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6 **In the News**

6 **Lighting** Robe Lights Roger Daltrey tour

6 **Pases** Access Pass & Design acquires Tour Supply INK

7 **Pyro/FX** Pyrotek Special Effects & Avenged Sevenfold bring the “Uproar Festival” to Life

7 **Sound** DiGiCo SD7 mixes Glee Live! In Concert!

8 **Staging** Stageco Thinks Big with new XL Tower system

8 **Video** Creative Technology Helps Raise the Barre for the Royal Ballet Live at the O2

9 **Video cont.** Pete’s Big TVs Tours with How Sweet the Sound

10 **Festivals** SummerStage
    Rockin’ the Parks

12 **Transportation** MCI Names Rush Truck as New Nashville Authorized Service Provider

14 **Styx/Yes** Another Small Show with a Strong Delivery

18 **Manufacturing** The Gibson Fiasco

20 **Venues** Dallas Winspear Opera House is Alive with the Sound of Renkus-Heinz

22 **Lighting** Jands Vista v2 Lights Up Adele for 2011 International Tour

24 **Journey** The Show that Looks Much Bigger Live Than It Does On Paper

27 **Tour Vendors**

28 **Strictly FX** on Tour with Journey

30 **Crew Members**

36 **Advertiser’s Index**
In this issue of mobile Production monthly:

* We give you a look the hugley successful Journey Eclipse tour.

*Strickly FX speaks about the inspiration for the effects used on the Journey tour.

* We take you behind the scenes of the Styx/Yes tour.

* We also get a look at the Gibson Guitar fiasco from the ever reliable Bill Evans who asks questions, but so many questions still to be actually answered it seems.

* Hank Bordowitz takes us to New York for the annual SummerStage Performing Arts Festival.

Hope you enjoy!

Larry Smith
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Robe ROBIN 600 LEDWash and ROBIN 600 Spot moving lights were used by LD Dave Farmer on the recent Roger Daltrey UK tour - which saw the legendary singer/songwriter and lead singer of UK rock band, The Who, perform the latter’s landmark rock-opera “Tommy” in its entirety.

The original lighting scheme for Daltrey was conceived by the almost equally legendary lighting designer Tom Kenny, who was busy with other commitments in the US and so asked Dave Farmer to look after the show on tour. The two also work together on the annual week of Teenage Cancer Trust shows at London’s Royal Albert Hall, of which Daltrey was instrumental in starting.

The lighting kit for the tour was supplied by Leeds based Zig Zag Lighting, who were contracted by the promoters to provide a rig that fitted Farmer’s spec. This consisted of the 14 Robe ROBIN 600 LEDWashes and 14 ROBIN 600E Spots which were at the core of the rig, and did all the hard work!

There were also bars of 6 PARs in pre-rigged truss sections, strobes and follow spots plus a Hog DP 8000 for control.

It was the first chance that Farmer had had to use the latest Robe technology, but he’s used other Robe fixtures on many of his past shows and projects, in particular the 2500, 1200 and 700 series ColorSpot and ColorWashes.

For the Daltrey tour, both the LEDWash 600s and the 600 Spots were arranged on two overhead trusses with some on the floor, where their compact size enabled them to be fitted unobtrusively around the backline. They were used to light the band and the stage in a colourful show, which was also completely smoke free, a fact that brought its own challenges in making the lighting work effectively.

Farmer thinks the gobos in the 600 Spots are good, and in particular likes the dots, the watery cones and the rotating propeller blade.

The LEDWashes he had to run at about 15 per cent most of the time to keep general light levels down so that projections onto an upstage screen could be optimised, and he commented that they dim “very nicely and smoothly”. He also used some of the Spot 600s for floor projections.

Overall the Robes proved very reliable on the tour, and Farmer reckons the efficiency and design of the LEDWashes will ensure that they have a good ‘shelf life’. He also used the LEDWash’s 3200 CTO setting quite frequently, especially in the downstate fixtures, and the strobe function on both types of fixtures to great effect.

Zig Zag’s technicians on the tour were Andrew ‘Bob’ Laidlaw and Tom Loynes, both of whom say it’s always a joy to work with Robes as they hardly ever need any attention apart from being hung and fired up!

Additionally, APD will enter into a strategic partnership with Tour Supply Inc, an industry leader in music and touring supplies and accessories.

Tour Supply and Access Pass & Design are excited to collaborate within the new partnership, the discussions for which began at the Tour Link 2011 conference in January. The companies see their cooperation as an integral way to better serve their often overlapping customer base and expand their marketing reach.

Access Pass & Design will begin immediate order fulfillment of key custom printed items like drum heads, concert backdrops and equipment scrims. Access Pass & Design has acquired the existing art files, necessary equipment, and key personnel involved in Tour Supply INK necessary to handle the expanded product line and workload. The two companies will cross-promote their product lines to their new and existing clients, and their collaboration will be apparent on both companies’ websites, within all retail locations, and via other print and electronic forms of media.

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Avenged Sevenfold is known as one of the most successful rock bands in the world. In collaboration with Pyrotek Special Effects, the 2011 North American tour has set out to showcase the pure intensity and passion they bring to their fans around the world.

The stage is set with their signature winged skull bat as the backdrop, and right off the top of the show the high intensity “Nightmare” reminds fans of the absolute power that Avenged Sevenfold brings to the stage. Discussions between Lorenzo Cornacchia (President and Designer for Pyrotek Special Effects), Bob Ross (Operations Director, Pyrotek Las Vegas) and production manager Jordan Coppersmith included decisions on pyrotechnic effects, placement, and ideas envisioned by the band. Flame cues were a priority as they accent the band and add excitement to the overall show design.

Flame units were placed in the skull’s eyes, while low lying fog was incorporated into the set. 20’ and 35’ Silver Mines were used during “Unholy Confessions” and stadium flashes were utilized to create a loud sound blast effect to energize the crowd and emphasize various Avenged cues. Fireballs were also used and with the help of Elia Popov, custom made flame bars were integrated into the skull bat to shoot flames eight feet in height. To Cornacchia, detail is key “Each of the pyrotechnic effects were designed to simulate the emotion that Avenged Sevenfold shows are known for. You will see a number of fireballs, dragons, and custom propane elements that are designed to be cued in sync with specific riffs or accents of the music”.

Pyrotechnicians Keith Maxwell, Clint Ranse and Rory Jones coordinate to bring the designs to reality in every show and work to accomplish the effects of specific cues. While it is not an easy task, the tremendous success of the tour proves to be a driving force for Pyrotek Special Effects to continuously push the boundaries of design and creation for each artist that the company is privileged to work with.

Glee’s transition to the stage has proved as huge a hit as the television show itself. Following a sold-out US tour in 2010, the show crossed the Atlantic for an equally successful tour of the UK, including multiple sold out dates at both London and Dublin’s The O2 and Manchester’s MEN Arena this summer.

Clair Global provided the show’s sound requirements, supplying two SD7s, one for the cast and one for the band, with JH Audio providing its JH 16 IEMs and founder Jerry Harvey performing monitor duties on the cast console.

“On last year’s Glee tour I was using an analogue desk,” says Harvey. “But this show has so many cues happening at the same time it was almost impossible to pull it off on an analogue desk, so I made the decision to go digital and move to an SD7.”

“I have 96 inputs and 14 stereo IEM mixes for the actors and I find the snapshot function is very user friendly and a huge benefit to mixing a show like Glee.”

Harvey had already used the SD7s for the US leg and says they worked flawlessly.

“The audio is amazing,” he states. “I have always been an analogue mixer and this is the first digital desk that doesn’t sound like a giant MP3 player. “The customer service has also been amazing. I am a HUGE fan of this console. The flexibility and the exceptional audio quality is so impressive I will always have an SD7 on my spec going forward.”
Stageco’s new XL Tower system will widen creative options for show and event designers.

Following a meticulous design and testing process Stageco unveiled details of the company’s ground breaking new Tower Staging system at this years’ PLASA show in Earls Court, London. The new system is significantly stronger, bigger, and, in-keeping with Stageco’s approach to stage design, is a modular component system. This means the new XL Towers can be used in multiple configurations, allowing more flexible design on a larger scale than ever before.

Director Dirk De Decker was part of the development team and he explains, “The XL Tower system has arisen from our experiences designing and building the extra large steel for the U2 360° World Tour. We learnt a lot about large scale fabrication, engineering and handling large steel components on site.

“We’ve been developing our skills over the last two or three years working at that scale, we have also noticed an increased number of requests from clients to create larger scale staging designs. This XL Tower system should allow us to meet market demand for large systems for years to come.”

The new XL Towers have been designed for optimum transportation with a 2.2m square truss size fitting perfectly into sea containers. Its additional engineering strength means that Stageco can extend modular stages height and extend roof-span to now offer a 50m potential span. In keeping with Stageco’s famed attention to detail, the new towers are user friendly and engineered with safety in mind, incorporating features such as ladders and resting platforms.

The first of the new XL Towers has been delivered to Stageco’s Belgian headquarters, but it won’t be there for long before 20 containers are dispatched for the systems first prestigious event in the Middle East later this year.

Says Stageco’s CEO Hedwig De Meyer, “Stageco is a company that thrives on continuously pushing boundaries. We are stimulated by working with creative designers who challenge us to deliver stages and engineering solutions that are beyond what has been previously achieved. I can only begin to anticipate what the world’s leading designers will come up with given the extended possibilities our new XL Tower system offers – and we’ll relish the challenges of course.”

Video

CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY HELPS RAISE THE BARRE FOR THE ROYAL BALLET LIVE AT THE O2

At almost six times the size of the Royal Opera House, London’s vast O2 arena was tasked this summer with creating the same level of intimacy and dance passion that The Royal Ballet brings to Covent Garden. The Company’s bold experiment of bringing highbrow ballet at low-brow prices to aficionados of the art at every demographic, culminated in a rapturous applause of approval from its 12,000 strong audience each night, leaving no one in doubt that each of the four performances of Romeo and Juliet was a huge success.

The success of The Royal Ballet’s presentation of Kenneth MacMillan’s 1965 Romeo and Juliet production at The O2 required little rethinking for an arena setting, but was largely helped by three huge screens provided by Creative Technology (CT) that were positioned above the stage.

Simon Byford, Production Manager for The Royal Ballet’s Romeo and Juliet production approached CT directly to assist in providing visual solutions for the show. Utilising the experience CT gained in providing a similar set up for the 25th anniversary production of Les Misérables held also at the O2 last year, the three large screens flown over the stage were comprised of 145 sqm of Flyer 18, some of the latest screen technology CT hold in their extensive stock. Using image magnification all three screens simultaneously relayed the stage performance, ensuring no member of the audience missed a single movement of the star-cross’d lovers tragic romance.

New to CT’s inventory, six Sony HXC camera channels complete with telephoto lenses, were also provided, run through a Grass Valley HDSdi 1 M/E PPU vision mixer. These cameras were directed by the Ballet Boyz – ex-Royal Ballet stars Michael Nunn and William Trevitt – who produced some truly stunning image content which, mixed with the live camera work and utilising the content playback through Mac Playback Pro systems, contributed hugely to Romeo and Juliet’s highly emotive story.

CT also provided the music director’s foldback camera and displays for the cast, with a second camera on a wide shot relayed back stage and patched into the in-house system.

Working closely with Lighting Director Ian Bagshaw, CT’s biggest challenge was to ensure that the stage reinforcements for the screens did not interfere with the lighting design. With full understanding of this type of event requirement, CT’s project manager Stuart Young was delighted with the smooth running of the entire event: “Relocating a production like this from the Royal Opera House to an Arena the size of the O2 isn’t necessarily new,” he said, “but it is necessary to provide the entire audience with the facility to feel the empathy and sentiment one would expect from a Royal Ballet performance.” Scott Burges, CT’s Director of Special Projects who handled the account was also pleased with how the event was received: “From the
sound of the audience’s applause at the end of each performance, I would say that this event blended a perfect harmony of ballet beauty whilst bringing this art to the masses.”

cltlondon.com

PETE’S BIG TVs TOURS
WITH How Sweet the Sound

Pete’s Big TVs is for the fourth year providing video support for “How Sweet The Sound,” an annual competition traveling the country seeking the best church choir in America.

Guy Benjamin of Pete’s Big TVs handled their role in the touring production, which was designed by LD Michael Dalton and set designer Jeremy Thom.

“Video projection is a large part of the show,” said LD Michael Dalton. Four Barco FLM 20k projectors focus on the main front projection scenic screen, which measures 30x80 feet. The projectors are fed by two Green Hippo HD Hippotizer media servers. The Hippotizers blend and shape images to conform to the big curvature in the scenic screen.

Live l-mag is rear-projected on screens on both sides of the main projection screen, using Barco SLM R12 projectors.

For the production, there are three Sony HDC-1500 Multi-Format HD cameras and four Sony HD box cameras on pan & tilt remote controlled heads. The cameras are switched using a Ross Vision console. An Avid Deko 3000 manages all the graphics for the production. Each city’s shows are recorded on a series of Apple Xserve computers running Apple Final Cut Pro.

Pete’s Big TV crew includes Video Director Jody Lane, EIC Paul Whitfield, EIC2 Brian Brinckman, Projection/ Hippotizer Tech Rob Villalobos, Projection/ Camera Brent Jones, Camera Operators Erin Lynch and Cybelle Forbes, Video Tech Chris Hill and Deko Operator Michelle Lippett.

A panel of judges - sitting at the side of the stage - preside over each city’s competition, while top names in gospel music entertain as well.

The biggest challenge in the lighting design is accommodating a wide variety of gospel choirs on stage, Dalton said, as each choir differs in numbers of singers and colors of robes.

“We build the basic show cue list, which remains the same throughout the tour, then update it based on the actual choirs’ sizes and robe colors for each city,” he said. “As with most competition shows we try to keep the lighting looks within certain boundaries to help level the competition.”

Nook Schoenfeld programmed the show and acts as lighting director.

Dalton and Pete’s Big TVs have worked together on How Sweet the Sound since the concept for the competition began. “Pete’s Big TV is a great crew,” Dalton said. “They’re easy to work with and with great results!”

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This is a neat trick at for-profit theaters, but even slicker for SummerStage, a semi-autonomous, not-for-profit venue. Located just off the 72nd Street entrance to Central Park, SummerStage produces over 30 free concerts and theatrical events over the course of four months (June through September) at its Central Park venue. However, their parent organization, The City Parks Foundation, also produce shows nearly six nights a week at other New York City parks, often two the same night.

“SummerStage is New York City’s largest free performing arts festival,” says James Burke, Director of Arts and Cultural Programs for the Foundation. “We present 110 free programs in Central Park and 17 other parks around the city. We work with the Metropolitan Opera’s series of concerts in all five boroughs as well.”

Toward this end, they have the free standing venue and several more... ephemeral stages they work from. For example, Hurricane Irene caused the postponement of one of the highlights of the season, the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival, held at Tompkin Square Park in Lower Manhattan’s East Village and Marcus Garvey Park, uptown Harlem. The ‘do-over’ festival had to be condensed from three shows to one, which was presented, appropriately, in Harlem at Garvey Park at another of the Parks Commission’s permanent venues, the Richard Rogers Amphitheater. “It’s probably the nicest amphitheater in the City Parks System,” Burke says.

The Foundation also owns a portable stage that plays in the parks not so graced with pre-existing concert spaces. “Most of the time we haul in our brand new Stage-Line 260 stage,” says Burke. “That takes about 4-6 hours to set up.”

While Burke says that in the not-to-distant future, their next “capital improvement project” will be lighting that they own. Until that time, they plan to continue to use Rainbow and One Dream for their lighting, Rainbow for the “portable” concerts and One Dream for the theatre programs. Carroll Music does the backline.

For the more permanent SummerStage facility in Central Park, “We do a lighting rental every year from B&L,” says Black. “As James mentioned, through a couple of different years’ worth of capital purchases, we’ve gotten a PM5V for monitor mixes that we purchased a few years ago from Yamaha. We’ve got the brand new Meyer line array that we got last year. We upgraded those speakers through a capital purchase as well. We have a new front of house board that we got this year, and a new Meyer wireless package.” Black continues.

“The front of house board is a new Digidesign,” says Burke. “It’s a lot of work raising that money. Some of it comes from our operating budget, but we got a donation from the City Council a few years ago.”

“Every year we try to improve our audio capability and what we’re able to do here,” says Black. “Not just audio. We try to improve little bits of everything from year to year. A couple of years ago we got a new concessionaire, who really got into the food business, upped the ante on the food and beverage, so that’s been our activity for the past few years, continually making our audience experience better. That includes the new line array, the new front of house board, and going digital at front of house.”

On any given day, between May and October, some 200 people will be working at the venue. “We’re not employing all of them,” Black says. “Some of them are volunteers. We have a very rich, very active volunteer pool, so we can have anywhere between 20 and 40 volunteers a day. In terms of staff, if you include the vendors, there’s about 200. We usually have about eight stagehands. We are a union house. Our minimum call here is eight stagehands and two engineers. Then we have about five or six technical staff: Stage manager, production director, technical director, and me. We try and not let the road crews outnumber us. When the big acts come in, they have from four to eight of their own people.”
There are a lot of restrictions here, because we are in one of the most famous parks in the world," adds Burke. "We work very closely with our partners in the Conservancy and the Parks Department to make sure patrons are safe outside the venue. We always escort in anything that comes here. You can't just have random trucks driving in. We have little buggies, we bring them in, bring them up the back. We load them in in a very specific way, load them out in a very specific way. There are a lot of timing issues."

While the Parks Department’s restrictions limit some of the things they can do (hence the earlier remark about semi-autonomy), their status as an independent not-for profit offers opportunities as well. As we sit down to talk, the season has just ended, and it’s the tail end of September. The amphitheater is gone and a huge platform and tent, taking advantage of the power capabilities and location of the SummerStage facility, occupies the space. One of the world’s biggest producers of premium pasta products has set up this venue for a place to showcase their product, in collaboration with several other food oriented products. All told, the pavilion they have created will be open for four days. They offer a cafeteria style kitchen doling out cooked pasta samples, a competition area with six identical kitchens, a kids area where they play with their food, turning ziti into necklaces and the like, an espresso bar, and an area where a wide variety of appliances are demonstrated, then raffled off (I won a blender).

“We've done it before," says Black. “We call these ‘managed events.’ It’s a nice way for the Festival to make some revenue so we can keep it free. The SummerStage Festival pays its artists and pays its crew. There’s a lot of money going out and not a lot coming in. A lot of people want to present in the park," she adds. “We’re a private, non-profit organization, so it’s pretty easy to produce through us.”

“This is the only turnkey venue in Central Park,” adds James Burke.

With the audience space pretty much removed, as we sit on the backstage platform where the offices and dressing rooms are, Black is contemplating the seasonal tear-down. By November, usually before the snow flies in New York City, the area where SummerStage was will be marked only in proximity to the Central Park Field House, a historic building used to store the entire facility and its traveling companion.

“We can store all of this stuff, which is why we can purchase things for ourselves," says Black. “It’s a giant puzzle each October to get everything in. We also own all of our stage decks and our rails and we pull all that out. We also pull out all of the lumber that we use for the VIP area and this deck.

“We stack all the lumber in first, then the stage decks go in, then the truss gets lowered and the truss and the roof get taken apart and all of that gets stored as well. It takes a long time to go in. It takes about two weeks to go out. It took the month of April to get ready and build the site. We’re producing rental events in May, so some of those events can’t have certain elements on the site yet. It’s a very staggered build, which is why it takes a while. We have... continued on 34
Rush Truck Center Nashville, is conveniently located off Interstate 24 in Smyrna, Tenn. Housed in a former Expo center, the 250,000-square-foot facility features 35 service bays and 12 body shop stations. A team of 38 highly skilled ASE-certified technicians employ state-of-the-art diagnostic technology to take care of preventative maintenance, repairs and more.

“MCI is pleased to have Rush Truck Nashville as our new service partner,” said Dan Besserer, MCI executive director of customer solutions. “Rush Truck has a superior reputation throughout the South. Its Nashville location is stellar; nothing else compares to it. Operators of MCI coaches will find that Rush Truck Center Nashville shares MCI’s high quality standards. A full-service shop, Rush offers repair, parts, roadside assistance and maintenance services ranging from components on MCI models including CAT engines and Allison transmissions.”

“We have experience with MCI coaches and conversion models,” said Trey Golden, regional manager of Rush Truck Centers. “We have an extensive parts inventory and plenty of service bays. I think MCI customers will be very excited to know that they can take advantage of our expertise and capabilities.”

Rush Truck Center Nashville is open 8:00 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday.
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Earlier this year Styx and Yes shared the bill for a short run through the US. Admittedly it wasn’t the biggest tour on the road. However, when it played on the same stage as much larger productions have appeared, the seven or eight truck difference was not missed by audiences that came out to the show. Because it was a twin bill, the bands alternated opening the show depending on the market.

Yes opened up when it played Atlanta’s Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park, and while the lighting system (designed by Jeff Ravitz) was of little effect that early in the day, the video system was just the opposite. Although both acts used the same lighting and sound systems, there were marked differences in the way they employed the rigs. Styx took the view that to putting I-MAG on the screen would have been a distraction and ran B-roll content heavily loaded with video clips and photographs as well as some computer generated imagery throughout the show.

Conversely, Yes stuck more closely to the more ethereal, almost sci-fi artwork that has depicted the band since its inception. There was another difference. The tour video system (provided by Pete’s Big TV’s) didn’t have a camera package. However, Yes’ Video Operator Andy Clark found a way around that by mounting POV cameras on the mic stands of the band members. Yes Production Manager Joe Cuomo then slightly distorted the images acquired by the cameras and periodically laid them over the CG content. Comeau discussed other differences between the two video presentations. “Whereas Styx’s
video is very carefully laid out and choreographed to the music, Andy has a fair idea about what he wants to do with every song and he plays it on-the-fly throughout the show."

Whereas with most tours, the opening act gets to work on whatever stage area is left after its gear is layered in front of the headliner, such was not the case with this tour. Because both acts had equal standing and took turns opening the show, everything was on wheels and rolled out of the way in as few pieces as possible, thus giving both acts the full stage regardless of whether they were opening or closing the show. Yes' stage gear primarily consisted of a drum riser, a keyboard riser and rolling cases that held bass and guitar rigs. This isn't anything new.

However, because Yes rarely has an opening act when touring with an “evening with” format, the crew had to get used to having to get off the stage in 7½ minutes. Comeau explained the process of adapting to the new format. “We normally don’t travel with an opening act or share a bill. So we had to prepare all of our back line and virtually everything else we do to get off the stage in the amount of time the Styx guys were calling for. For example; Styx uses in-ear monitors and we use floor wedges. But we got it done.”

All that being said, Comeau was quick to place credit where credit is due. “Like I said, we’re used to doing ‘an evening with’ and the Styx crew are used to playing double and triple bill shows because they’ve been doing it for years. The made it a lot easier for us get adapt to this way of touring. Those people were really great.”

Styx's configuration had roughly the same components although it was more cleanly packaged as a solid set. The center piece of the set was the drum riser, which was faced out with frosted back lit panels. The drum riser was flanked on either side units that looked like amp walls. The amps in the set pieces looked real but were actually filled with LED panel. Each amp unit also had a stair case on either side that led up to a walkway. There was also a circular keyboard riser that played downstage right.

Designed by Styx Production Manager Keith Marks, it was based upon the needs of a previous tour. “I designed this set with amp walls, along with some help, about four years ago for a tour we did with Peter Frampton. I actually drew it up on a napkin in Tommy’s room. Then a couple years ago, we gutted the amps and fill them with LED. Later that same year we were opening for Def Leppard and we had
to make it all fit around their set. The only real alteration we had to make was to cut the drum riser into two parts.”

Once Yes was out of the way, the Styx set came out and was locked in place in six, count them... six minutes.

Because Yes played in daylight, it’s difficult to talk about their lighting execution. However, such was not the case with Styx. As was said earlier, the lighting design was put forth by Jeff Ravitz and it was operated by Lighting Director Libby Grey who told us, “If you like the way it looks over all you can thank Jeff. If you like the way it looks tonight you can thank me, I guess.”

The design was a fairly basic array of three cross stage truss lines, a stick of truss running up and down stage on both sides and assorted floor mounted instruments. Because both acts had full access to the entire rig for their shows, there were no conventional fixtures in the system given which maximized the creative capabilities of the LD’s.

The lighting design did a great job of continuing the color pallet off on the wall down onto the stage. The absence of I-MAG on the wall help to maintain the band members as the true focal point and Grey’s timing of the show was outstanding.

One very interesting aspect of the show was the fact that audio gear was provided by two different companies. Audio Analyst provided stacks and racks while Clair Global provided consoles and processing gear. This was a largely political decision based upon the fact that both bands have long standing relationships the respective companies. While Styx was the primary production contractor, Yes felt the need to continue doing business with Clair, with whom they have worked since the very beginning of their career.

The Styx show was mixed by the band’s original studio engineer, Gary Loizzo which would account for the incredibly loyal sound that came off the stage.

This show was a perfect example that less can truly be more. There was no one in the audience who walked away unhappy because there wasn’t ten more trucks of gear on the stage. That is not to denigrate the shows that are touring with more elaborate productions. It simply point out that is can be done with less. As Libby Grey so aptly said, “I may not be lighting the Rolling Stones, but what I do means just as much.”

The Styx crew


Yes crew

1: Yogi Badeau - LD, Wade Ellis - Production Assistant, Mike Clarke - Keyboard Tech, John Walsh - Drum Tech, Richard Davis - Bass Tech, Dean Mattson - Monitor Engineer, Andy Clark - Video Director, Andre Cholmondeley - Assistant Guitar Tech, Joe Comeau - Production Manager, Dave Wilkerson - FOH Engineer
2: Jason Daniello – Moog Artist Relations Manager, Mike Clarke - Keyboard Tech

16 mobile production monthly
Styx Crew
Production Manager - Keith Marks
Guitar Tech - Jimmy Johnson
Guitar Tech - Greg Mandelke
Drum Tech - Paul Carrizzo
Keys Tech - Jeff Heintz
Stage Manager - Brian Wong
Lighting Director - Libby Gray
Lighting Designer/Show Director - Jeff Ravitz
Lighting Techs: Stan Green, Brad Wagg, Jason Bowman
Monitor Engineer - Evan McElhinney
FOH Audio - Gary Loizzo
FOH Audio - Chris Carlton
Audio Techs: Chris “Cookie” Hoff, Rick Procopio, Spenser Ellis
Video Tech - Rob Villalobos
Merchandise - Casey Compton
Tour Manager - George Packer
Asst Tour Manager - Jason Powell
Production Assistant - Steve Macauley
Band Bus Driver - Tom Gregorio
Crew Bus Driver - Sterling Howard
Band Truck Driver - Jerry Price

Yes Crew
Production assistant - Wade Ellis
Production Manager - Joe Comeau
LD - Yogi Badeau
FOH engineer - Dave Wilkerson
Monitor engineer - Dean Mattson
Keyboard tech - Mike Clarke
Drum tech - John Walsh
Bass tech - Richard Davis
Assistant guitar tech - Andre Cholmondeley
Video director - Andy Clark

Vendors
Audio:
Racks and Stacks - Audio Analyst
Boards - Clair Bros
Lighting - Epic
Video - Pete’s Big TV’s
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O
verzealous law enforcement? Unintended consequence of well-meaning environmental legislation? Or maybe political payback?

Depends on who you ask, but however you look at it, if you are touring outside the U.S. and are carrying ANY instruments of the wooden variety, the recent raid on the Gibson custom shop in Memphis, TN is something you probably want to take notice of.

A review for those who have not been paying attention. On August 24, federal agents with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shut down the guitar maker's custom shop in the home of the Delta Blues to serve search warrants in an ongoing investigation that started with a similar raid of the Nashville custom shop in 2009 in which six guitars were seized.

Depending on who is telling the story, it was a routine service of search warrants (says the Fish and Wildlife service) or a combination of a SWAT operation and a stormtrooper raid (says Gibson CEO Henry Juszkiewicz). The issue is tropical hardwoods and especially ebony imported from Madagascar.

To get to the roots of the dispute, you have to go back more than a century to 1900 when a law called the Lacey Act was passed that was designed to target illegal trade in plants and wildlife. The law was the first federal statute aimed at protecting wildlife and was really meant to stop poaching of game and transporting it across state lines. It has been amended several times, most recently in 2008. Again, depends on who you talk to. It was either an attempt to rein in illegal logging or a way to protect influential parties in the U.S. logging industry from foreign competition. Bottom line is that the law was expanded to make it a U.S. crime to import, or even be in possession of, wood that was harvested outside of the laws of the country from which it was harvested. As an example, on a document put out by the U.S. government explaining the law, if company X in one country sells wood flooring to a U.S. company and company X bought said wood from company Y in a third country and the wood was harvested illegally, or even if documentation that the wood has harvested legally cannot be presented, then the U.S., flooring company may be subject to forfeiture of the wood and maybe some heavy fines. This is even if they were told by company X that the wood was legal.

In the case of Gibson, the government isn’t saying but Juszkiewics went on an internet interview program with uber-conservative Alex Jones and claimed that Gibson was being selectively persecuted because of his own right-leaning political views and backing of Republican politicians. Whatever. But he also claimed that the issue was a law that prohibits the export of Madagascar ebony in pieces more the 1/8th of an inch thick that has not been worked on by local labor. In other words, the fretboard “blanks” used on many Gibson guitars. According to Juszkiewics, the Fish and Wildlife people told him that he would have a better shot at staying in compliance with the law if he had all Gibson instruments made overseas.

So why are we talking about this? One word. Guitars. Actually the law applies to any wooden object from furniture to gun stocks but for now let’s talk about guitars.

A few days after the Memphis raid, we were with Kevin Madigan who is out mixing Crosby and Nash. During line check...
we noted how great the acoustic guitars sounded and asked if he was doing anything special. He wasn’t. As he put it, they are blessed with really good guitars. Instruments that the band has had for many years. Can you see where this is going?

The band was getting ready for a European leg and the decision had been made to leave those guitars at home and to rent - in addition to local PA, local instruments as well. Why? Because right now the entire law, and especially the enforcement of it, is murky at best. You may exit and enter the U.S. a dozen times with the band’s prized axes without incident. Or you may run into a glorified security guard with a bug up his butt who demands to see your documentation that all of the wood in that guitar was legally harvested. That means every piece of wood from the mahogany back and sides to the rosewood or ebony fingerboard. And not just according to U.S. law. According to the expanded scope of the Lacey Act, you would have to know where each piece of wood came from and be able to show that each piece was harvested and exported within the laws of the country from which it came. An impossible task. And if you can’t? The instrument might (MIGHT) be subject to forfeiture.

So, as your artists get ready to hit the road outside of the U.S., until someone clarifies the law and the enforcement becomes standardized you have two choices. 1) Tell your artist that he or she needs to leave their fave instrument at home or 2) take the chance that it gets confiscated. Neither one is good for job security…

Back to Mr. Madigan. As we were talking about this we looked down at the stage and noted that David Crosby is playing through an old Mesa Boogie; one of the hardwood cabinet ones, maybe made of Koa wood. We noted that guitars were not the only thing that would be left behind. Again, no one is being clear as to the extent of enforcement here. But this is a case where safer is way better than “sorry you lost the guitar you have had for 30 years.” And a one-way ticket home. ●
DALLAS WINSPEAR OPERA HOUSE IS ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF RENKUS-HEINZ

More than a quarter century in the making, Dallas’ AT&T Performing Arts Center is a cultural nexus in the city’s revitalized downtown arts district. The area is home to a number of different entertainment venues, from the Dallas Symphony’s Meyerson Auditorium and the intimate Wyly Theatre to the Winspear Opera House and the open-air Annette Strauss Square, making it a busy hub of activity on any given evening.

The 2,200-seat Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, created by architect Foster & Partners, with theater design by Theater Projects Consultants and acoustician Sound Space Design, is home to the Dallas Opera, and an anchor in the new arts district.

The Winspear’s sound system, designed by Martin Van Dijk of Toronto-based Engineering Harmonics, is centered around left/right arrays of 12 Renkus-Heinz STLA/9R RHAON empowered loudspeakers that retract into the ceiling when not in use. Low frequency reinforcement is provided by four Renkus-Heinz DR18-1 subwoofers on rolling dollies.

Renkus-Heinz PowerNet PN-Series loudspeakers provide additional coverage, with eight PN82/9 systems for over-balcony fill, and two PN151/4 systems flown from the venue’s soaring 60-ft high ceiling. A separate speech system was also installed, utilizing 10 Iconyx IC8-R and two IC16-R systems.

Just across the way from the Winspear, Annette Strauss Square is an outdoor performance venue that hosts concerts, theatrical and dance performances and festivals, with open-air seating for up to 2,400. As Jeff Stephens, technical supervisor for the Winspear and Strauss Square explains, the Square’s relatively close proximity, not only to the other venues but also to the surrounding luxury high-rise condominiums that are home to a growing number of urban professionals, created a few challenges in system design.
“Particularly with an outdoor venue in a populated area, it’s important to be good neighbors,” Stephens observes. “We worked with the city to make sure the sound could be steered and focused toward the seating, and away from the other buildings as much as possible. Having a rock concert right next to a symphony hall and an opera house could be problematic, and having it outside people’s homes would be even more so.”

The outdoor venue’s system, also designed by Martin Van Dijk, employs left and right arrays of ten STLA/9R boxes per side, along with six DR18-2 dual 18-inch subwoofers for low frequency power. A ring of SG42 two-way powered speakers acts as a delay fill. “We use the delay fill so we don’t have to drive the main PA quite as hard, which helps to keep the energy off the Meyerson,” says Stephens.

By all accounts, the PAC’s opening season has been an unmitigated success. “Thus far we’ve had several concerts and a dance festival, and the Square is becoming a very popular movie screening venue as well,” Stephens reports.

“We worked closely with the Opera on a performance of Don Giovanni at the Winspear, which was broadcast at Annette Strauss Square as an Opera Under the Stars event. It was a huge success, and we got lots of compliments on how great and clear the sound was. It was particularly gratifying, being outdoors and right next to a highway. The system performed beyond our expectations.”

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The system ran Jands’ next generation Vista v2 software, and on some sections of the tour operating duties were taken on by John Barker while Rob fulfilled other design commitments on his busy schedule - including tours by Peter Gabriel and Goldfrapp also utilising Vista systems.

Rob’s classy, innovative design for Adele was sculpted using entirely white light, a bold aesthetic move which has won considerable acclaim. None of the moving lights were seen to move, there was minimal flashing, and was a real case of subtlety and suggestion to augment Adele’s powerful performance and natural stage presence.

There was a distinctive back wall of 96 cone-shaped lampshades each illuminated from behind with a 60 Watt incandescent household light bulb - all individually dimmed. These had been dipped in a special rubber solution treatment to make them break-resistant.

The Matrix facilities on the Vista S1 - one of the many tools added with the Vista v2 upgrade - made mapping and programming this unique arrangement of lights extremely easy.

The lighting rig echoed the simplicity of the show’s concept. Rigged across three overhead trusses were seven Robe ColorSpot 2500E AT moving lights and 20 ETC Source Four profiles, and on the deck were 16 Martin Professional MAC 2K Washes, all supplied by Neg Earth Lights.

Commenting on the Vista v2 software, Rob says, “I really like it. It is very solid and a marked step forward from V1. It feels almost as if the console directly connects my brain to the lights”.

In addition to Rob’s Vista systems being used on Adele, Pulp, Peter Gabriel and Goldfrapp tours throughout 2011, one has also just gone out on Will Young’s latest UK tour, operated by Jason Hynde.

The next generation Vista v2 software was designed from the ground up to allow all levels of user get the most from whatever mix of technology they have available, whether dimmers, moving lights, LED, or media. Available in a wide range of hardware Vista v2 offers both the simplicity to work fast, with the power to control the finest details, so everyone can focus on creating a great looking show rather than on programming a desk.

Jands Europe’s Neil Vann commented, “Rob’s designs are always interesting, fantastic looking and very precise. Vista v2 offers the perfect balance to get the detailed control he demands, with the simplicity to get the most from the tight timeframes that today’s productions have to work to. If you haven’t taken a look at Vista v2 for yourself yet, take the chance to see just how much you could be getting from your time.....”
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Kern admits he was more actively involved in designing logistical aspects of the show than the artistic content, “My involvement was in the packaging of the tour with an eye toward moving it in and out of the three continents we were traveling to. We went in a couple different directions and finally came up with this concept and presented it to the band and they liked it. Then it was really about creating visual content of the show and Deuce directed all of that.”

Lighting Designer/Lighting Director - Kevin “Deuce” Christopher put forth a lighting design was a pretty basic system structurally because the plan was to dry hire lighting in South America while maintaining the integrity of the lighting design wherever the show went. The design had to have enough impact to carry the visual aspect of the show because for logistical reasons the video system didn’t make the South American run.

With the exception of six VL3000 Spots mounted on upstage set carts and four floor mounted VL3500 Wash’s the majority of the lighting rig consisted of five truss lines flown at descending trim heights with the farthest upstage being 12 feet above the stage. The trusses were loaded with the aforementioned Vari*Lite instruments as well as four Atomic 3000 strobes and four 4 light Mole fixtures. The farthest downstage trusses each had five racks of ACL’s. These five trusses were all used for backlight. There was a downstage truss that offered a downstage wash via six VL3500 Wash units. The downstage also contained ten Lekos intended for lighting fixed positions on the stage.

Deuce admits budget was a big part of the layout of the design, “The idea behind stepping the lighting system down like that was to take what we had within the budget and spread it out as far as we could and give it a huge dramatic look.”
photo by Michael A. Beck

photo courtesy of Jimmy Mathis Photography
As a result of that design decision, the lighting and [flown] video rigs became set pieces.

The video portion of the show was a bit different than what we're used to seeing. Because the band members are opposed to anything that might distract the audience from what's actually happening on stage there was no I-MAG component in the video array of the show. The flown video presentation was spread out across the upstage stack of truss in three lines of eight panels of PRG Nocturne's newly released V-18 product. Each panel measured 36.5" x 36.5". The video system and content were designed by the team of Mark Devlin Visual Designs and Jonathan Beswick.

Going into the design stage of the tour, Beswick and Devlin were also deep in design mode for Def Leppard's Mirror Ball Tour. As was the case with that tour, the initial plan was to go with PRG Nocturne's 28 mil V-Lite product for the 24 flown panels, or windows as they were referred to in our conversation with Deuce. However, when they all looked at the resolution of the V-Lite, it became apparent that the tighter resolution of V-18 was called for. Unfortunately, that meant the content had to be re-rendered in a remarkably short amount of time. This called for marathon sessions that involved Mark Devlin sleeping next to his rendering computers for a week.

The content played across the entire array as one large image. This broke up the overall image so that it was still visually relevant to the show but not so dominant as to distract the eye from the far more relevant live action on the stage. The design was logistically useful because when the system had to be squeezed to get into smaller venues so it would be done without distorting the content the panels could be brought closer in order to make the tight fit without damaging the image. The 24 flown panels were not the extent of the video presentation. The upstage line was comprised of six set carts that were each loaded with V-9 Classic (PRG Nocturne's original nine mil product.)

While this was great look, it posed an interesting challenge, “I’m not used to having audio concerns with my designs, but this was different. The band has always played with their amps out on stage. When we put the video pieces out there we eliminated the band’s backline.” While the band were the ones who came up with the idea, it took a fair amount of cooperation between Deuce, the backline crew and the audio team to make it work. “We have a great crew out here and we all work together really well,” said Deuce.

In the end, the solution was to leave enough space between the carts to allow the cabinets to push through the opening.

The guys in the band also have closed in-ear monitors as well.

One element that Deuce had never designed with was lasers. In the beginning of the tour the laser system consisted of four eight watt green lasers. “They lasted about four shows into the European run before [Journey guitarist Neal Schon] put the kibosh on that,” recalled Strictly FX Laser Tech Duane Nowak. “He said the green look was like every other show that had generic green lasers.” That stripped Nowak’s responsibility back to firing confetti/streamers every night. Then about four days prior to going out on the American leg of the tour, two 20 watt Arctos units and two 16 watt Kvant RGBY lasers were added to the show.

Because the Kvant lasers have a safety feature that shuts them down if the temperature of the unit goes above or below established parameters, they were placed on the deck thus averting the need for Nowak – the only technician on his “team” – to climb into the rig to do a reset during the show. The Arctos units were place in the rig instead. The full spectrum (including white) Arctos lasers added a far more dynamic visual effect to the show.

There is a growing trend of allowing support acts to bring additional production elements on the tour in an effort to give the audience members more bang for their buck. Such was the case with Foreigner who was the second act on this bill following Night Ranger. The aforementioned ACL racks in the lighting rig were actually there by request of Foreigner Lighting Designer Cosmo Wilson. Since they were there, Deuce put them to work in his show as well.

According to Wilson, a deal was cut giving Foreigner full access to the entire lighting rig. However, understanding the realities of the industry mandating the headlining act have the biggest look, Wilson expressed to Deuce his tacit acceptance that there was no way he would actually get the entire rig. “I’ve been in his shoes before,” said Wilson. “I knew I wasn’t going to get the whole rig. They allowed me to hang a few extra lights and it all worked out.” He went on to explain how the ACL’s came into the picture, “When we’re touring on our own I use my ACL bump buttons quite a bit and in the beginning of this tour in England I kept going to those bumps and it was bumming me out. So I went to lighting crew chief Kevin Cassidy and talked to him about adding some ACL’S and he said it was doable. I then took it to Deuce and he asked me what I wanted. When I told him what I was looking for he said, ‘well get it done.’”

Understanding that the bill for the lighting addition was on Foreigner’s tab, Wilson spoke very highly of the cooperative spirit of Journey’s crew as did Foreigner Production Manager Simon Sidi, “Any restraints we had on our show
Journey

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photo by Michael A. Beck

photo courtesy of Jimmy Mathis Photography
few bands have an iconic sound like Journey. To add visual excitement to that classic sound, the rockers turned to Strictly FX for lasers, confetti - and even beach balls, to emphasize the upbeat mood and bring the show out to the crowd.

Journey’s powerful sound provides all the inspiration for the FX, says Strictly FX lead technician Duane Nowak, who designed the confetti cues and is on the road with the band. “Everything we do adds to that moment that already exists in the song. It’s quite an honor to be able to put our spin on the Journey songs.”

Especially for encore, “Don’t Stop Believin’,” Nowak pulls out all the stops, cueing the lasers while coating the audience and stage in a snowstorm of white confetti and streamers. “It’s quite a lot of effects for one guy,” Nowak says. “But it’s very exciting,” he says, adding that the band has been quite collaborative regarding placement and timing of the FX.

On this leg of the tour, Strictly FX brought four high-powered color lasers, six double-streamer cannons, four of the company’s patented Confetti Cobrasm, four base hazers and eight large beach balls. Strictly FX Designer Doug Cenko and Art Director David Kennedy designed all the laser looks for the show, working closely with LD Kevin Christopher and Production Manager Rob Kern.

Strictly FX started with the band at rehearsals in England in June. The last dates on this leg of the tour wrapped up Oct. 21, with the band currently in talks to extend to Australia, Asia and possibly back to Europe in early 2012.

were not political, they were practical and logistical. We only had a certain amount of time and space within which to work. Journey wanted us to have as good a show as possible. In addition to the extra lighting support Foreigner was allowed for its portion of the tour, there was also a 30’x8’ video wall that flew just downstage of a drape situated between the second and third trusses (from the upstage).

Despite the fact that PRG Nocturne was the video vender for Journey, the company Foreigner went with for its video gear was Chaos Visual Productions. “I’ve known Nick and John for 30 years,” Sidi explained. “I’m quite happy to work with them. They’ve got the right gear for us at the right price.”

In addition to inserting an extra layer of production value to the middle of the bill, Foreigner beefed up the show opener by allowing Night Ranger the use of the video wall for its production graphics.

One hallmark of this production from top to bottom was a pervasive sense of cooperation. “We have a great deal to thank Rob Kern and his crew for.” said Sidi, “It’s a lot more than just hanging a truss for us or allowing us to add some lights. Those guys really helped us immensely at every step of the way. Rob Kern and Scott and Deuce and all his staff were just phenomenal.”

This show traveled in only seven trucks and not one person at the show we covered seemed bothered by the lack of another 20 trucks of gear. That’s not to denigrate larger shows whose budget allows for more extensive production elements. Instead it points up the fact that budget is less consequential when creative talents such as Rob Kern, Deuce, FOH Engineer Orris Henry (who was running the sexiest console on the road), Stage Manager Scott Nordvold, Duane Nowak and many others have a hand on how the budget is applied. In fact the show had a look to it that belied in huge measure the size of the budget and logistical restraints the production functioned within.

There is another point that must be made about this crew. When Rob Kern saw the crew shots he was a bit concerned that our reading public my get the idea that his crew might lack humor. Nothing could be farther from the truth. While we will not go into examples of how humor manifested itself during our visit, we ask that you take our word for the fact that Kern and his team don’t mind showing that they love their jobs.

Just ask them. ◆
Crew Party

Production/Tour Manager - Rob Kern
Production Coordinator - Wendy Catto
Stage Manager - Scott Nordvold
Wardrobe/Dressing Room Coordinator - Jennifer Blanchard
FOH Engineer - Orris Henry
Monitor Engineer - Joshua Swart
Lighting Designer/Director - Kevin “Deuce” Christopher
Guitar Technician - Adam Day
Guitar /Bass Tech - Jeff “Jeffro” Hannah
Keyboard Technician - Brent “Elvis” Jeffers
Drum Technician - Steve Toomey
Venue Security - Richie Surrency
Monitor Technician - Jason Bennett
Audio Technician - Corey Harris
System Technician - David “Quiggers” Quigley
Lighting Crew Chief - Kevin Cassidy
Lighting Crew: Gary Boldenweck, Tyler Munson, Oscar Canales
Imag Video Director - Matthew Howe
Video Technician - Angelo Bartolome
Special Fx Tech - Duane Nowak
Merchandiser - Steve Lewis
ILAA Representative - Jeff Allen
Bus Driver (Band Bus) - Vance Vigna
Bus Driver (Arnel’s Bus) - Gary Lumpkin
Bus Driver (Band Bus) - Danny Crum
Bus Driver (Neal’s Bus) - Melvin Markham
Crew Bus Drivers: Joe Mooney, Charles Strausbaugh, Nathaniel James
Lead Truck Driver - Mark Beasley
Truck Drivers: Roland Jung, John Pyle, Bob Reddy, Glenn Hoffman, John Fredrick

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FOREIGNER CREW

Tracey Wiedeman VIP Manager

NIGHT RANGER CREW
FOREIGNER CREW
Tour Manager - Robin Irvine
Assistant Tour Manager - James Taylor
Production Manager - Simon Sidi
Lighting Designer - Cosmo Wilson
Stage Manager / Backline - John Pelligrinelli
Monitor Engineer - Lorenzo Banda
FOH Engineer - Mike Lowe
Guitar Technician - Cris Lepurage
Guitar Technician - Joshua Williams
Set / Keyboards - Ed Fitzwater
Keyboard Technician - Kevin Mcgrath
Video Technician - Kevin Mcguire
VIP Manager - Tracey Wiedeman
Merchandising - Steve Lutz
Band Bus Driver - Dan Gillis
Crew Bus Driver - Thom Blauvelt
Truck Driver - Selwyn Champion

NIGHT RANGER CREW
Todd Confessore - Tour Manager
Brian J. Simon - Production Manager/FOH Engineer
Mark Newman - Backline Technician
Glenn Kaufman - Backline Technician

Mark Newman - Backline Technician, Todd Confessore - Tour Manager, Glenn Kaufman - Backline Technician, Brian J. Simon - Production Manager/FOH Engineer
SummerStage continued from 11

a workout in the park we do every year in May, we have a couple of cultural events that we do every year in May, and a couple of concerts, and we try and build out the last bit of SummerStage in the beginning of June. Then in the end of September we start our strike.”

“In late October,” Burke adds, “the Summer Stage venue is just an empty dirt field,” Burke muses.

And when a blanket of snow covers Central Park in the winter, nobody knows it was there, until the next spring.

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- The system is completely self-contained so no external power supply is needed. A diesel-fueled generator provides 100 hours of continuous, quiet operation (at half load) and power outputs via standard CEE 32A plugs.

SPECIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screen (WxH):</th>
<th>27'-8&quot; x 15'-1&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pixel</td>
<td>704hor x 384vert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>24R/12Vmm, 1R2G1B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiles</td>
<td>22 width x 12 high Total 264 Tiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot print at venue (LxWxH)</td>
<td>45' x 32' x 31'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailer (LxWxH)</td>
<td>45' x 8' x 13-5&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>38,000 LBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel generator</td>
<td>On board, 100 KW , 120/208 VAC, 60 Hz, 347 AMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical panel</td>
<td>400 AMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shore power Requirements</td>
<td>200Amp, 5wire, 3 phase, camlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power consumption</td>
<td>15kW/h @ 40Amp/leg/phase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ADVERTISER’S Index

AAA Communications.........................19
Accurate Staging................................40
Acropolis Aviation............................13
Baker Donelson.................................34
Beat The Street................................IBC
Boulvard Pro.......................................23
Celebrity Jet Charters.........................23
Clay Paky............................................2
Coach Quarters...................................13
Cube Passes.......................................7
D&S Custom Coach.............................33
Engine Power Source (EPS)...................11
Epic Production Technologies..............1
Global Special FX...............................17
Guitar Hands.....................................21
I-MAG Video.......................................38
LMG Touring.......................................40
Loews Vanderbilt Hotel.......................36
Master Brian Gates............................33
MD Live.............................................17
Michael A. Beck Photography..............19
Motor Coach Industries (MCI)..............23
NIC Freight........................................13
OSA - On Stage Audio...........................5
Precise Corporate Staging....................21
Prevost.............................................BC
Pyro Engineering...............................34
RIC Corporation................................33
RN Entertainment.............................13
Road Radios.....................................30
Roadhouse Coach...............................4
Stage Call.........................................37
Taylor Tours.....................................34
Tour Logistics...................................33
X-Streamers.com..................IFI
Xpeditious Unlimited.........................IFC
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