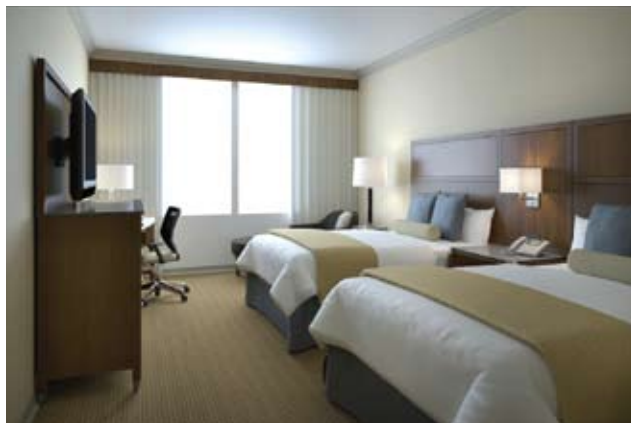


Milwaukee Theatre Interior



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Last August, Hyatt Regency Milwaukee was purchased by Noble Investment Group located in Atlanta, Georgia. The vision of returning it to the icon of downtown Milwaukee has begun with a renovation completion date of Spring 2009!

The renovation taking place has a current renovation budget exceeding \$18 million. Work already in progress includes all new Hyatt signage, new exterior finish, and enhancements to entrances and landscaping. Another exciting feature of the renovation will be a brand new elevator system for guests to expedite travel between the expansive lobby and guestroom area.



In November 2008, work will begin on all guestrooms, guestroom corridors, lobby, restaurant and lounge areas. A complete facelift in guestrooms will occur including new wall vinyl, bedding, furniture, doors, flat screen televisions, telephones, data technology and bathrooms. The rooms will depict

a great style which will be urban casual, yet very comfortable for guests. Guestroom corridors will feature a new décor package to include new carpeting and wall vinyl. Color will be introduced to walls which will liven up the entire atrium area.

A new restaurant/bar combination will become a focal part to our lobby, and will open up the remainder of public area for better guest utilization, comfort, and relaxation. The final plans are being introduced and will take place in late fall 2008 as well.

For additional info. about the project, or to inquire about available dates
contact: Jack Allison
414.270.6065
jallison@hyatt.com

"Now is the time to inquire about open 2009 dates as space is selling fast," stated Jack Allison, CHSP, Director of Sales & Marketing for Hyatt Regency Milwaukee. "The renovation is

being met with great anticipation and excitement, both from local and national clients." ☺



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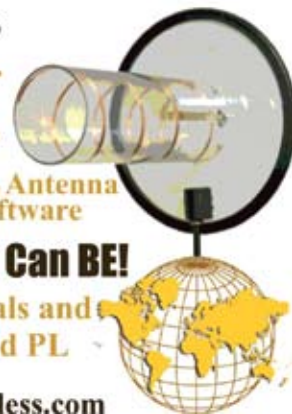
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In recent years, Clearwing has been the primary source most commonly used for the largest and most intricate events being produced anywhere near its Milwaukee hub. In 2005, Clearwing won the contract to provide production labor, support labor, mainstage structures and delay towers at Miller Park for the Miller Brewing 150th Anniversary Big BrewHa, a corporate party and concert for 40,000 people featuring Bon Jovi. Clearwing is also one of the first calls for White House Communications and political campaign event managers. In April of 2008, they provided production services at the Bucyrus plant in Milwaukee for a town hall style meeting with John McCain. Clearwing has also provided production services for the Wells Fargo's annual Client Adviser meeting, Lombardi Golf Classic, and the Milwaukee Urban League events typically held annually at the Midwest Airlines Center.

Clearwing also provides sound, lighting, staging and management services for various fundraisers, corporate parties and general sessions, business theater events, and product reveals in and around the Milwaukee area. Annual clients include Vince Lombardi Charitable Fund and Milwaukee Ballet. Some special event clients include Major League Baseball, GMR Marketing, and The National Football League. As the main equipment supplier to Summerfest- the largest music festival in the country, Clearwing is also very qualified and experienced in the festival arena. ☺



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DIGICO D5 IS FLYING HIGH

With IRON MAIDEN, Somewhere Back In Time

Although it is not unknown for hugely successful bands to have their own aircraft in which to tour the globe, it is highly unusual for the band's lead singer to be the pilot. Yet this is the case with evergreen hard rockers Iron Maiden and, as they begin another major tour, the ultra-compact size of Monitor **Engineer Steve 'Gonzo' Smith's DiGiCo D5 console** means that there is plenty of room on board for it to travel with him.

Touring in a Boeing 757 might seem like the height of rock star cool but, as the band's *Somewhere Back In Time* tour rolls through India, the Americas and Europe, there are certain drawbacks. A major one is that when you are carrying not only the band and 50-strong crew, but also an entire 12 tonne production suitable for venues holding up to 50,000 people, space is at an absolute premium.

Before joining the Maiden crew, Gonzo worked with reggae legends UB40 and it was during this period that he got to know Bob Doyle, who would later go on to join DiGiCo.

So when the D5 was introduced, Gonzo was introduced to it too.

"When I went to work for Maiden, they didn't want to use it at first, largely due to a bad experience they'd had with recording on a different type of digital desk," he says. "But I kept on and I finally talked them into it and they've loved it ever since."



With his D5 recently updated with the latest V4 software, making it even more 'monitors-friendly', Gonzo is running 18 monitor mixes for the six-piece band.

"Maiden are very 'old school'," he says. "The only band member on in-ears is guitarist Adrian Smith. The rest are all on wedges, with sidefills and a number of full mono mixes through speakers placed by the onstage ramps, which the band run around on."

"Bruce (Dickinson, lead vocalist and 757 pilot) also has additional fills at the back of the stage, projecting just a vocal mix forward," he adds. "Of course, wedges are essential for the classic Maiden 'foot on the monitors' pose as well!"

With the band's material being considerably more complex than most non-metal fans give them credit for, Gonzo is taking advantage of the D5's snapshots facility for certain songs, which means he can make major mix changes instantly. "It's really to make things a bit easier for me, but it is a major help," he says.

With the exception of one outboard graphic EQ for drummer Nicko McBrain's drum fills, Gonzo is using just the D5's internal effects, which he's very happy with.

"The effects are very user friendly and sound great, especially the EQ," he says. "The built-in comps and gates also help to save a lot of space, which is crucial on this tour. I have just one small rack with a couple of effects for the guitarists, the receiver for Adrian's in-ears and the EQ for Nicko."

Advantage is also being taken of the D5's excellent audio quality to record shows from it, the multitrack mixes being kept for a range of different purposes, including potential commercial release and putting on the band's web site. The console's advanced gain structure means that a single cable is used to send a full 1:1 multi-channel recording from the D5's MADI port to a computer, which can then be mixed down in the studio at some point in future, as required.

With thousands of fans on the tour, both old and new, taking up Dickinson's infamous exhortations to 'Scream for me', the DiGiCo D5 has become an essential part of the Iron Maiden touring rig.

"The console has been fantastic," says Gonzo. "It's very straightforward to use and very reliable. And if there ever is a minor problem, there's worldwide backup 24 hours a day. You can't really ask for more." ☺

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XTA GIVES YOU EXTRA SAYS Pooch

Nu-metal rap rockers Linkin Park unleashed their third studio album *Minutes to Midnight* in May 2007. It sold more than 600,000 copies in the first week and went straight to the top of the Billboard 200 Charts. However, as their current world tour reminds us, Linkin Park is also a phenomenal live act — and has XTA very much at the heart of their sensational sound.



Linkin Park's tour began back in January 2007 and is scheduled to run until January 2009. They headline Projekt Revolution at the UK's Milton Keynes Bowl on 29 June 2008 and are expected to take in some of this summer's key European festivals, before jetting off to Canada and the US.

The band has been playing sell-out shows to around 15,000 fans a night, although at larger venues in Asia, for example, the crowd has swelled to a whopping 40,000.

The PA design includes a big front hang of Adamson Y18s and T21 subs, while the side hangs consist of Y10s and Spektrix. But the variation in venue size means that a massive

amount of this equipment needs to be carried — 24 Adamson Y18s, 16 T21 subs, 48 Y10s, as well as 28 Spektrix boxes.

The man responsible for Linkin Park's incredible live sound is none other than legendary FOH engineer, Ken 'Pooch' Van Druten. He is no stranger to full on rock, having engineered KISS for many years, and knows full well that XTA will give him just what he needs. For Linkin Park, he is using nine XTA DP448s and two DP224s to process the loudspeaker system and he is clearly a big fan of XTA. "I have used XTA crossovers and EQs for years, for many different bands," he reveals. "It always works well.

"I have used different types of processors from all around the world. But XTA always sounds the best. The combination of XTA processors, Lab. gruppen amplifiers and Adamson transducers is my dream PA — it just sounds fantastic!"

So what does Pooch like most about XTA products? "The way they sound," he says. "That's all I'm interested in. The band has no idea what gear I'm using to make them sound good. They trust me completely. And if I've made the choice to use it, then they know they're getting the best."

Linkin Park's fans also know good sound quality when they hear it. Some have even created websites dedicated

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to the celebrated Linkin Park sound — lplive.net is a good example.

Fans also leave comments on Pooch's personal blog (poochblog.evilentertainment.net). For example, on 28 February 2008, Astat wrote: "I'd just like to say I appreciate all the work you do, the live recordings. You mix sound awesome and have actually gotten better with time."

The Linkin Park *Minutes To Midnight* World Tour will continue to use the DP448s and DP224s until 2009. Beyond that, XTA will be the vital tool for the systems that Pooch designs for his other clients.

With two or four fully balanced inputs and up to eight fully balanced outputs, the 4 Series set a new standard in terms of performance, flexibility and ease of use. The DP448, in line with the rest of the series, has a completely new processing platform, running at a native sample rate of 96kHz. This provides a bandwidth of over 30kHz and a dynamic range in excess of 116dB. The range uses high-performance, 24-bit converters on the inputs and outputs. ☺

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XL VIDEO

Celebrates 10 Years of Westlife

XL Video supplied video equipment and crew for Westlife's "Back Home" tour, celebrating 10 years as a pop

phenomenon.

The live show – one of the most dynamic and visually exciting of their careers so far – has been designed and directed by William Baker.

Westlife shows have always had a strong video element, and this one was no exception, with 7 Stealth Mk2 LED screens being instrumental in the look and feel of the show, bringing, texture, depth, movement and colour to every area of the stage.

Custom video playback ran throughout

the show, all of it commissioned by Baker and produced by Blink TV. The tour was produced by Production North and production managed by Karen Ringland, with XL Video's Phil Mercer project managing.

Mercer comments, "Westlife have toured prolifically for the last 10 years, and it is always a good challenge keeping the look of the show fresh and varied from one year to the next".

Downstage there was a curved section of Stealth measuring 27 modules wide by 8 high, which flew in and out and was used for an innovative video reveal at the top of the show. This sequence was carefully crafted in collaboration with LD Baz Halpin, so the video content and lighting worked seamlessly in a gradually reveal of the band standing behind the screen.

Upstage, near the back of the 'W' shaped stage set, were 2 portrait formatted Stealth

surfaces measuring 13 modules high by 7 wide, angled in a 45 degree V. To each side of these were a total of 4 landscape Stealth panels, all measuring 9' x 7' modules and in 3:2 aspect ratio, which flew in and out through the performance.

The Stealth was used almost exclusively for showing VT playback material. I-MAG appeared on the central curved screen just once, during the unplugged section of the show. This was in black and white – to contrast with the generally very rich colouration throughout the rest of the performance – and the screen was divided into 4 sections, each showing a tight head shot of Nicky, Shane, Kian and Mark.

The live camera mix was directed by Billy Robinson. XL supplied four Sony D50 cameras, which were positioned one at FOH, one in the pit on track & dolly and two off in the wings of the audience. Robinson cut the mix using a GV Kayak switcher, and this was beamed up onto two side 14' x 10' screens each fed by a Barco SLM12 projector from XL.

All the playback footage was stored on 2 Doremi hard drives and triggered by MIDI timecode from the backline, controlled via Barco Events Manager. This was programmed and formatted for all the screens by Richard Turner during production rehearsals at Lite Structures in Wakefield.

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ON THE ROAD

With All Access Coach Leasing

by DESLEE GONZALES

Life doesn't always play out the way we plan, and for most of us, it almost always doesn't. Three months after Eric Blankenship moved to Nashville in 1992 for a record deal, he instead found himself on the road selling swag for Ricky Skaggs. Then, after getting a license to help drive while selling shirts for Lari White and Tim McGraw he decided to drive full time. In 1998, his plans changed yet once again when he decided to come off the road and into the office. At the company, he had just been on the road driving for, Blankenship began leasing and handling drivers. It was then he met Jim Borelli, the head mechanic.



Eric Blankenship



Jim Borelli

Borelli, originally from Indiana, is known for taking great pride in doing things right the first time; people really admire and love that, especially the drivers. Speaking of the talent of his partner, Blankenship says of Borelli, "Jim is a mechanical genius. He has been fixing things for over twenty years and it shows in his knowledge of seeing the problem and finding a solution. I've yet to find anything he can't fix except for a 95 Chevy truck on a Friday afternoon at 5:00

pm., but that's another story...". In 2002, Blankenship found himself at a window of opportunity and decided to start his own bus company. Teamed up with Borelli, 7 management buses and a \$5,000.00 dollar credit card, the two started All Access Coach Leasing located in Gallatin, Tennessee.

Co-owners Blankenship and Borelli head up the office as President and Lead Mechanic accordingly. Blankenship handles sales and leasing and Borelli is in charge of maintenance. While John Hill heads up Operations, you will find Pat Blankenship managing the office and Kay Thurman handles driver compliance and helps takes care of all the general office duties. Jack

Blankenship fills the role of Parts Manager and Adam Foster serves as their mechanic. All Access also has a quality on-site maintenance and repair service as well as a full licensed and bonded cleaning staff.

The coach company offers Band buses, Star buses, and Crew buses. Their coaches are equipped with six, nine or twelve bunks and they also offer slide-outs. A handful of the coaches are even built with full custom bedrooms or convertible bedrooms. They also offer trailers

"We strive to have the cleanest, best maintained and best driven coaches in the industry!"



in a variety of sizes and come stock with E-track and ramp doors. Presently, the company has 41 buses ranging from 1998-2008, 17 trailers and a twenty two passenger day coach perfect for company trips, promotions and radio tours . They plan to add four new coaches in 2008. They not only do wraps, but also offer their service with the conversion process to help anyone wanting to build and lease coaches or alternatively to have for private use.

When asked about their clients, Blankenship boasts, "We have a wonderful client base. A lot of our customers are like family. We do about sixty percent country, forty percent rock-pop, comedians, Christian music and corporate stuff." Some of their wonderful clients include: Trace Adkins, Martina McBride, Larry the Cable Guy, Josh Turner, Rodney Carrington, Jason Aldean, Santana, Ricky Skaggs, Billy Currington, George Thorogood, Denver and the Mile High Orchestra, Sara Evans, and Black Stone Cherry.

Blankenship also boasted about the drivers at All Access, who he says are "one of the key ingredients in this recipe." They have a terrific group of drives who make doing a safe and proper job priority. Having only the best, most professional drivers is vital to this company.

It is no wonder All Access Coaches has continued to serve so many great music artists; they pride themselves on excellent customer service. Blankenship explained that his team understands that this industry does not include a regular 8-5 workday. Not only are they accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but they also give out their home numbers and personal cell phone numbers to everyone. The company takes a hands on approach in the coach leasing industry and takes great pride in maintaining their equipment to ensure it to be at the very highest quality and safety standards. Their website assures the public that "All Access Coach is large enough to handle all your leasing needs, yet small enough to be accessible to each of our clients. Our goal is to make every travel experience the most comfortable possible. We strive to have the cleanest, best maintained and best driven coaches in the industry!" ☺

allaccesscoach.com



PYROTEK SPECIAL EFFECTS

Adds A Blast to the Maiden Tour

Pyrotek Special Effects Tours with Iron Maiden

The *Somewhere Back in Time World Tour* was inspired by Iron Maidens' recently released DVD, *Live After Death*. As Iron Maiden's tour began, their USA and UK dates were selling out at a rapid pace; some shows sold out weeks in advance. Fans have been flocking to get tickets as the band will be touring to a number of cities which they have not played at for many years.

In order to bring back some of the old classic looks with a touch of new effects; Vice President of Pyrotek Special Effects, Lorenzo Cornacchia worked with Dick Bell (*Iron Maiden's Production Manager*) to incorporate the pyrotechnics into the show design. Cornacchia explained "*The request from the band was to implement a fuller and thicker look of effects while adding in some new aspects of pyro to the show*". Referencing prior touring films from the 1980's, Cornacchia collaborated with Bell to get a feel for the original design, to create, not only a replication, but continue to provide fresh and innovative ideas into the show. "*The Pyro was intended to not only be apparent but accent the band. Between the selection of songs played and the stage set we really focused on re-acquainting the classic 80's look. The legendary Egyptian theme from the PowerSlave Tour brought back some great memories and when I had the chance to watch it live, I was pleased to say that this was arguably one of the best shows I've witnessed of Maiden,*" commented Cornacchia. Lighting Designer, Robert Coleman was intricate in synchronizing the lighting to punctuate the pyrotechnics, ensuring that the effects appeared predominant and not washed-out.

Pyrotek came on board to start the second leg of the North American tour. Shooter Keith Maxwell, along with pyrotechnicians, Renato Salmon, Gary Bishop and Eric Mucho were the crew at hand that implemented the design into fruition. Working together with stage Manager Bill Conte, Pyrotek became involved during the last three shows of the first leg in Los Angeles, New York and Toronto. Pyrotek, along with the band, the entire 50-man crew and the 12 tons of equipment and stage set, will continue the North American tour when it kicks off in San Antonio, Texas May 21st at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater. The tour runs through to June 21st, closing off at the Bell Center in Montreal, Quebec. After completion of the North American tour they will then transition into the European leg.

The design of *Number of the Beast* demonstrates Pyrotek's infamous propane Dragons into the show with transition of asymmetrical chases and all fire cues igniting the stage and exhilarating the audience. Aside from

the implementation of the propane flamed Dragons within *Aces High*, the tour's introductory song, leads in from a video intro which starts off with transitions of classic military footage. The opening guitar riffs lead into a 1 x 25 all fire cue of gerbs that ignite from the upstage, stage right and left, while fireballs erupt on the downstage edge. *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* begins with a succession of air bursts while low lying smoke flows from the upstage to down stage edge towards the floor level audience cre-



ating and eerie atmosphere. The design for *Powerslave* starts off with 1 X 25 gerb fans that ignite across the entire upstage, stage right, and stage left. Involving the band in relation to the effects, a powerful red-flame wall located stage right accents lead singer Bruce Dickenson as he appears on stage. The look



has Dickenson emerge through the flaming wall which also incorporates two fire balls cued on either side creating a fuller look to the pyrotechnics. Also included for this act are a number of all-fire Dragon sequences. The original stage effects for Eddie, (a colossal mummy from their past tours), were unable to fit on the Iron Maiden Boeing 757; flown by pilot and lead singer Bruce Dickenson for the first leg. As a result, Iron Maiden will be bringing Eddie along, (featured on the *Live After Death* DVD for the 2008 summer tour) with the intensions to incorporate additional effects built into Eddie's facade. The final song *Hallowed Be Thy Name*; implements red flash with crackle mines cued to a chunky rhythm that closes the show. A 15-foot tall *Cyborg Eddie* appears for the song *Iron Maiden* after 20 X 20 gerbs fill the entire stage. With the recent addition of Pyrotek Special Effects, the tour thus far has created an anticipated buzz among fans worldwide, as the bands return has been a huge success. ☺

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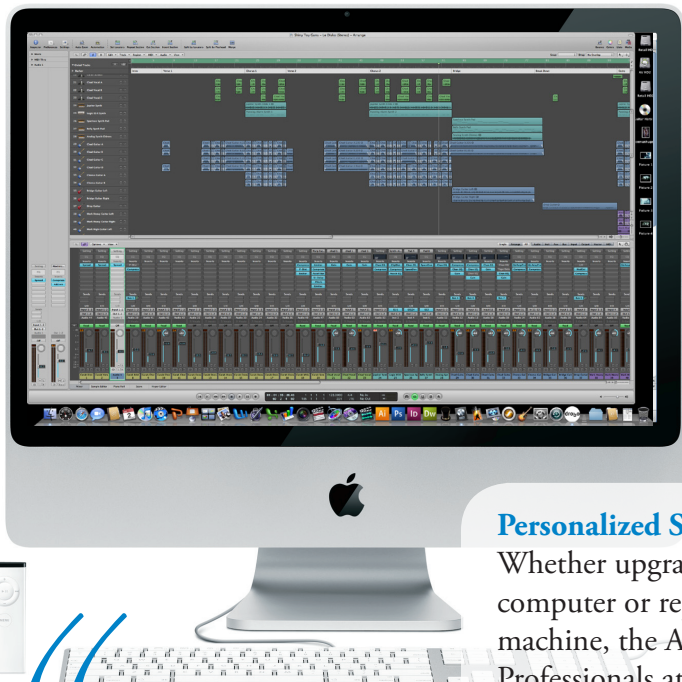
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"No matter where I am or what I need, I know that I can call MacSpecialist and have their attention and an immediate solution," said Paul Bradley. "Additionally, in the rare instance that they are unable to provide what I need, they'll find someone who can." Bobby Schneider adds, "MacSpecialist provides a first rate product coupled with incredible customer service and an understanding of urgency, which is an irreplaceable asset in the touring world."



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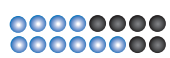
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LINKIN PARK

by MICHAEL WADDELL



LP IS ALL OVER THE MAP

Often when working a show backstage, one is overwhelmed by the pride crews take in their work. It should be noted that this is not pride in the boastful or vain nuance, rather a feeling of gratification on a difficult job well done night after night. *mobile Production* monthly often witnesses the aura of pride and being amongst a family when we are submerged backstage. Seldom however, are we struck by the sense of ownership of a tour within a crew, which might explain why there are a number of award winners in this crew.

This is not to say there isn't a hierarchy that exists, there is and must be on any tour. Notably, everyone backstage attributes the overwhelming positive vibration to the six very young men that make up Linkin Park. It's frequently said 'shit runs downhill,' well, so does humility.

An army, we have heard, moves on its belly. Tours of course, move on trucks. Linkin Park rolls 500,000 pounds of gear down the road in 11 trucks, including a mammoth 72' x 46' multi-platform stage. The stage, built by Accurate Staging, was designed with a 360 all-purpose-play in mind. There were four primary levels and a fifth level was flown in mid-show. At the lowest point the stage deck was 5' off the ground, at the highest point it was 12.6'. There were two 8' x 10' risers over scissor lifts which rested at a deck height of 8.5' on which stage left were drums and stage right was the DJ. Interestingly, you will find no skirting around the bottom of the stage. Instead, lighting is utilized in making the actual structure a part of the show.

Initially, the highest points of the stage were built with a safety rail. Show designer and *Tour Guide Magazine's* 2003 and 2005 Lighting Designer Top Dog AJ Pen told us, "Mike Shinoda (Linkin Park



Prod. Coordinator Huge Remple, General Jim "George Patton" Digby (Production Manager) and Production Utilitarian Man-Maurice Montalvo

founder) saw this and said, we don't need those. We don't fall off the front of the stage, why would we fall off anywhere else? So off they came."

Not only was the stage innovative, the design process was unique. Initially Pen showed the band a design using a 60' x 40' stage with side and rear elevation. Shinoda wanted something 'more exciting' so Pen and Stephen Pollard did more rendering. Six weeks prior to the start of the tour they were no closer to a set. So, while in rehearsals at Third Encore in North Hollywood, CA., *Tour Guide Magazine's* 2004 Production Manager Top Dog, Jim Digby, Stage Manager Ethan Merfy and Pen bombarded Shinoda with Napkin CADing, which prompted Shinoda to come in with a sketch that looked remark-

ably close to the end product.

"It was the first time in my career," said Pen, "I'd worked with an artist who was so involved in the design process. Mike had very specific ideas for what he wanted the stage to look like including visuals being

drawn from the movies Transformer and Tron as well as F14 Jets." The challenge in designing a show where the artist is so involved, Pen exclaimed was "just getting inside his (Shinoda's) head." In the end, there are visual elements of an F14 and Transformer when looking at the stage. It appears Pen succeeded in getting inside Shinoda's head.

The next thing to notice are the five 14' x 16' Stealth video screens hovering over and parallel to the stage like spokes on a bicycle wheel. Each screen is suspended in the air about 20' over the stage by four high-speed chain master motors provided by Show Distributions. Element Labs by VER provided the screens. They fly in and out and at a number of different

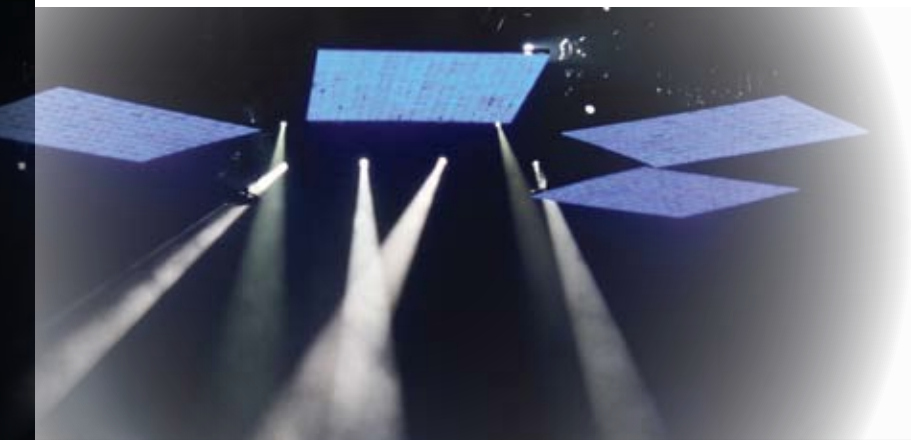


angles throughout the show, or they virtually disappear when parallel to the stage. This is done by Motion Controller Alexandre Blais, who had 25 video screen cues. The front pair of motors on the screens were beam trolley drive wheels whilst the rear trolleys were chase trolleys. On either side of the stage were Fast-Fold video screens.

Christie Lights provided the lighting gear which consisted of Martin

MAC700's, MAC2000 Wash's, MAC2000 Profile's MAC600NT's and a pair of DF-50 Hazer's plugged into a switch dimmer. The lighting rig hung on 36 points at a total weight of 54,000 lbs on the main grid. Hanging from around the video screens were Martin MAC2000 Profiles, MAC2000 Wash's and Atomic3000 Strobes.

The overall lighting design was straightforward rock 'n' roll. There



Alexandre Blais – Motion Controls

were often beautiful looks, and the artist(s) were always well lit. Unfortunately, this is not something that can be said about every tour. At no time did the video aspect overtake the show. In essence, the video and lighting melded together wonderfully. AJ Pen did a beautiful job of making this show, though big (after all 11 trucks 500,000 lbs. is big) look absolutely huge!

These aspects of the show, from conception to completion, took three weeks and were a collaborative effort between Nocturne Production, Accurate Staging, VER, Christie Lights and Show Distribution.

While on a brief stint with INXS, Production Manager Jim Digby had an occasion to hear the Adamson PA boxes. "These Adamson boxes," explained Digby, "created a power in the sound unlike anything I had ever heard. There is more mid-range punch and clarity than I had ever experienced before." *Tour Guide Magazine's* 2006 & 2007 FOH

Engineer Top Dog Kenneth "Pooch" Van Druten subsequently went to hear the boxes on a Van Halen show and was equally impressed.

The challenge for Digby was that no US vendor at that time had enough of the Adamson product in their inventory. The manufacturer worked directly with Pooch and Digby to find a vendor who was willing to get behind the product and provide an A-list crew. At the top of both Digby and Pooch's wish lists was Audio Analysts; due to each of their past experiences with excellent AA crews.



Kenneth "Pooch" Van Druten – FOH

"We lucked out," said Digby, "in fact when AA came on board they supplied us with their A-List team who had just finished a leg with Bruce Springsteen and whose work ethic is 100 percent." However, Audio Analysts did not have the Adamson

gear desired. Enter Jesse Adamson, the Adamson in Adamson System Engineering, who brokered a deal between Audio Analysts and Atomic Pro Audio. Atomic brought to the table the coveted boxes and one audio crewmember.

In all, the tour was supplied with the following Adamson gear: M-15 monitor wedges, SX18 side fills, Y18 and Y10 (Main Cluster), T21 (Flown Subs), Spektrix (Center Cluster), Y10 (Side Hang), Spektrix/ Spektrix Wave's (Far Side Hang), and T21 (Stack Sub). Also used were Lab Gruppen FP10000 and FP7000 Amplifiers, and XTA 448 Processors. The result was... loud! But it didn't hurt. In fact, it was brilliant! "That," stated Digby, "is 100 percent Pooch, team audio and 100 percent this box."

"Further, the success of the tour needs to be equally attributed to the core backline team who have been with LP since the beginning of their second record," added Digby. "This includes newcomer wardrobe mistress Susie Steadman and everyone else in the current configuration of the crew who come to work everyday ready and happy to provide Linkin Park with consistent production success, that positive attitude is 100% led by our Stage Manager Ethan Merfy and the great teams provided by our vendors."



This crew, who takes such pride in their work and feel as though they are, in part, owners of the show, put together one hell of a tour. Everyone's attitudes were positive and energy was vibrant. But wait, it doesn't end there.

If you are Kenneth "Pooch" Van Druten, you have one long-assed day. Every evening's performance is recorded, mixed, and ready for distribution three to five days after the performance. There are no overdubs; one will receive a live performance

of the show they attended with warts and all, if any.

Pooch arrives at the venue early in the morning, sits behind a Digidesign Venue Profile and mixes the show recorded on Pro Tools the previous night. He then goes to front of house to tune the speakers, returns to his secluded room in the bowels of the building to conclude his producer / engineering job. Only to go back to front of house to mix sound for the current evening's performance, while

at the same time recording work he must address tomorrow morning. Whew, it makes your head spin.

The result of this is Linkin Park Live (at your home town). For about \$10, a blank CD is sold with directions to a website and a user name and password from all of the merchandise tables. As mentioned, three to five days later, the public can then download the performance they were witness to. What a wonderful way to keep CD's viable.



Currently, Digby and his crew are preparing to take this show on the road in Europe with an entirely new configuration. *mPm* is curious to see what they come up with. In addition to the inherent issues with touring overseas, the routing is, shall we say... challenging. While on the subject of routing, Mike Amato, *Tour Guide Magazine's* 2004 and 2005 Tour Manager Top Dog Winner, has more than a little work cut out for him getting the band party where they need to be. ☺

LP CREW

Band: Mike Shinoda, Chester Bennington, Brad Delson, Joe Hahn, Dave "Phoenix" Farrell, Rob Bourdon
 Management: Mad Mac Entertainment / Rob McDermott, Ryan Demarti, Trish Evangelista
 Business Management: Gudvi, Sussman, & Oppenheim/ Jonathan Schwartz
 Booking Agency/Agent: Artist Group International/Michael Arfin

TEAM PRODUCTION

Tour Manager: Mike Amato
 Production Manager: Jim Digby
 Stage Manager: Ethan Merfy
 Production Coord.: Hugo Rempel
 Tour Accountant: Jeff Mauss
 FOH Engineer: Kenneth "Pooch" Van Druten
 Monitor Engineer: Kevin "Tater" McCarthy
 DJ Tech: Jason Lemiere
 Guitar Tech for Brad: Sean Paden
 Drum Tech/Carpenter: Brad Stonner
 Bass Tech: Ted Regier
 Pro Tools Tech: Dylan Ely
 Guitar Tech for Mike: Kurt Schneck
 FOH Audio Systems: Brett Stec
 Monitor Systems Tech: Paul White
 Audio: John Bruey, Rick Procopio, John Brotherton, Evan McElhinney
 Lighting & Visuals Director: AJ Pen
 Lighting Lead: Tim Solar
 Lighting Programmer: Geoff Froot
 Lighting Rigger: Mark Abra
 Lighting: Glen Rupert, Mike Kapler, Erin Charlton, Mike Hall,
 Motion Control: Alexandre Blais
 Carpenters: Angel Aguirre, Samuel Harrington, Frank Medina
 Video: Stanley Twitchell, Nelson Funk, Omar Montes, Scott Grund, Matt Howe
 Utilitarian Man: Maurice Montalvo
 Lead Rigger: Michael Dunn
 Dressing Rooms: Susie Steadman
 Catering: Michael Glazer, Jeremy

Criscitiello, Natalie Vermiglio, Zach Rudland
 Security Director: Marcel Mathews
 Security: Jerry Devorak, Kenneth Payne, Larry Echols
 Merchandise: Jill McCutchan, Ryan Bowman
 SLO: Zach Niles
 Bus Commanders: Harry Wing, Keith Kaminski, Mike Hall, Bill Douglas, Tom Torrisi
 Truck Drivers: Jody Winslett, Petey Henke, Robert Lenzen, Mike Meadows, Carl Roberts, George Wissert, Anna Hatch, Herb Combs, Terry Christiansen, Leslie Washington, Dan Bergman

TOUR SUPPORT / VENDORS

Lighting Company: Christie Lights
 Set Company: Accurate Staging
 Radio Communications: AAA Communications
 Freight Forwarding: EFM Management, Inc.
 Video Company: Nocturne Productions
 Automation: Show Distribution
 Audio Company: Audio Analysts
 PA: Atomic Pro Audio
 Credentials: Cube Services
 Catering: Culinary Underground
 Band Security: SPI International
 Venue Security: NPB Companies, Inc.
 Bus Companies: Roberts Brothers
 Coach Leasing, Four Seasons
 Coach Leasing
 Trucking: Upstaging
 Merchandise: BandMerch
 Crew Travel: Protravel International / Kathryn Pechenik
 Band Travel: Entertainment Travel / Nick Gold
 Insurance: Dewitt Stern Group
 Radio Promotions: Ron Cerrito
 Publicity: BWR Public Relations
 Record Company: Warner Brothers





PICTURED LEFT: (l to r, top to bottom)

Kevin "Tater" McCarthy – MON

Jeff Mauss – Tour Accountant

Brett Stec – FOH Audio Systems

Dylan Ely – Pro-Tools Tech

Sean Paden – Gtr. Tech (Brad)

Mike Amato – Tour Manager

PICTURED BELOW:

Nocturne Video Tech – Omar Montes

On top of video screen is Nocturne Video Tech – Scott Grund

PICTURED OPPOSITE PAGE: (l to r, top to bottom)

Tim Solar – Team Lighting Lead, Geoff Frood – Team Lighting Programmer

Maurice Montalvo "In the Hat" – Utilitarian Man

Ethan Merfy – Stage Manager

Susie Steadman – Dressing Rooms

Skip Twitchell – Team Video



ADAMSON SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

Thinking *Inside* the Box

by BILL ABNER

In a time when most companies are trying to branch out and diversify their base, Adamson Systems Engineering is focused on building quality products delivered to a specific market. Namely, products directly focused on the touring and festivals market. Providing the loudspeaker systems for Linkin Park's high profile *Projekt Revolution'08* tour is just one example of their products being used in a specific niche market. While they acknowledge that there are other opportunities out there-and they do sell their products in those other markets-Adamson designs and builds products primarily for live sound reproduction in touring applications.



When asked how that focus came about, Director of Marketing and Sales, Jesse Adamson, son of company Founder, President, and CEO, Brock Adamson, explains that it happened as

a natural progression. "My father was a live sound mixing engineer with Rocky Mountain Sound, and my Grandfather was always into engineering and manufacturing. When "my old man" (Brock) realized that existing speaker boxes of the day weren't up to the task for touring and live sound applications, he relied on his sense of manufacturing to begin designing boxes that would fit the purpose. It developed more out of a need from a sound company perspective than from some small contractor-based organization." The byproduct of that nexus is a company with a solid idea of who it is and where it is going, as well as a good understanding of its position in the marketplace.

Adamson designs, develops and manufactures as many as possible of the components needed for its speaker systems right in its own 37,000 square foot plant outside Toronto. That alone sets it apart from most speaker builders, marketers, and manufacturers. From the 5/8" Baltic birch cabinets themselves, to its patented rigging and flying system, and even its own wave guides and transducers, Adamson believes that its ability to provide

quality components designed and built to its own exacting standards sets it apart from other big name speaker manufacturers. Jesse Adamson explains: "We are not limited by off-the-shelf products and standards by which most of the big name manufacturers are limited. We don't have to pull from those same component selections that everyone else does, so it allows us to achieve higher levels of control and consistency in our product lines."

One only has to look at the many patents and innovations in speaker technology devised by the Canadian firm to understand their point. For example, Adamson was among the first speaker manufacturers to develop and capitalize upon, line array technology. It was the pioneer of Kevlar cone technology, and many users agree that their "Shooter" array modeling and configuration software is at the top of the class in line array calculators. Additionally, its transducer innovations has set it apart from the norm by allowing much higher power and higher SPL where it was previously unattainable with any level of consistent quality. "One of our main focuses at Adamson is the real technology *inside* the box," adds Jesse.

While Adamson is still a small, family-run business (around 50 employees in its Port Perry, Ontario facility), their influence is felt worldwide. Its foot is firmly planted in European markets from Belgium and France, to Germany, Italy, Switzerland and The Netherlands.

It has further capitalized on that success by opening Service Centers throughout Europe designed to cut delivery times to the end user by stocking limited amounts of products, and a select group of replacement parts.

The young company attributes much of its overseas success, again, to quality. The European market, by Adamson's reckoning, hasn't been as susceptible to the allure of big name badges like JBL, EV, or Meyer as has been true in the US and Canada. "The European Market was easier to break into for us because they seemed to be looking for products that would meet their specific needs instead of just reacting to the marketing of the larger and more well advertised products in North America, just because they are a big name," explains the scion of the Adamson Empire. That edge transmits and carries over to the European touring and festival season as well. Already this year Adamson is on board for several major summertime festivals in Germany and other European countries, and it looks to be a busy summer for the company's systems techs in addition to their Linkin Park commitment.

Looking to the future, Adamson is committed to continuing to build innovative touring systems, by keeping its ear to the ground so to speak, and by delivering a high quality, well designed product, intended to keep the touring world's

continued on 50

On the Road with:

Linkin Park World Tour

Nelly Furtado "Get Loose" Tour
USA & Canada

Keith Urban "Love, Pain & the
Whole Crazy" Tour, Australia

Peter Gabriel "Warm Up
Summer 2007" Tour, Germany

"Project Revolution Tour"
with **Linkin Park**, **My Chemical
Romance**, **Placebo**...

V-Fest Toronto 2006
with **The Flaming Lips**, **MUSE**,
The Strokes...
V-Fest Vancouver 2007
with **The Killers**, **Hot Hot Heat**,
Metric...

Les Vieilles Charrues Festival
2006 & 2007
with **Peter Gabriel**, **Arcade Fire**,
Brian Ferry... France

Gurtenfestival 2006 & 2007
with **Avril Lavigne**, **Scissor
Sisters**... Switzerland

Austin City Limits 2007
Austin Venture & AT&T Blue
Room Stages, USA

Skanderborg Festival 2007
with **Snoop Dogg**, **Peter
Gabriel**, **Status Quo**... Denmark

Gigi D'Alessio "Made in Italy"
European Tour

O Rappa, **Chiclete com
Banana**, **Ivete Sangalo**
Brazilian Tour

Die Fantastischen Vier
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ATOMIC PRO AUDIO

Filling The Gap In The Northeast...

by MICHAEL WADDELL

While covering Linkin Park's All Over the Map tour, *mobile Production monthly* learned that Production Manager Jim Digby and FOH Engineer Kenneth "Pooch" Van Druten wanted to use Adamson sound boxes. As it turned out, the challenge became finding a vendor with enough of the desired gear.

With the assistance of Jesse Adamson, the tour was able to combine Rutland, VT based Atomic Pro Audio to supply the speaker system and Colorado Springs, CO based Audio Analysts, who supplied the crew, consoles, recording package and touring expertise.

mPm had the delightful privilege to speak with Kevin Margolin, founder of Atomic Pro Audio. Those who have spent any time talking with Margolin will attest to his warm, friendly demeanor. Margolin's professionalism and intense desire to "do what's right" in business came through in the phone interview we had, and the hour conversation was full of insights and experiences of a seasoned professional.

Atomic Pro Audio came together more organically rather than with any real preconceived ideas. In 1987 Margolin found himself doing sound for bar bands in and around the New York and Vermont area. "I was just mostly doing this for fun," said Margolin. After three or four years, a friend of his gave him some national promoter rep work as a production manager. After years as a successful production manager, running theater, field, and arena shows, he began looking at sound reinforcement as an additional business. "The PM gig really built the sound company,"

admits Margolin. Business came along to the point where in 1994 Margolin decided that he along with his wife and business partner, Kristin had to do it fulltime.

Since then Atomic has grown into a full-fledged production company supplying lighting, backline, staging, video and much more to a diverse client base in the Northeast Region. As the sound reinforcement focus was met with other emerging production needs, Atomic Pro Audio adapted.

Operating out of a rural area, a growing Atomic faced logistical challenges when equipment was scarce. But as the company's growing client base began demanding that additional elements of production be integrated with sound, Margolin began to weave lighting, backline, staging and video into operation. Able to send a high quality production anywhere within the regional footprint of the Northeast, Atomic became a new choice for the region's entertainment, collegiate, public and corporate communities.

Atomic has several employees who have been with them since nearly the beginning. "I'm really fortunate to have an experienced and versatile staff. I feel a tremendous loyalty towards the people here," Margolin shared. "We're proud that we began offering health care to employees last year. We want this to be a great place to work." Atomic has a heavy office staff, much to the clients benefit. There are six fulltime people capable of discussing technical issues by telephone. With operational and technical tweaks often being time-critical realities of day-to-day operations, Margolin is always looking to fill gaps in efficiently managing more than

20 full-time employees. To aid this balance they recently added a second position to deal with the logistics of gear. "I believe the customer has to come first. If the phone rings, they need to know that they will get a live person on the other end at least 99% of the time and their concerns or needs will be handled."

"One of the challenges we faced was outgrowing smaller customers as the business was building." In Atomic's effort to keep old contacts strong while building new ones, Margolin makes it his business to reach out and touch potential new customers who often have challenging requirements. "We still do about 50 different colleges (many of which are all-in jobs), lots of festival and arena work and corporate gigs." In addition to that, Atomic has installed audio and video systems for theaters, high schools and churches throughout New England and New York. A satellite office in Syracuse, New York was opened in 2000 to better serve western New York customers.

When the call came from Jesse Adamson to supply sound reinforcement to Linkin Park's national tour Margolin admits, "I thought this might be more than we could do. He told me that Digby had a desire to work with Audio Analysts, who didn't have the Adamson gear, and Jesse began putting the two of us together. Adamson helped with the packaging. Audio Analysts was great to deal with, I mean they were fantastic on every level. They were on time with everything and the communication was great. It was truly a wonderful experience. I would be open to another arrangement between anybody with a similar need. We have a nice package for touring." In fact, they still have some gear out on the Linkin Park tour's European leg beginning in May.

Looking 10 years down the road Margolin said, "We'll continue to adapt and grow as our customer's requirements change, and we're built for that." ☺

Contact information

Atomic Pro Audio
112A Quality Lane
Rutland, VT. 05701
P: 802.775.5550

mailto: Kevin@AtomicProAudio.com
visit: AtomicProAudio.com



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An Interview With MARTIN KELLEY OF CHRISTIE LITES

by MIKE WHARTON

Martin Kelley is a happy man these days. Between handling the pre-production line up of bands for the Virgin Festival, gearing up the Feist tour and Linkin Park's Project Revolution while continuing to service his customers in the Canadian Film and Television Market, the account executive for Christie Lites wants to share the good news, "It's going to be a busy summer."

Mobile Production Monthly was able to flag Kelley down for a few brief moments to find out where he's been, how he got here and what lies ahead.

He had his first taste of the business in the theatrical department in high school and working weekends with a local AV company called Stage Tech. "They did it all - audio, video and lighting," says Martin. During the three or four years of learning his skills as a tech for the company, he worked in many of the local venues, which led to some runs as Production Manager in several theatres.

Martin continues, "Around '94 Dan Tulloch, who was one of my first mentors, left Stage Tech to go to work for Huntly Christie. I was kind of at a crossroads, not sure whether I wanted to start my own production company, or just try something completely different."

An invitation from Dan to come check out Christie's operation changed all that. Huntly, who started his company in his father's garage in '85, was at that time pulling shows together out of a warehouse across from Lake Ontario.

Kelley reminisces, "I'm the kind of guy who jumps in with both feet, you know. I was hesitant to go down and check the operation out - if I'm going to commit to something, it's all or nothing. Huntly's enthusiasm

just lit me up, and his company was geared to lighting only. I was attracted to the intensity of his focus and his passion for the work, so I went for it."

Kelley was exposed to the local film industry almost immediately as a pani- projector tech. Around the set he would hear some of the electricians talk about wishing they had more control of their lights. That started a whole dialogue about dimmers, socapex, and how theatrical lighting could be used on location.

"I realized then and it is still true today, my clients have been my best teachers," Kelley emphasized. Christie also recognized that his intuition, technical expertise and design capabilities could be utilized more effectively, thus becoming an account representative.

Around '97 Cinematographer Alexander Gruszynski asked Kelley to come on board as the lighting designer for the club scenes in the film, "Studio '54." Huntly agreed to a short leave of absence and Kelley spent the next six months working on the shoot in the Toronto film studios.

"My long time friend AJ Pen was brought on this project as board op when we went to do re-shoots in New York," Kelley recalls, "It's guys like him and Jim Digby that make me realize how lucky I am to be working in this business. You know,

it doesn't matter if I'm at FOH for a Linkin Park Stadium show or in a small theatre event, when those house lights go out, I get goose bumps... every time. I truly enjoy my job... and I get paid for it!"

Some days you just have to work a little harder than others to earn that pay, though.

Christie Lites was the supplier and Kelley was working with lighting Designer Jason Jennings on a Super Bowl 2008 event in Phoenix, which consisted of massive rigs on the tarmac lighting B17 bombers, not to mention all of the party tents...

Kelley laughs now as he explains, "one of the six trucks didn't show up... just fell off the face of the earth! The domino effect that followed in the wake of this really taught me a lot about handling clients' expectations and the value of being honest, no matter what. Finally, 11.5 hours later he (the driver) shows up. It was one of the most challenging events in my professional life, and we pulled it off, so ultimately it was one of the most rewarding."

Kelley ends, "You know, like they say, the show must go on and it does, but I've found that the people in this business also realize that family comes first. I'm really fortunate to have Lesley as my wife and our two year old son Cooper... well let me just say - that little guy is going to teach me a lot!" ☺

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spice girls

TAKE THEIR AUDIENCE ON A TRIP TO GAG CITY

by MICHAEL A. BECK

One of the biggest concert tours of 2007-08 has been Spice Girls. All one had to hear about this show was the players involved. With names like Mark "Springo" Spring, Scott Chase, Tim Shanahan and, of course, the ever dynamic Roy Bennett, you have to know that this is going to be big regardless of the number of shows projected for the tour.

In addition to the high-end members of the production and design team, there was the presence of vendors like Clair Brothers, PRG, Nocturne and Tait Towers. The production lived up to all expectations. However, as one might expect, it had more than its share of challenges. The elegance of the design lived in the way these challenges were met and overcome.

First, there was audio. The biggest issue was the crowd noise. FOH Engineer Ray Furze explained, "The initial scream is 115 db. You can't compete with that. I don't even try," Furze says. "Above a certain level your ears shut down and then what's the point of being out here. So I add a little extra high end in the beginning and then when the crowd comes back down to a more reasonable level, I ease the high end back to a normal level."

However, that wasn't the only rub the audio team had to deal with. A major feature of the show was a runway that extended out from the main stage to a "B" stage in the center of the room. FOH System Engineer Sid Rogerson spoke to Mobile Production Monthly about it, "You've got five live mics that spend much of the night out on the thrust in the center of the room."



Production Manager Mark "Springo" Spring & Set and Lighting Designer Roy Bennett

Having worked previously on the George Michael show, Rogerson faced a similar issue. But instead of having a straight runway out into the center of the room, there was a horseshoe shaped deck that arched out into the crowd and back. This had Michael directly under the main hang. Rogerson explained, "We tried a number of different approaches to that situation. We tried feedback eliminators, different programs on the crossover and even me sitting on the graphic." When the matter of five mics out front came up there was a whole list of possible solutions to choose. In the end, the simplest was the best. "On this show we tilted the PA out about 10 degrees," said Rogerson.

The speakers were German made D&V J-8's that have an 80-degree dispersion angle. By turning the arrays outward the afore mentioned

crewlist

the band
Musical Director: Simon Ellis
Percussionist: Thomas Dyani
Bass: Scott Firth
Guitar: Paul Gendler, Greg Hatwell
Drummer: Vinnie Lammi
Keyboard: Nick Nasmyth

the creative team

Show Creative Director: Jamie King
Set & Light Design: Roy Bennett
Asst to Jamie King: Carla Kama
Video Content: Dago Donzalez
Asst to Roy Bennett: Peter Aquinde
Lighting Programmer: Troy Eckerman,
Cory Fitzgerald

the Production Team

Production Manager: Mark Spring
Stage Mgr: Scott Chase
Show Mgr: Mike Morobitto
PRG Project Co-Ordinator: Robert Cooper
Production Co-Ordinator: Dian Eichorst
FOH Engineer: Ray Furze
Monitor Engineer: Matt Napier
Lighting Director: Mac Mosier
Lighting Crew Chief: Ian Tucker
Lights: Kathy Beer
US Lights: Jason Winfree, Matt Schneider,
Russell Lyons, Michelle Brummett, Marc
Wuchter
UK/Euro Lights: Craig Hancock, Glenn
Poower, Luke Prithcard, Jason Dixon, Carl
Boswell, Craig Saunders
Pryo: Kevin Hughes
Lasers: Alan Gomborg, AJ Seabeck
FOH Systems: Simon Rogerson
MON Systems: Nick Mooney
Radios / Ears: Stephanie Thompson
Sound: Demetrius Moore, John Switzer
UK / Euro Sound: Simon Hall, Don Parks, Rob
Priddle, Nick Davis
Video Director: Dave Neugebauer
Video: Leon Roll, Stefaan Michels, Troy Baccheschi,
Jay Strasser, Michael Sienkiewicz, John Moore
Backline Crew Chief / Keyboards: Vince Barker
Guitar Tech: Andrew Ball, Adam Birch
Drum Tech: Andy Henderson
Percussion / Keyboard Tech: Clint Lockyer
Riggers: Mike Farese (Head), Danny Machado, Rick
Wilmot, Steve Genovese, Bill Macklin
Electrician: John Zajonc
Carpenter: Tim Shanahan (Head), Gino Cardelli,
David Medrano, Jim George, Tina Skjerseth, Randy
Wilson, Curtis "Duewerk" Baker
Motion Control: Jacques Richard
Catering: Marcus Jones (Crew Chief), Kate
Drummond-Brassington, Sean Leitch,
Chris Desmond
Wardrobe: Dana Carr

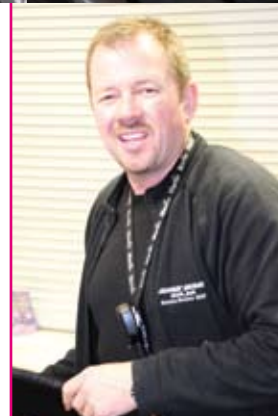
the drivers (US)

Crew Bus Drivers: Vince Grecco, Geoff Daubney,
Donnie Leach, John McNutt, Doyle Andrews,
Raymond Jacobs, Richard Lundeen
Truck Drivers: Cary Stembridge, Jay Usgaard, Jorge
Delgado, Walter Layman, Nick James, Jeff Anders,
Randy Cook, Jerry Dvorak, Matt Anderson, John
Canning, Mike Smith, Sam Green, Danny Harelson,
Mark Reese, Ron Kilburn, Herb Cohn, Larry
Hockensmith, Jim Turner, Hosea Goodwin,
Danny Martin



tour related offices

Tour Promoters: (USA) AEG Live
 (UK) Sim Concerts
 (Germany) X-WHY-X Konzertagentur GMBH & Co.
 (Spain) Troubleshooter
 Trucks: Edwin Shirley Trucking Bell Lane
 Flight Cases: Road Case Rentals
 Freight Forwarding: Rock-It Cargo UK, LA
 Tour Expendables: Tour Supply
 Itineraries: Smart Art
 Management: 19 Entertainment UK, USA
 Touring: 19 Touring UK, USA
 Accountancy: 19 Entertainment UK
 Donenfeld Management
 Financial Management:
 Sycamore Consulting International
 Agent: Creative Artists Agency
 Record Co.: EMI Music UK
 Insurance: Robertson Taylor
 Tour Public Relations: The Outside Organization
 Artistic Design & Direction: Jamie King Productions
 Lighting & Set Design: Dakana Designs
 Tour Management: World Wide Touring
 Central Music Service: Geoff Donkin
 Production Management:
 Decision Point Consultants
 Catering: Eat Your Hearts Out
 Special Effects: Pyrotek Special Effects
 Communication: Road Radios
 Merchandise: Bravado International Group
 Ground Transport: Daitz Personal Logistics
 Charter (US): Airworks
 Charter (Europe): Premier Aviation UK
 Buses (US): Phoenix Bussing
 Trucks (US): Upstaging
 Sound (UK): Wigwam Acoustics
 Sound (USA): 8th Day Sound
 Lighting: PRG
 In Ears: Ultimate Ears
 Power: Legacy Power
 Set Construction: Tait Towers
 Additional Set Pieces & Design: Planview
 Staging: Accurate Staging
 CAD Services: Brungardt Enterprises
 Tour Passes: Access Pass & Design
 Video: Nocturne Productions
 Security: Celebrity Protection
 Video Content & Design: Veneno
 Travel Agent: The Tour Company
 Travel Agents: Altour (A Party). The Appointment
 Group (B&C Party)



(left to right, top to bottom)

Carpentry Crew – (front row) Tim Shanahan – Head Carpenter, Flory Turner – Motion Control, David Medrano, Jim George, (back row) Gino Cardelli, Tina Skjerseeth, Randy Wilson, Jacques Richard – Motion Control

Lighting Crew – (front row) Ty Brooks, Jason Winfree, Bits Lyons, Kathy Beer, Mac Mosier – Lighting Director, (back row) Robert Cooper – PRG Project Co-ordinator, Rob Semineau, Mike Ryder, Jim Petrussion, Bill Suttle

Mike Morobitto – Show Manager

Rigging Crew – Rick Wilmot, Shaker, Chuck Melton, Danny Machado – Head Rigger

Scott Chase – Stage Manager

Video Crew – (front row) Leon Roll, Kim Hampton, Dave Neugebauer – Video Director, Jerry McReynolds – Video Engineer, Jay Strasser (back row) Stefaan Michels, Eugene McAliffe – Assistant Director, Michael Sienkiewicz, Rob Church

John Zajonic – Tour Electrician



10 degrees, the dispersion patterns merged at a point just down stage of the “B” stage and the feedback threat was eliminated.

Now we come to laser. There’s not much to say about the laser portion of this show. That’s not because it wasn’t noteworthy, but because it was used with such elegant discretion, that one never got bored with seeing it, as can so often be the case.

Ah, but then there was lighting. As is usually the case with a Roy Bennett design, you could have Mount Fuji in full eruption upstage of the artist and the artist would still be the highlight of the show. But because this show opened in the States with limited engagements, then headed over the pond for several UK/European dates, and returned to finish out in the States, there was a strong desire to make the show as portable as possible for trans-oceanic travel.

Bennett’s answer was simple; build as much into the stage and set as possible and pick the rest up “over there.” The result was that with the exception of a few Martin Mac 2K’s that were used on a silhouette gag that happened once in the show, all of the hard edged lighting was done by Vari*Lite 3000 Spots, and the wash lighting was done by the monster VL-3500 Wash’s. There was also a strong compliment of Atomic Strobes as well. “Because I had to make the lighting system very generic, I went with Vari*Lites because you pick them up everywhere,” Bennett told mPm. “Then I made the set sort of a lighting instrument in and of itself more than I’ve done in the past.”

All of the foot lighting for the stage was provided by LED IW12 Blasters - built into the stage so that they could travel with the stage. But having them recessed into the set and covered with clear Lexand offered another advantage. Lighting Director Mac Mosier explained, “We used these things on

Madonna and on Tim and Faith. They they sat on the stage, and they were always getting knocked out of focus.”

This was an important facet of the “B” stage. Had they been mounted to the top of the stage, they couldn’t encircle the whole thing as there would have to be room on the upstage edge for performers to enter the platform. In this case, however, because they were imbedded in the stage and covered, the foot lighting could offer 360-degree coverage.

There was a line of fascia that bordered the stage facing out toward the audience. This was lit from the inside with RGB Color Blasters. Again, these were built into the stage and traveled with the stage.

The band played in elevated enclosures called garages on either side of the stage. The inside of the garages were also lit with LED. The front of the unit was bordered with VersaTube that

played behind opaque panels that were clear enough to get an image through and diffused enough to soften the look. We'll come back to that.

Almost every part of this show was in some way affected by the stage that was some of the strongest innovation that Tait Towers has ever shown. The show opened with the Spice Girls entering on individual lifts. This may sound like something that's been done before. But it's not. There was a limitation that required some serious thought. The elevators had to get ten feet of lift out of a 6-foot envelope. The solution was just elegant and beautiful as the women who rode on them. The solution was a device called the "Flaggevator." Before we go into the explanation of this thing it must be pointed out that Tait Towers built 40 elevators last year, and no two were alike. This company is about solving the puzzle in front of it with original thought rather than adapted technology from projects gone by that "just might work."

Back to the Flaggevator. Obviously, it had a platform and that platform had to constantly remain level. The platform was attached via a gimble arm to a carriage that traveled horizontally that was pushed by a single motor. As the arm lifted the platform (that was on the top of a small tower) into position, the carriage traveled toward the platform to a position under the platform/tower. The result of that movement was that the arm was now part of the vertical lift and gave the platform four more feet of lift. This approach not only gave the lift incredible power but it also ensured a silky smooth ride.

In addition, this is the best part of the Flaggevator. From concept to completed manufacturing of six of them (one for each "Spice" and a spare) the project took two weeks.

There was another aspect of the stage that was a joy to behold. Motion control. Tait Vice President Adam Davis explained, "There's a lot of motion control on this show, and we have done

something on this one that is completely different from all of our previous motion control projects." Davis added, "In our previous motion control systems all motion control data such as limits and decoding would home run back to a rack. In this we had distributed control. Everything that moves has its own onboard processing. All we're doing is telling it where to go, how fast to go and when to go."

The main reason for this innovation is cable management. As anyone who has ever toured can attest, one of the biggest headaches on any given tour is cable management followed closely by power. By handling the motion control at the point of movement, there is a significant drop in the amount of cable that has to be dragged throughout the production to all of the places that need motion control. It also creates an equally significant drop in the number of connectors that will eventually need to be soldered.

continued on 50



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needs well in focus. Additionally, it is looking to increase its exposure into contracting, or installations, because it realizes there is a huge chunk of business out there that can benefit from their products.

Passion seems to be the catchword for this company though. One can hear it in the way Adamson speaks about their products, its mission and their goals. From the paternal Brock whose life of innovation and vision is well documented and hailed, through Jesse and on down the food chain to the office staff, the design teams, and even the box builders in the plant. They all speak about their systems with conviction, care and pride. "Basically, we like to think that we build something that everybody else can't build, and we try to apply that to the touring market," says Adamson.

On the surface, Adamson Systems Engineering appears to be a family enterprise with its manufacturing roots dating back through three generations. Jesse however is quick to point out that the real heroes are the guys like Kenneth "Pooch" Van Druten, FOH engineer for Linkin Park and Jim Digby, Linkin's venerable Production Manager who are out there in the trenches every day putting the systems to work and providing valuable feedback to Brock and Jesse, so that they may continue to develop, design, and build speaker systems that will exceed expectations, continue to meet the challenges and rigors of life on the road, and allow them to think *inside* the box. Inside the speaker box that is. ☺

The trade off is that there are, according to Davis, 28 processors around the production site providing motion control and feedback. However, no one seemed to complain about said trade off at all.

The most impressive part of what Tait Towers accomplished was that it took the three weeks to design everything and another three weeks to get it all show ready. Six weeks from day one of design to loading it up for rehearsal. That's just not natural!

Video was delivered to the show through seven spectacular walls of (LSI/SACO) V-9 LED video, which has become something of a signature for Nocturne who provided video on the tour. There were two large landscape (horizontal) walls that played up stage of five smaller portrait (vertical) panels. Each of the landscape panels represented (much of the time) one of the five Spice Girls. However, they could be flown together for one large and absolutely seamless image. The same could be done with the two larger screens upstage.

The motion control for the video walls was handled by the Tait Towers system that was used for the stage. Control for these panels had to be super sensitive and controlled with a feather touch in order to keep these wildly expensive walls from turning into airborne bumper cars. Once they were flown together, they had to fit without any delineation between them. It had to look like one single image. Nocturne took that project to Tait (as usual), and the job was completed with the same precision as everything else that comes out of Lütz, PA.

Background low-resolution video was provided by a fairly new product out of Element Labs called Helix H37. Helix is

a more rigid version of its more pliable predecessor known quaintly as "Shower Curtain." The entire upstage wall was made up of Helix.

However, lines of VersaTube were laid in over the Helix and were all covered by what looked like very large clear plastic restaurant bus trays. Because of the way they protruded out from the wall, Bennett was able to hit them with light and add both color and texture to the look. The "garages" that the band played in on either side of the stage also had a rear wall made of Helix minus the VersaTube.

A large portion of the upstage wall, aptly called "the garage door," flew out to allow an opening for a motorized platform dubbed the "Mobilator" which would travel down stage for the duration of a song. At the end of the piece, the Mobilator would then retract into its upstage position to be reset for the next gag. At one point in the show, it was fitted with "strippers polls" for a song. During a tune called The Lady is a Vamp, the band members come down out their garages and set up on the Mobilator. When it came out, a large rectangular frame that was ringed with very large standard incandescent light bulbs, known as the "picture frame" (what else would it be called?), flew in front of it.

This show never ramped up. There was no point where it peaked as most shows do. It started like the amplifier of Spinal Tap's Nigel Tufnel... on eleven. And that's where it stayed for the duration of the night. Even the times when Bennett used only minimal lighting on stage the show had power. It was gag city, and that is just what this audience came to see. From a purely production standpoint, it was a great show. ☺



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XL Video continued from 18

XL supplied 7 crew for the tour, under the direction of crew chief Stuart Heaney, systems engineer Graham Hollwil, Stealth tech's Andy Tonks and Patrick Vansteelant and camera operators Luke Levitt, Thomas Levitt and Mark Cruickshank.

Playback footage was created by Blink TV's Marcus Viner, Tom Colbourne and Helen Stringer. They worked on the project at Blink's studios for about 2 months, including a 2 day video shoot with the band at Centre Stage Studios in Islington, London.

Working with cinematographer Angus Hudson, this produced material that was used in the 'beauty' shots for "Swear It Again" along with footage for other songs, and they also filmed a dancer and a pole dancer. The dancer was shot with a series of different brass instruments, the footage was then composited and layered to create the eye-catching multi-coloured pop art style brass band for "Easy Way".

The pole dancer was treated with chrome and gold effects and appeared in spectacular James Bond style fashion in "If I Let You Go".

Westlife tours again throughout May, culminating in a massive show at Croke Park stadium, Dublin, after which they will take a year's break. ☺



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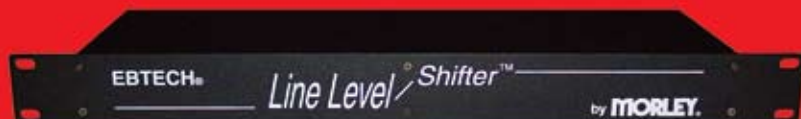
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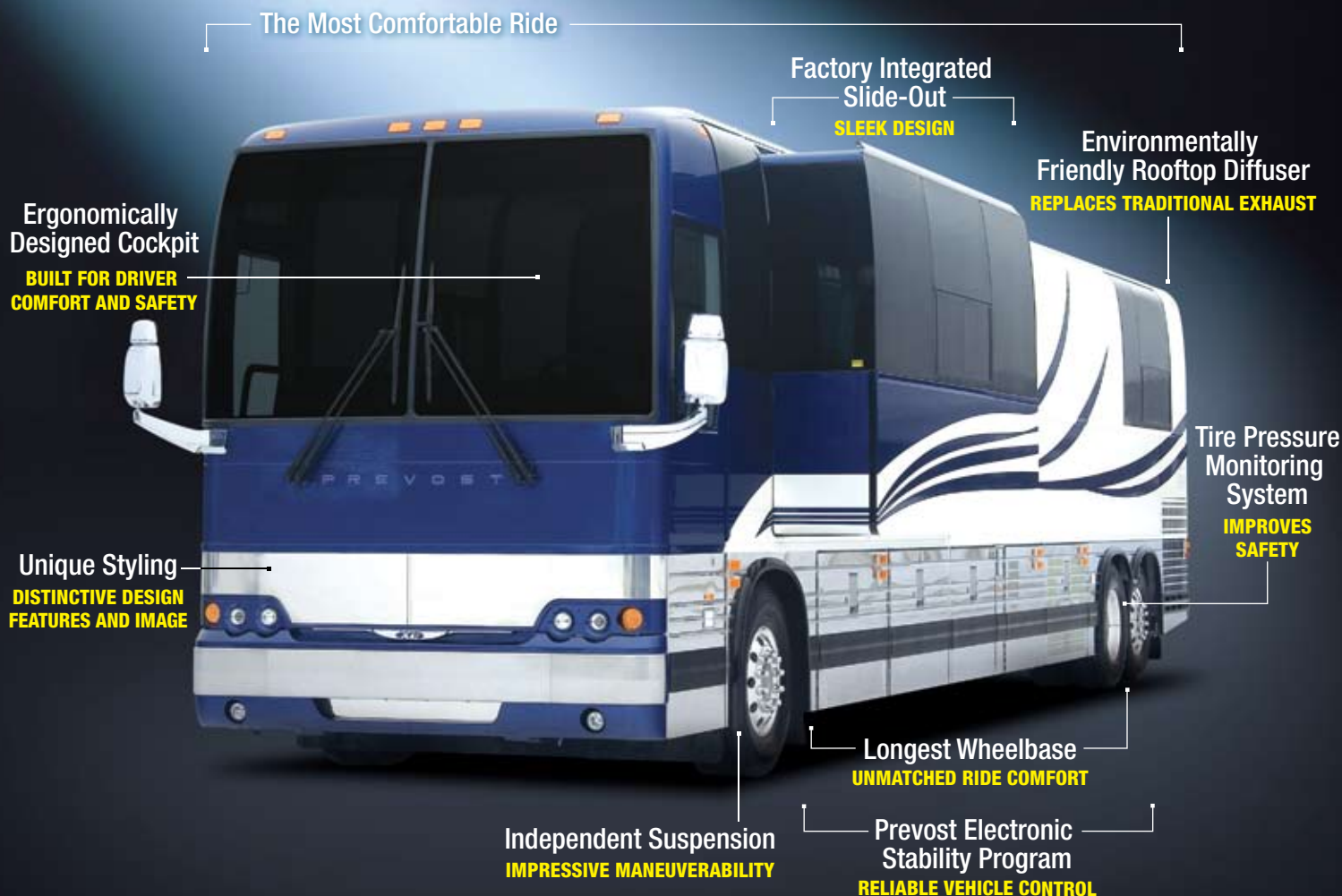


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