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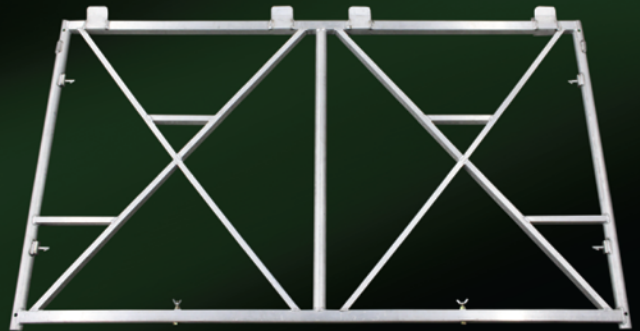
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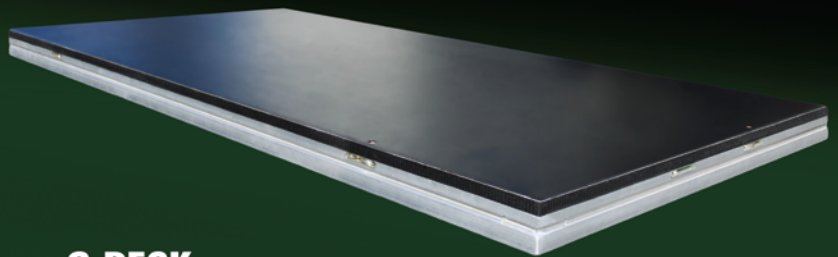
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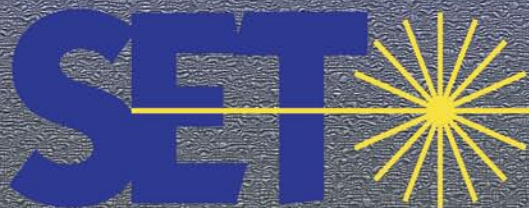
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FROM THE *Publisher*



Is it possible? Is it 2013 already? Where did the last year go? Maybe this is a function of age, but it seems that it we went from Spring to Christmas in a blink of an eye! Tour Link is on us and that is where our year begins. We work pretty hard during the year, but nothing like the amount of work we do during the last quarter of the year. So, I want to take this chance to thank our staff for all the hard work they put out. I especially want to thank Managing Editor, Chris Cogswell and our Chief Writer, Michael Beck.

In this issue, we cover one of the more challenging tours on the road, Madonna and her MDNA Tour. Her tours are always challenging, but the show is always something special. A lot of the credit for the production goes to Production Manager extraordinaire Jake Berry. Jake is one of those rare individuals who can balance multiple tasks and while doing so, remains the perfect gentleman. Jake will bring his experience to Tour Link this year, so don't miss the chance to hear him speak and meet him....he is worth the trip by himself.

Also in this issue is a piece on Le Bas Air Charter. This company also has a director with a unique personality. Tracey Deakin is a Brit with an amazing wit. Hey, that rhymes! I may have to let him use that line. In any event, his energy is driving this company into the industry with quality service keeping client interests as the primary mission.

So, enjoy this issue and we hope to see you in Scottsdale.

Larry Smith
Publisher



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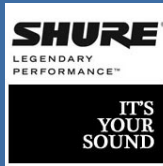
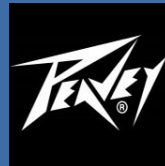
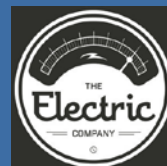
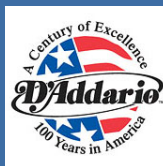
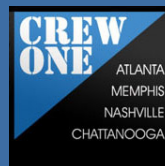
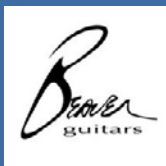
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The Stones Roll at 50 with Clair

With former members Bill Wyman and Mick Taylor making cameo appearances, along with guest spots from guitar legend Jeff Beck and songstress Mary J. Blige, The Rolling Stones celebrated their 50th anniversary with style and panache with two sold out shows at London's 20,000-capacity O2 Arena in late November.

Dressed in a silver blazer and trilby, Mick Jagger led the vintage rockers — Keith Richards, Ron Wood, Charlie Watts and sidemen Daryl Jones (bass) and Chuck Leavall (keys) — through a crowd-pleasing, no-filler set of classic songs spanning their five decades as “the greatest rock’n’roll band in the world”.

From their 1963 hit ‘I Wanna Be Your Man’ through to their current chart

success, ‘Doom And Gloom’, the band’s commanding stage presence was as dynamic as it has ever been, with Sir Mick at ease as he cracked jokes between numbers.

Clair Global was chosen by the Stones’ production management supremo Dale ‘Opie’ Skjerseth to supply the audio systems and crew for the shows as well as private band sessions in France and production rehearsals at Wembley Arena in the week leading up to the opening 50 & Counting show.

FOH engineer Dave Natale, whose close association with Clair stretches back to his twenties, entered the Rolling Stones’ camp in 2005 on their A Bigger Bang world tour. He mixed the latest shows on a pair of Yamaha PM4000 analogue consoles, relying on outboard devices such as the Aphex 612 expander gate, Yamaha SPX 990 digital multi FX, Manley EL-OP tube limiter, dbx 903 comp/limiter, Smart C-2 dual mono compressor and Apogee Rosetta 200 AD/DA convertor.

Natale mixed to a PA consisting of main and side hangs of Clair’s flagship i-5 line array with flown i-5b bass modules and P-2 two-way active front fill cabinets. There were further i-5s in a rear hang. The system was set up by Brett Stec using Clair’s proprietary AlignArray software; it was powered by Crown amplification and processed with Clair iO loudspeaker processors.

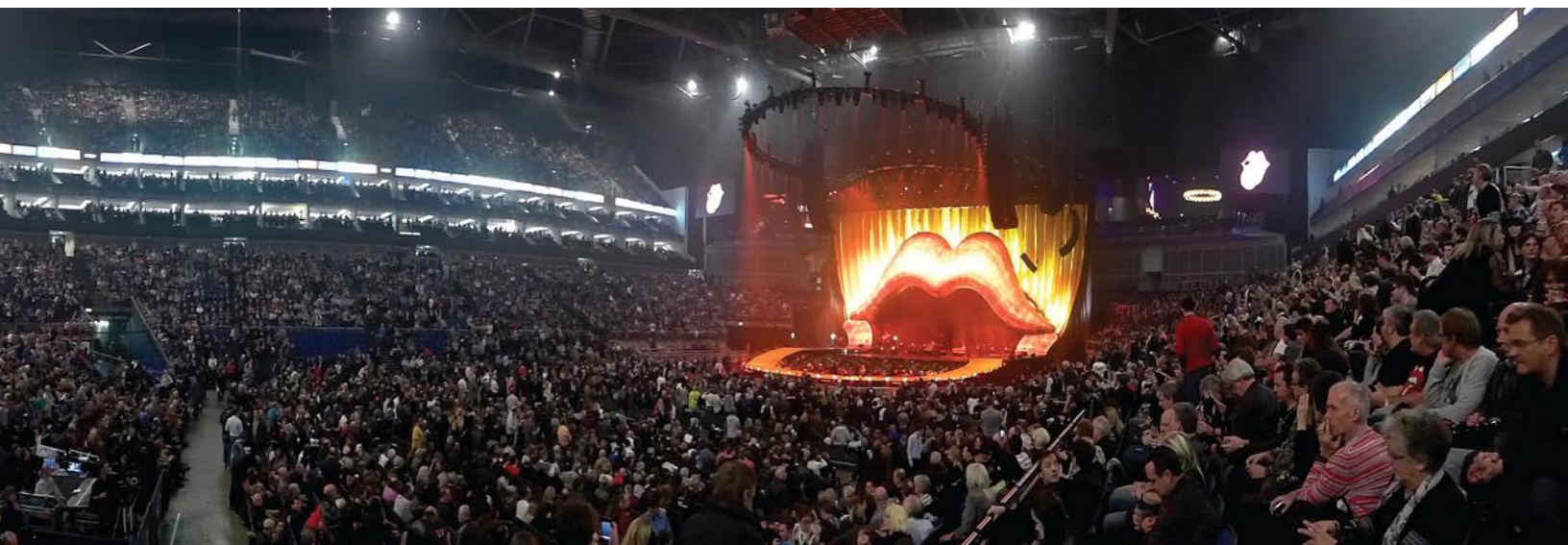
Another Clair long-timer, Ed Dracoules mixed monitors and divided his channels across a primary Midas Heritage 3000 console and an Avid (formerly Digidesign) D-Show Profile, a secondary board added to handle inputs specific to the show’s introduction and encore. Stage monitoring was provided by Clair 12AM wedges, R-4 Series III full-range cabinets, i-5b bass modules and Shure PSM1000 IEM systems.

Outboard in monitor world included dbx 160a mono compression, Aphex 622 expander gates, t.c. electronic TC1128 28-band graphic EQ and Yamaha SPX 990 effects. Shure UR series wireless systems were used throughout.

Chiefed by Lars Schlapfer, the Clair crew included system engineer Brett Stec, PA technicians Adam Collins, Matt Woolley and Tino Kreischatus, monitor system techs Myles Hale and Don Baker, and stage techs Simon Bauer and Thomas Huntington.

The Rolling Stones followed their 50 & Counting shows at the O2 with US dates at Brooklyn’s Barclays Center (December 8) and the Prudential Center in Newark (December 13/15).

www.clairglobal.com





Robe Adds its Voice to Top German Talent Competition

Nearly 200 Robe moving lights added glamour, sparkle and dynamics to the lighting design by Manuel da Costa for The Voice of

Germany (TVOG) 2012.

The hugely popular talent show was produced by Schwartzkopff TV Productions GmbH & Co KG and Talpa Distribution B.V. and recorded in Am Studio 20 of Studio Berlin.

It was broadcast on ProSieben and SAT.1, and featured a live audience of 1200.

Da Costa also lit the first TVOG series in 2011, for which he also used Robe fixtures at the heart of his design. He had a relatively open brief on lighting this one, and had to fulfil all the main criteria of a high profile TV show – being flexible enough to give each artist an individual look for their different performances and to ensure it worked well on camera and looked good to the studio audiences.

Also, there needed to be a visual harmony with Florian Wieder's impressive modernist tri-angled and arched set design.

Da Costa, one of Germany's leading TV lighting designers, opted for Robe products because he's used them before on several previous prestigious projects and knew they could produce the effects he wanted. Also because of their reliability and consistency.

The full Robe count was 98 x ColorSpot 2500E ATs, 62 x ColorWash 2500E ATs, 26 ColorWash 1200E ATs and two ColorBeam 2500E ATs.

Seventy-four of the ColorSpot 2500E ATs were rigged in the trussing system above the stage and the other 24 were hung on a

matrix of towers behind the stage and around the central video wall. All 88 of the ColorWash 2500 and 1200E AT fixtures were also in the roof.

The pair of ColorBeam 2500E ATs were centre stage behind the opening video screen to silhouette performers for their entrances and exits.

The ColorSpot 2500E ATs and the ColorWash 2500E ATs were used as the respective spot and wash backbones of the lighting rig, chosen for their power and intensity. "Reliability, colour and output are excellent," says Da Costa adding that they are also very fast moving and he likes the smooth dimming.

"The Robe 2500 Series overall delivers a bright strong and punchy beam," he states.

He appreciated the rotating gobo and prism effects – always a winner for 'light entertainment' TV lighting – and finds the variable frost very helpful for creating wash effects. He also utilised the iris and shutter features to create some cool stuff!

Da Costa has been using Robe lights regularly for his designs since 2007, when German distributor LMP initially invited him for a demonstration, and he has been a firm advocate ever since.

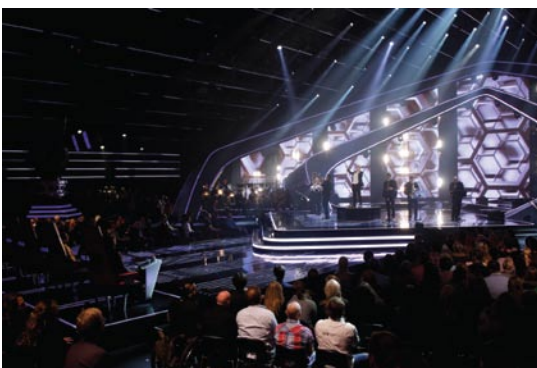
For The Voice of Germany 2012 Da Costa worked with a programming team of three, all using grandMA consoles. Michael Baganz controlled all the Robes and moving lights; white lights were operated by Uli Weiss and video was run by Bjoerge Block. Video content was produced by Falk Rosenthal from Gravity.

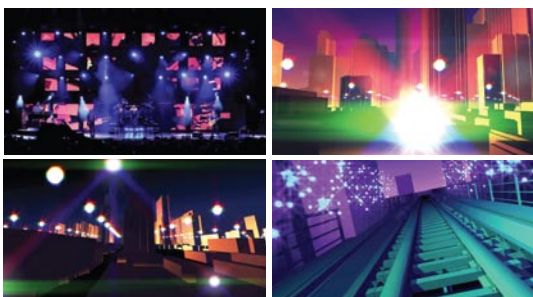
The Robes were supplied to the show by rental company MLS Magic Light + Sound GmbH from Köln, whose lighting production manager was Klaus Wedig.

The Voice of Germany 2012 was won by British singer / songwriter Nick Howard with his song "Unbreakable".

The show was directed by Mark Achterberg and frequently attracted viewer ratings of several million, all of whom were treated to that bit of extra Robe visual magic courtesy of Da Costa!

www.robe.cz





GMATTER Delivers Video Content Design for Journey's World Tour

GMatter of Boston, MA completed video design work for the legendary group Journey as they head to Australia and New Zealand on their 2013 Eclipse World Tour.

GMatter produced video for live performances for "Don't Stop Believing", "Escape" and "Wheel In The Sky". Kevin "Deuce" Christopher, Lighting Designer for Journey, directed the video project for the band while David Bigelow lead the post production creative team through the video editing and compositing process.

Playing to arena audiences Journey's stage features a video display of 30 LED video screens rising 40 feet above. For "Don't Stop Believing" a full 3D city was created in Cinema 4D. The intended effect: to depict a sensation on stage that the band members of Journey are actually riding on board a city subway train. "The effect when you watch it is pretty exciting. Using 3D to get a sense of depth makes the stage feel even deeper," said David Bigelow, GMatter's Director of Post Production.

All digital editing and compositing was done in Boston until rehearsals in San Manuel, CA began late last summer. "Working with the LD and the band at rehearsals is the most productive part of the process. We can see the video with the band on stage finally after weeks of only imagining it. We continue to edit and change content as needed," said Peter Moll, Director of Production at GMatter.

"Video content needs to work well with the lighting design and not overshadow the band. It needs to be an ideal backdrop for them. I believe we struck the right balance with GMatter's new content. The results speak for

themselves", Kevin "Deuce" Christopher said.

GMatter of Boston, MA has developed video content for artists Nicki Minaj, Elton John, Van Halen, James Taylor, Stone Temple Pilots, Guns N Roses, Velvet Revolver and ZZ Top.

www.gmatter.tv

The Hands That Rock Massages the Future for Underprivileged Children

Newly Formed Organization Receives
Star Power Support

The Hands That Rock (HTR) is an organization with a mission to bring the magic of music to underserved communities throughout the world. Founded by Darcy Lynch, founder of Stage Hands Massage Therapy (SHM), the organization will provide "Chair Massages" for audiences at major concerts, music festivals and events with net proceeds supporting music programs in cooperation with local music outreach organizations.

Since its inception in June 2012, the five-month young charity had 390 massage therapists at 31 music festivals and events nationwide for 118 consecutive days raising \$12,000. HTR's services are not limited to only the United States. SHM, the sister company to HTR, presently covers a worldwide territory, providing healthcare services to the Music and Entertainment industry with local practitioners.

HTR's primary focus will be on developing and partnering with programs concerned with music education, performance, related resources and outreach for individuals and groups in need. It will additionally address community initiatives associated with such outreach programs and groups to include environmental, social and health-related concerns to help create a suitable environment for the creation and performance of music.

"When I first started talking to various individuals in the performance industry about The

Hands That Rock, many people told me that they would pitch in and help by letting us set up chair massage areas at their festivals," says Darcy Lynch. "Kevin Lyman, founder of Unite the United, partnered with us and actually purchased branded massage tents and took them on the Vans Warped, Mayhem and Uproar Fest tours. A portion of the proceeds from massaging was donated to the charity, Little Kids Rock. Some of the concert producers have favorite local charities and we gladly support these organizations as well. We are grateful that the industry has given us such strong support."

Some of the charity's events and festivals have included: the Vans Warped tour, Rockstar Energy Mayhem Festival, Uproar Festival, Identity Fest, Country Throwdown the PGA Tour, CVS Charity Classic, Jeffery Osborne Celebrity Golf Tournament, Newport Jazz & Folk Festivals, Moogfest, Harvest Music Festival, Bumbershoot, and many more.



The future growth of HTR is inevitable. In order for our highest level of exponential success to be reached, our plan is to expand our services across industries such as Sports and Entertainment, Film and Television, and Corporate Events. To help prepare for this growth, we are looking for assistance from notable industry leaders to become directly involved by joining our board of advisors and by forming partnerships with HTR to co-promote similar charitable causes.

For more information please contact, Darcy Lynch at: handsthatrock@gmail.com or by phone: 401.369.2239

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S.I.R. Opens New Rehearsal Studios in Vegas

Company Offering Unique Opportunity for Touring Bands to Consider

SIR Studio Instrument Rentals of Las Vegas has announced the Grand Opening of the first truly professional rehearsal complex in Nevada. The new SIR facility located at 4545 Cameron Street, provides two dedicated studios nicknamed "The Sound Stage" and "The Living Room" both staffed by their team of dedicated backline and audio technicians in a unique setting near the famous Las Vegas Strip.

Studio #1 "The Sound Stage" has an impressive open span of 55' x 83' x 30' without obstructions and is wrapped entirely in tracked 24' black velour drapery. The Studio Power Panel features (2) 100 amps 3 phase circuits with Cam-lok connectors and a total of 400 amps of dedicated power. The stage offers 14' truck load-in and Stage Door exterior entrances.

Studio #2 "The Living Room" is a plush 1200 sq. ft. soundproofed room measuring 30'x 40' with a dedicated Control Room, mixing board console, PA system, effects rack and microphone package in a fully temperature controlled environment.

Las Vegas SIR is very tour friendly with semi-truck dock high door loading for easy access, a large break room, spacious lobby and is adjacent to thousands of nearby hotels, restaurants and the glamour and glitz of Las Vegas. The complex boasts on-site parking for all tour vehicles with great security in the best part of town. Road Managers know

that layovers in Las Vegas are much more economical than other Southwest cities.

John Panichello road tech working on "The Million Dollar Quartet" said "SIR Las Vegas' New Dock High Loading saved the show by providing quick semi-truck turn around, a convenient access to the stage and a pleasant staff.

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PreSonus Names Patrick Faucher to CIO Post

PreSonus® has named Patrick Foucher to the newly created post of Chief Information

Officer. In his new position, Faucher will oversee the streamlining and unification of the company's communications infrastructure, focusing on end-user experience across the entire suite of PreSonus hardware, software, and online solutions, as well as internal data and communication platforms.

Faucher was previously the CEO and co-founder of Nimbit® (now a part of the PreSonus family), where he was instrumental in creating the music industry's most powerful direct-to-fan platform for musicians. Prior to founding Nimbit, Faucher was Technology Director at Stumpworld Systems, where he helped to create some of the first e-commerce applications for bands, including Phish, Aerosmith, and the Rolling Stones.

In his new position, Faucher will focus on making PreSonus' online information systems more consistent, simple, and engaging for dealers, distributors, reps, customers, and others who do business with the company.

"PreSonus is a global company, with teams in Hamburg, Hong Kong, Ireland, and Massachusetts, along with our main office in Baton Rouge. We want to better integrate our systems from all of these aspects of the company," says PreSonus CEO Jim Mack. "Furthermore, with the integration of Nimbit, PreSonus has created an ecosystem of hardware, software, and services. Creating a streamlined communications environment within PreSonus is essential in today's

highly connected world, and I can't think of anyone more qualified than Patrick to spearhead that integration. I am confident he will help us provide a better user experience for everyone who interacts with our information systems."

"Now that Nimbit is part of the PreSonus family, I welcome this new challenge," says Faucher. "The team here is an incredible group of industry innovators and leaders. I'm excited to be working with them to create an integrated ecosystem of solutions that has never been done. Together we're going to provide a great user experience for everyone who uses our systems."

www.presonus.com

Dominic Harter Returns to HARMAN to Head Up Soundcraft's Global Sales Machine

Dominic Harter has rejoined HARMAN to head up Soundcraft's global sales operation, following the promotion of Adrian Curtis to VP Sales of the HARMAN Professional EMEA sales team. Harter originally joined HARMAN in 1998, primarily to manage the systems supply of the vast quantity of HARMAN equipment to the Millennium Dome project,

working with all the HARMAN brands on all aspects of the project. With the completion of the project, Harter became Sales Manager with BSS Audio and C Audio, using his in-depth technical knowledge and sales skills to

support the distributors and products.

Harter has spent the last 10 years with Turbosound, where he was Director of R&D before becoming Sales Director.



"It's great to be back at HARMAN with so many great people and old friends," Harter reported. "Soundcraft was the first brand I ever worked for as a student and I am relishing this opportunity to steer the brand through the next phases of the digital console market development, and work with all the regional HARMAN Pro sales teams around the world. It is a pleasure to be part of such a fantastic brand."

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Greg Lake Comes Full Circle

by richard bennett

With only three crew members and a small van, Greg Lake's solo jaunt across Europe is a nostalgic trip back in time to the early days of the touring industry.

The American Novelist Peter De Vries was right, to a certain extent, when he said "Nostalgia isn't what it used to be." There is an age that we all reach, when we start to reminisce, about lost loves, missed opportunities and the early days of our careers. And as the years pass these trips down memory lane tend to take on a more romantic view than the harsh reality they actually were.

For most individuals who have chosen the life of touring as their contribution to the employment statistics, those early days inevitably centered around working with a small band; Touring up and down the country in a beaten up old van, which carried not only the gear, but the group and the crew, stopping at out of the way all night cafés, for enough greasy food to induce a coronary by the fourth mouthful.

During the early 70s, many of the future supergroups of rock traveled that very path, driving up and down the M1 - the longest Motorway in England connecting London to the rest of the north of the country. The Rolling Stones, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and many others could constantly be seen huddled in their Bedford vans speeding along the road to the next poorly paid gig.

For veteran sound engineer John Turner, it is a time he remembers with a rose tinted fondness.

"Any day of the week you could pull into the Watford Gap Services café, just North of London at 2:00 in the morning and the car park would be full of beaten up Bedford vans. Inside the restaurant you would see Francis Rossi and Rick Parfitt from Status Quo eating their egg and chips, Lemmy would be standing in the corner playing the fruit machine. Everyone who is today considered rock royalty would stop at Watford on the way back from their gigs in the North. The M1 was where we all paid our dues, whether you were in a band or part of their road crew. That's where we learnt our trade," he says.

Although, Turner's career has moved on from those days along with the bands he worked for, bigger and better tours have become his staple diet for more than four decades. But life is a full circle, and as FOH engineer for Greg Lake's *Songs of a Lifetime* solo tour, Turner has found himself once again traveling Europe in a small van, with all the gear piled in the back heading up and down the motorway, just like the good old days.

The idea for the tour came from Lake himself, while he was writing his autobiography "Lucky Man", as he explains:

"While I was writing the book, these songs that had had an effect on my career kept popping into my head, and I realized that it was almost like a tapestry of my life and that these songs also meant things to other people, like the fans that had followed me throughout my career. I then came up with the idea of a solo tour that would take me and the audience on a journey through our collective memories and emotions."

With the concept of a collective journey, Lake wanted the show to have an intimate and personal feel to it, similar to a US tour he had done with Keith Emerson a few years ago. For that tour, the two former Emerson Lake and Palmer band members re-created a recording studio environment on stage, complete with a huge glass window, with the actual tour

monitor engineer mixing live sitting in the booth on stage with them, and even a red recording light which would come on when they played.

For the *Songs of a Lifetime* tour, Lake worked with Production/Tour manager André Cholmondeley and Turner to create a stage production that consisted of a group of flight cases and guitars scattered around the stage, with a few spotlight stands lighting up Lake.



"Greg wanted the on-the-road feel for this set up, with the flight cases on stage and the guitars just lying around," says Cholmondeley.

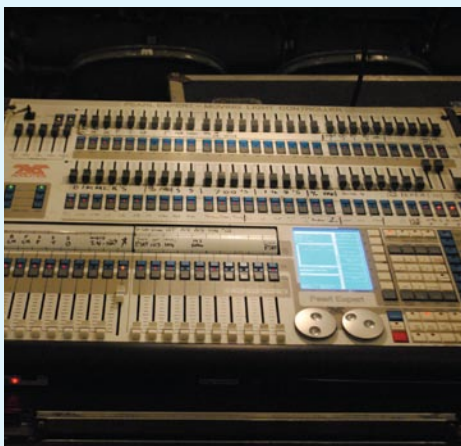
This idea worked, not only from the obligatory budget restraints aspect, but also from a gear prospective. With the desire to make the whole tour self-sufficient, there was a reluctance to use local vendors. Therefore, the challenge was to carry all their own equipment for every gig, a set up that not only had to fulfill the demands of the show, but would also fit into a small seven and a half ton van, or as Cholmondeley puts it, "Give us a stage and power and we are ready to go!"

With the logistical and cost restrictions, along with the self-sufficient concept, pre-production consisted of several discussions concerning the type, cost and compatibility of the equipment needed.

A long time DiGiCo Profile user, Turner

has turned to the Yamaha M7 mixing desk for this tour, primarily due to its light weight construction. As for the PA system, he has gone for the d&b 4 system, which he refers to as “a small punchy PA, that was suitable for every venue,” and a number of d&b D12 digital amps as they are small enough to fit into the one truck.

While the whole ethos of this tour from the production perspective was to be self-sufficient, Turner will take a left and right feed out of the desk into the local venues in house sound system, if available, mainly for venues that have a balcony. This allows him to get the coverage he needs for a full clear sound.



Lake has his own preferences when it comes to the microphone set up, as Turner explains:

“We are only miking up the vocals on this run. We have three separate mikes in three different positions on stage. They are all Shure Beta 87A’s, because Greg likes the sound of them, I mix his in-ear mix from FOH. Normally we would use a Sennheiser 935, but for this tour we are using the IEM G3 In-Ear.”

Joining Lake, Turner and Cholmonderley on this back-to-basics tour is Lighting Director Oliver Player. It’s his job to give the minimal stage set up that all important atmospheric mood. For this he is running with three Selecon PC Rama Fresnels, four Robe ColourSpot 700E AT units, three Robe LED 148 Blinders and two Martin Atomic 3000s. For atmospheric effects Player employed two JEM 24/7 Hazers. The gear that was in the air was supported by three Doughty Easy Lift

wind up stands. Other lighting gear on the production is a Martin RS 485 Splitter Light Processor Paradime 19” rack dimmer for Dimming and Distro. All of this is run through an Avolites Pearl Expert desk.

With such a small and compact production, the tour is certainly a throwback to the early days of touring, including the pre-production. On this run, Player was given a couple of hours and a video of the US shows to sort out the light programming, while Turner and Cholmonderley spent one day with Lake running through the set, before packing up the van and hitting the road.

A unique aspect of the tour is the Q&A session that Lake has after the interval, sitting on one of the flight cases. He invites members of the audience to ask him questions about his career and his songs, occasionally playing a couple of tracks. For this section, Player and Cholmonderley walk around the venue with two hand-held microphones passing them to the audience for the questions.

With only the three of them covering the whole production, the ability to be adaptable and the need to wear many different hats has become a way of life. Turner is not only the sound engineer, but also takes care of the VIP package ticket sales and fans, while Cholmonderley doubles up as Lake’s guitar tech and on-stage monitor engineer. Player helps out with several different aspects alongside his LD role.

Being a self-sufficient tour does have a number of advantages such as more control over the set up and the crew. All three of them know each other well and more importantly, get on with each other. With Lake driving to each show in his car, the crew all travel in the van together. Using local crew for load-in and load-out at each venue is the only time the numbers swell, but once the van is packed it’s just back to basics as they head to the next venue.

For Cholmonderley, this back-to-basics touring is not so much about the production side of things as it is about the music. Running with a small production

allows the music to take center stage, which ultimately is why the fans come to the gig.

“At the end of the day, the music has to be good. If the music is really good, then you can get away with a minimal production and a relatively clear stage. With Greg’s history and his experiences it’s the music and stories that drive this show. All we do is add a bit of atmosphere.”



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Twenty-Three Successfully Safe Years of White Glove Charter Service

BY MIKE WHARTON

Madonna's *MDNA* Tour production once again utilized the air charter services of Le Bas International. This is the air charter company's fourth outing with the Madonna production. The tour consisted of three commercial size craft; the A320, 737 and a McDonnell Douglas-80 to transport performers and production crew. Launched in 1990, the company's three original principals Peter Le Bas, Tracy Deakin, and Patrick Hampton continue today as the management core. Previously, Le Bas had owned a limousine service in LA, catering to the entertainment industry. The company was doing substantial business when Le Bas sold the successful enterprise and created Le Bas International with partners Deakin and Hampton.

Deakin and Le Bas crossed paths when Le Bas was running his limo service. Deakin was working for a charter company out of Long Beach, CA known as Alpha Jet at the time. Le Bas International grew out of a conversation between Deakin and Le Bas about private jets.

Le Bas International remains a brokerage company. A firm decision was made in the early days not to own a fleet of aircraft. Though the option was viable and capital available, the commitment was more a cornerstone of their business philosophy rather than a financial adjunct.

The reason for this, states Le Bas is, "We wanted to keep



very objective with the client so when they came to us with a certain request we could produce a range of aircraft rather than try to sell them one specific fleet or model. This decision has worked well for us, allowing the company to successfully grow more quickly and now, twenty-three years later, we still have no desire to own aircraft."

Of course, a hand-off of this sort needs to be well-vetted to garner the success and customer loyalty Le Bas strives to maintain. Missed deadlines, departures, arrivals or delays of any kind are simply not an option.



International since 1995.

This dual sided loyalty has created two very important aspects to the company's business. The financial acumen has practically guaranteed Le Bas's ability to provide the safest and best type of aircraft for clients cost effectively. This has also translated into the company being awarded in 1999, the American Express Preferred Vendor status fourteen years in a row.

Employee loyalty has facilitated Le Bas's ability to provide its unique 24 hour a day dispatch. Since its inception on October 1, 1990 the company has never been closed a single hour. Within 20 seconds of a call into the company, a live human will answer. This is done through teams of four or five people around the globe each set up to deal specifically with only a handful of clients.

"The people on these teams more often than not know the client on a personal level as well as all aspects of the aircraft being used," notes Le Bas.

While the company does specialize in the small to midrange size aircraft, whenever a large aircraft or a particularly difficult airport is in the routing, a company representative will be on that plane to insure smooth passage. Mr. Le Bas will find himself quite often traveling on the same aircraft in the service of a client, as he did November and December of 2012, traveling with the Madonna production at its first date in Tel Aviv through the Mideast and the America's.

Though Le Bas refers to his company as a "white glove" service, by no means is it "hands off" once the deal has been set. He is referring to a first class service being provided to clients that look for the personal touch of the company. The company is geared to provide, if necessary, security services, catering for its craft and ground transportation once the plane lands. Primarily though, "We're a people business and our business is to get people safely from point A to point B," he says.

A goal Le Bas International has successfully accomplished for 23 years.

To insure this, LeBas hires only vendors that enlist the safety inspection and practices of two globally recognized companies, ARG/US and Wyvern. Both meet all FAA standards.

Le Bas attributes the loyalty of its vendors to CFO Patrick Hampton's financial management skills in that, "He has never been a day late paying a bill." This 'eye on the ball' so to speak, has garnered employee loyalty as well. Le Bas International's average tenure of employment is around ten years. In 2012 a new President of the company was elected, Donough Hughes, who has been with Le Bas



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MADONNA'S MIDNNA

IT'S A MATTER OF SCALE

BY MICHAEL A. BECK





2012 opened with a bang for the Madonna camp, although pre-production work on the *MDNA* world tour started well before the ringing in of the new year. One of the complicating factors was that as the camp was organizing a very large and involved world tour, it was also preparing Madonna's performance for the 2012 Super Bowl Halftime Show. "There were two or three phases of rehearsal," said Production Director Jake Berry. "It started in December and for December and January we were in Super Bowl mode. Then we started band and dancer rehearsal. We took over a pier in New York and turned it into 'Madonna World'. We began loading in on February 10 and it took a week to build studios that contained a mock stage the same size as the one we had on tour."

The tent facility also housed three dancer workout rooms, and one room for a team of slack line performers. This "Madonna World" remained in place until April 17 when everything moved into Long Island's Nassau Coliseum for rehearsals, which lasted five weeks. On May 29 the show opened in Tel Aviv.

From there on through the end of the tour in November, it was a constant burn with no appreciable break.

This production had a monstrous number of moving parts, which made it stand out from every other show on the road. Yet the members of the crew we talked to all agreed that while it was a huge production, the only real challenge was logistical and about two weeks into the tour that was pretty well knocked out. "It was a big show back in March when we started putting it together," said veteran Stage Manager Ian Kinnersley. "Truck after truck was getting delivered to Long Island and we saw all this stuff coming in and we had no clue as to where it was going until Jake would come onto the floor and say, 'Okay, this is for this and this goes over there.' For 15 or 20 days every day we were getting deliveries right up to the last day, and then we had this 29 truck monster. It was huge. But we jump forward to today and it's a three truck monster because we're used to it. We're comfortable."

Be that as it may, it was, by any measure, an utterly enormous project. And although it can always be boiled down to routine, this was a busy routine because the pro-

-duction was part theater and part gag-heavy pop show. The show opened with a commentary on Catholicism in the song “Girl Gone Wild” that featured three male dancers dressed in hooded monk’s robes rising into place on a raised level of the stage via toasters. As this was happening, a massive “confessional” that looked more like a cross between a very well-appointed wedding chuppah and the fanciest gazebo ever designed, flew through an opening created by two 30’ tall Daktronics 10mm video walls that swung open like giant French doors. As the confessional landed on the stage carrying Madonna there was also an enormous Botafumeiro swinging across the stage complete with smoke.

This is the way the entire show went all night. Including the confessional and Botafumeiro, the show had seven fly gags wherein set pieces and/or people flew.

The most complicated of these gags was a bit during “Give Me All Your Lovin” wherein a drum corps consisting of three separate groups of three drummers flew in through the upstage video doors and landed on stage.

Each group of drummers flew in on a separate track. But because of the limited opening between the doors through which they were able to enter into view they had to start the move with the two outside groups facing in toward each other and the center group facing forward in tandem formation. The center track drove straight downstage whereas the offstage tracks turned in their respective directions.

When the trolleys carrying the drummers reached their end points, the outside groups had come around to face the crowd with the center group remaining as they started. Once at their termination points, the offstage groups landed on the stage among several other drummers while the center group stayed aloft. When it was time to exit they were back up to the traveling trim and the whole move was reversed.

As they were flying back out, several towers rose up out of the stage, faced out with high-res video panels with video content of drummers playing on each panel creating the illusion that there were several more drummers than actually existed. This system of towers was called the “matrix”. Aptly named,

it was a matrix of 38 aforementioned towers – or cubes as they are called on the tour – around which the entire rest of the stage was anchored. The Tower Lifts – as they were dubbed by Tait Towers where they were built – traveled in pairs in carts that locked together and were leveled via hydraulic jacks in order to compensate for the odd uneven arena floor. When the system was fully placed it took up the biggest part of the main stage. When it became one unit it weighed just a hair under 100,000 pounds.

Leveling this system was critically important because during one part of the show Madonna was dragged somewhat violently across the lifts in their home position. Catching an edge during this move would have had unspeakable consequences.

One of the more interesting aspects of the matrix system was the method by which it was controlled. The control was light driven. If a cube was fed absolute white it would rise to its highest elevation and absolute black dropped the lift to its home position. Where the cube went between high and low was based on varying levels of grey



scale. This was all fed to the control software through a template built in Adobe After Effects. This way precise movement could be selected by way of the numerical properties of the various stops along the grey scale. The video clips of varying shades of grey were then applied to the overall time code of the show.

Because all of the video content of the show was being spread around so many surfaces, bit mapping the content across the whole of the show was something of a challenge. Each of the cubes had three surfaces upon which video was playing as well as the eight panels of the enormous upstage video wall, meaning that there were 108 areas of coverage just in the matrix alone. It all had to be synchronized not only in the way it showed up but in the way the matrix operated. We'll get into more about the video aspect of the show a bit later.

The automation of this show was everywhere. In addition to the seven fly gags, the matrix and the three previously mentioned toasters, there was also an escape hatch lift upstage, a personnel lift at the tip of a triangular B stage accessed by two thrusts that wrapped around a VIP section on the floor at the stage. Directly behind the personnel lift on the B stage was a larger props lift that was used to lift groups of people and props including an upright piano.

Riding herd on all of this movement was Theatrical Stage Manager Mike Morobitto. Morobitto called 125 setup, action and cleanup cues over the course of the show, but within those cues were several sub-cues. "[Producer] Tiffany Olson and I spent a lot of time working on setting up a really, really simple foolproof system for a complex show," explained Morobitto. "We numbered everything. We looked at [the idea of] a few cue callers and there was so much talking going on that by the time the guy stopped talking the cue had already passed because sometimes it would be one simple cue in terms of a lift moving or a screen opening. However, sometimes on the same cue we wanted three different lifts to go down, we wanted video screens to open, we wanted a band riser to mobilate on stage and say, a disco ball to fly in. Five, six, seven things happening all at once. That's a lot to say.



"So we worked it all out, put it on paper and we numbered the cues. Then we'd give the crew sheets to the crew and we'd sit down every day before rehearsals and we'd take it a section at a time. We'd basically choreograph the crew just like the dancers are choreographed so they'd know their steps in order to get from cue to cue and how much time they'd have to break one thing down, build another, get it in place and send it out on deck. So they'll each have their number but I know all the other numbers as well. Let's say carpenter number three has fourteen different numbers. He knows that when I call number 72 he's sending a lift up or when I call 64 he's mobilating a band riser out to the center of the stage along with four or five other people who also have something to do in cue 64."

In total, Morobitto estimated the show contained something in the area of 450 cues within the 125 he actually calls. As the set pieces were coming off the back end of the stage they were hoisted down to the arena floor where the irrepressible Head Carpenter Flory Turner and a team of four carpenters and local stage hands would break it down and send it directly to the trucks while at the same time getting the next set pieces up to the stage for assembly – and in some cases – deployment.

However, before any of that takes place, Turner builds the stage. Whereas with most traveling custom stages the entire stage rolls into place in one piece, the

sheer mass of this stage precluded that as a possibility. Therefore, the stage rolled into place in 15 separate pieces – not including the matrix.

When asked what the biggest challenge of her job was Turner, who was only home four days in 2012 smiled sweetly and said, "Just finishing the tour."

As Turner and her team were doing their work the automation is manned by motion control specialists Raff Buono, Jack Richard and Andrew Johnson. While the automation of the show could actually be operated from positions at the front of house or a site near the base of the matrix under the stage, the primary control location was at the front of house, which, of course made the most sense given the obvious ability to see everything (or most of everything) that is happening. As was said earlier, the movements of matrix were handled via time code. The fly gags and the movement of the eight 2,000 pound video panels were controlled by Jack Richard at the FOH position. However, the lifts and toasters were all operated locally at their position. "We could control them remotely but we have to have a spotter at the lifts anyway, you might as well have the guy drive it," explained Buono.

With Lead Rigger Todd Mauer operating the props lift behind the stage during the show, the team of automation operators running the show totaled eight people. In a phone



conversation with Morobitto he was asked if there is anything that deeply concerned him during the show and he answered that there was not. "Have you ever been out on one of those tours where you have to constantly stay after a crew to make sure things get done? That was not the case here. Everyone knew exactly what needed to be done and they felt motivated to do it," explained Morobitto. However in a follow up call he corrected himself explaining that timing of the show was so critical that if anything happened to throw the timing of the action of the show off it could throw a serious chain in the fan. The result is that everything in the show had a backup.

One example of this was in the song "Vogue". At one point in the song Madonna was introduced into the song via a mirrored fly gag dubbed the "Vogue Flyer". The move consisted of flying the set piece with Madonna on it straight up to a trim of about eight feet then flying it through a break in the video walls to the matrix where she exited the flyer onto the matrix which was fully elevated. However, in the event that Madonna was running late getting onto the flyer due to something like a delay in a wardrobe change the matrix might not have been in position when she got there.

The backup plan designed by Morobitto and Robert was to fly the gag directly to the matrix in a diagonal trajectory rather than taking it straight up and out to the matrix in a level flight. This would shave 17 seconds off the move,

more than making the trip on time. Because of all the moving parts in this show, there were backup plans all over the landscape. Assisting Morobitto in the execution of his responsibilities was an array of four infrared video feeds looking down on the stage from vantage points directly over the B stage, the main stage looking down at the toasters, looking down at the matrix and one shot looking straight down on the center point of the video wall so he can see what's happening immediately upstage and downstage of the wall.

The video portion of the production, which was supplied by Screenworks, was comprised of eight manned cameras and one robocam; five hand held at the main stage and the B stage, two long lenses in the seats and one at FOH. In addition to the eight upstage Daktronics video walls there were also two offstage 13.5' x 24' IMAG video projection screens fed by two stacked Barco 20k projectors. In addition to the IMAG projectors there were also two projectors at the front of house that were converged and hitting the entire face of the stage to give the image of glass breaking away from the front of the production. Once that effect had taken place the projectors were shut down for the night.

Video Crew Chief Jason Lowe seemed to agree with the sentiment of the rest of the crew that this is a pretty straightforward if not huge production. However, in terms of cutting the live video it was not as straightforward for U2 Video Director Stefaan "Smasher"

Desmedt. "When I do U2, I cut to the music and four guys and that's it," explained Desmedt. "But in this show I cut to the choreography, which is full on all night." Given enough time any good director can change the mindset by which he/she cuts a show.

That notwithstanding, in this case Desmedt only had four days to get into the new groove. The reason for this is that he'd spent the entire rest of the time during rehearsals working on programming and bit mapping the content of the show which was put forth by Montreal based Moment Factory as well as programming the cube movements of the matrix. Eventually he had to hand off everything to other people so he could lean fully into the task of learning the show from the perspective of directing the live video. Because one of the demands of the show was that it had to be lit like a television show rather than a live concert, the cameras had to be heavily shaded. Thus television Technical Director Emilie Scaminaci was brought in to handle the shading on the show.

Lighting design was penned by high profile television Lighting Designer Al Gurdon. While the lighting of the show did indeed have its dramatic moments, it was clearly lit with an eye toward more general coverage than one might see coming from such hard-core concert designers like Roy Bennett, Bryan Hartley or Howard Ungerleider. The compliment of 300+ lighting instruments in this design were put forth by PRG and included 78 PRG Best



Boys (their first tour in the US), PRG Bad Boys, 144 Sharpy's, 26 Robe Robin 1200's (also their first tour in the US), Robe Robin 600's, Elation Impressions, VL3500 Spots and Washes, VL 3000 Spots, 100+ Martin Atomic Strobes with color changers and 400 iCove LED fixtures outlining the stage.

Lighting Crew Chief Ron Beal was heartily impressed with the Best Boy units. "They've been great. They've been poured on in the rain and it was not a problem. They've been kicked off the stage and a little bit of super glue and they're back up and running."

One of the more dramatic effects created by the lighting system was due to the use of the Sharpys. They were housed in pods around the stage as well as in a massive pod upstage of the center break in the video wall. When grouped in these formations they had a look that was both powerful and elegant.

Of all the interviews done in the course of covering this tour, by far the shortest was with Audio Crew Chief Mark Bunich who brushed away any notion of the size of the show. "Yeah, it's just more of whatever you have on a show. Whether it's a small scale show or a large scale show, they're similar, it's just more equipment," explained the even-keeled Bunich.

The systems provided by Eighth Day Sound was all D&B J series cabinets – J-8, J-12, J subs, and the new V series cabinets that have been recently

released. The show is mixed through Digico SD7 consoles. While the show seems to be a very straight forward application of audio engineering there is the one challenge that all pop shows present. "It's the fact that she [Madonna] is in front of the PA almost half of the show," added Bunich. "So it's just a matter of how things are aimed and tuned and the levels are set for the various sections of the PA."

The part of the audio package that was not in any way routine was monitors. Monitor Mixers Matt Naiper and Sean Spuler who have been working for Madonna for several years, decided three tours back to work on the same mix with Naiper handling the music and Spuler mixing the vocals. While the two engineers were working on separate consoles, they were getting exactly the same mix. They were simply addressing different parts of it respectively. Because Madonna likes to have the same mix in her monitors that she has on the recordings, the monitor mix was effects heavy. One would think this would cause a latency issue. However, the delay was only five milliseconds which didn't pose any real problem.

With all that was considered on the technical side, we can tend to miss the areas of props and wardrobe. The space under the stage was honeycombed with countless changing rooms and hair stations and the traffic pattern of one clothes rack after another was endless. While Madonna only had four wardrobe changes over the course of the night, some in the cast had as many

as 12. Because of the rigorous wear that the wardrobe is subjected to and the sometimes delicate nature of the pieces, there were several backups to many of the outfits used in the show.

Part in parcel of the care and maintenance of the wardrobe is laundry. Everything had to be washed every day. But because of the aforementioned delicate condition of many of the pieces it all had to hung dry.

Because of the heavy laundry needs of the show the tour carried its own laundry service provided by Hans Topf of Rock N' Roll Laundry who has been doing laundry for the touring industry out of Germany since 1988. While Topf was actually touring with MDNA, the company – partly owned by Bobby Schneider – he typically just sends laundry equipment out on a given tour. But the heavy work load on this tour required a more hands-on touch given the fact that he has six washers and six dryers that are constantly running.

Another part of a big pop show that often goes unnoticed is props. In this show the list of props is extensive, ranging from drums for a marching band to handguns and rifles and everything in between. Managing this task was the head props person on the tour Rebecca Sloan whose job started in the beginning of March with the process of figuring out what was needed for the show, sourcing it all into rehearsals and then making sure it was sturdy enough to survive the tour. "Madonna

is an artist who is very particular about what she uses and once she's decided on something, changing it is not a good idea. Therefore, I only had one chance to get it right," said Sloan.

Because the rehearsal process on this tour was somewhat shorter than Madonna is normally used to, Sloan and her team were working at a very fast pace. Part of that pace was not only getting the props into rehearsal, but making sure it all worked effectively and – most importantly – safely. "We had weaponry, twirling batons and cheerleader pompoms," Sloan recalled. "We had a holster that had to work when she climbed a wall. We had a set of body shackles that we had to figure how to quickly fasten and unfasten on stage without hurting the artist. She likes realism in her props as much as possible, so we wound up going with quite heavy full steel shackles.

So how do you put full steel shackles on somebody and drag them around a stage without hurting them?"

Thus are the challenges of putting the finishing touches on a production like this.

All the way through the team on this production the story seemed to be the same. There was a shrieking burn in the very beginning of the gig because of the short rehearsal window. "The challenges of a project like this are not unsolvable," said Set Co-Designer Mark Fisher. "But it becomes a challenge when you're dealing with these short time scales because there's no time to 'to and fro' in discussion on things like visualization. In the end, the [matrix] lifts were complicated but there're not that complicated. I mean if you compare them to any other modern machinery like a modern motor

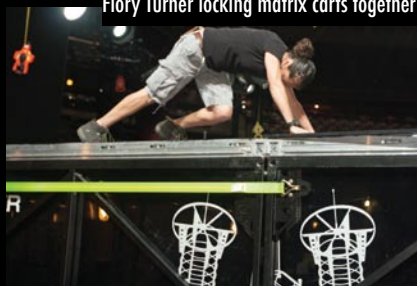
car the only thing remarkable about them is that they're being brought into existence in a very short amount of time. It's not rocket science. The rocket science is getting them built quickly."

Once the rocket science of getting this show on the road was mounted, everyone seemed – according to what they said – to get into the same groove of any other huge concert tour that has ever gone out. All the same this could have been a nightmare with a less cohesive crew. Jake Berry had that issue beat from the very beginning.

"I heavily drew on some of the people that I had on U2 because we had phenomenal success on that tour and the way it ran. Rather than bringing a bunch of individuals we brought a team and that really, really worked."



Flory Turner locking matrix carts together



Dirk Henneberger strapping matrix carts in place.



Front Row: Dirk Henneberger - Carpenter, Stanley Jilesen - Carpenter, Sid Berry - Carpenter, Josh Smith - Carpenter, Dennis Osborne - Carpenter, Second Row: Flory Turner - Head Carpenter, Boja Gonzalez - Carpenter, Back Row: Drew Hilt - Carpenter, Appy Thorig - Carpenter,

Tour Punker Dog



Arthur Fogel -
Live Nation Tour Promoter



Jake Berry - Production Director, Sid
Berry - Carpenter (and Jake's Nephew)



Raff Pagen - Production Coordinator, Jake Berry
- Production Director, Elizabeth Curto - Produc-
tion Coordinator



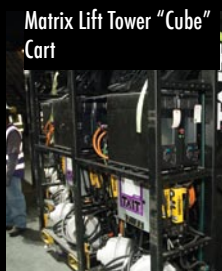
Rebecca Sloan - Head
Prop Person



Matrix cart hydraulic
leveling jack



Mike Morobitto - Theatrical
Stage Manager



Matrix Lift Tower "Cube"
Cart



JR Newkirk - Drum Tech, Tommy Simpson - Guitar
Tech, Bob "Bongo" Longo - Back Line, Joe Wolfe -
Keyboard Tech



Hans Topf - Rock n Roll Laundry



Russell "Bits" Lyons -
FOH Follow Spots



FOH Engineer - Tim Colvard, Mark
Cuniffe - Lighting Director



Demetrius Moore - Monitor System Engineer, Eoin Collins - Audio Tech, Matt
Naiper - Monitor Engineer, Mark Birch - FOH System Engineer, Tim Colvard -
FOH Engineer, Arno Voortman - Audio Tech, Wilson Tennerman - Audio Tech,
Daniel Blum - Audio Tech, David McPhee - Monitor System Engineer, Clinton
Reynolds - Audio Tech



Head Rigger - Todd Mauger, Darrell Schlabach -
Rigger, Ricky Acebo - Rigger, Robert Slepicka - Rigger



Jake Berry - Production Director, Ian
Kinnersley - Stage Manager



Robert Fry - Dimmer Tech, Urko Arruza Urratia - Moving Light
Tech, Jonathan Fuller - Lighting Tech, Ronald Beal - Lighting
Crew Chief, Back Row: Matthew Levine - Moving Light Tech,
Kevin Sherwood - Moving Light Tech, Christopher Shelleck
- Truss and Hoist Tech, Christopher Olk - Moving Light Tech,
Matthew Bright - Moving Light Tech



Austin "Aus Dog" Smith - Video Tech, - Chaim Chavarria - Video Tech, Tim Brennan -
LED Lift Tech, Emilie Scaminaci - Technical Director, Nate Brister - LED Tech \Camera
Operator, Zanoood Hammid - Video Engineer, Eric Smnacher - LED Tech, Adrian
Brister - Camera Operator, Stefaan "Smasher" Desmedt - Video Director, Jason Lowe
- LED Tech \Camera Operator/Video Crew Chief,
Chris "Jonesy" Jones - Camera Operator

Band

Madonna: Guitar & Vocals
 Kevin Antunes: Musical Director/Programmer/Keyboards
 Brian Frasier Moore: Drums
 Jason Jang: Violin
 Monte Pittman: Guitar
 Ric'Key Pageot: Keyboards & Upright Piano
 Background Vocals: Kiley Dean, Nicki Richards

Performers

Dancers: Adrien Galo, Ali "Lilou" Ramdani, Brahim Baibat, Chaz Buzan, Darrell Bullock, Drwe Dollaz, Emilie Capel, Emilie Schram, Habby "Hobgoblin" Jacques, Kupono Awaeu. "Lil Buck" Riley, Loic "Speedylegz" Mabanza, Marion Mutin, Marvin Gofin, Rocco Richie, Sasha Mallory, Sheik Mondesir, Stephanie Nguyen, Valeree Pohl, Vibe Henderson, Taman "Yamsonite" Okur

Slackliners: Carlos Neto, Hayden Nickell, Jaan Roose

Kalakan: Jamixel Bereau, Thierry "Tirrit" Biscary, Xan Errotabehere

Entourage

Manager – Guy Oseary
 Assistant to Guy Oseary – Sara Zambreno
 Management – Samantha Hess
 Sheena Dolc
 Live Nation Tour Promoter – Arthur Fogel
 Tour Director – Tres Thomas
 Artist Tour Manager – Frankie Enfield
 Tour Manager – Jason Milner
 Choreographer – Alison Faulk
 Choreographer – Jason Young
 Tour Accountant – Bob Kotch
 Ticketing Manager – Cynthia Oknaian
 Advance Security – Jose Castro
 Security: Craig Evans, Didier Meert, Hugo Rodriguez, Jerry Meltzer
 Hotel Advance – Courtney Rousso
 Choreographer – Alison Faulk
 Choreographer – Jason Young
 Trainer – Nicole Winhoffer, Timothy Anderson
 Hair Stylist – Andy LeCompte

Kinesitherapeute D. E. – Jean Michel Ete
 Chef – Marco Pernini
 Esthetician/Masseuse – Michelle Peck
 Make-up Artist – Lauren Anderson
 Personal Assistants to Madonna: Dana Belcore, Danielle Doll
 Personal Assistant to Arthur Fogel – Alicia Geist
 Assistant to A Party Tour Manager – Gingi Levin
 Assistant Tour Manager – Jill McCutchen
 Physiotherapist – Chris McClean, Mark Parkhouse
 Wardrobe – Lola Leon
 Al Gurdon

C Party

Production
 Production Director – Jake Berry
 Stage Managers: Ian Kinnersley, Ronald Ramos
 Technical Director – Mike Morobitto
 305 282-6819
 Tour Coordinator – Alison Larkin
 Security: Scott Nichols, Alessandro Nicotra, Sara O'Herlihy
 Production Accountant – Emily Thomas
 Settlement Manager – Tyler Arend
 Production Coordinator: Jess Berry, Mimi Sullivan, Elizabeth Curto, Raff Pagen
 IT: Josh Kapellen
 VIP Party Coordinator – Fran Coombs
 VIP Party Assistant Coordinator – Natasha Veinberg
 Live Nation Production Assistants: Colleen Cozart, Cristian Fogel

Back Line

Programmer: Daniel Roe
 Drum Tech: Chris Achzet, JR Newkirk,
 Back Line: Bob "Bongo" Longo
 Keyboard Tech – Joe Wolfe
 Guitar Tech – Tommy Simpson

Carpentry

Head Carpenter – Flory Turner
 Carpenters: Sid Berry, Boja Gonzalez Martinez, Drew Hilt, Stanley Jilesen, Dennis Osborne, Josh Smith Appy Thorig, Dirk Henneberger

Rigging

Head Rigger – Todd Mauger
 Riggers: Robert Slepicka Ricky Acebo,

Darrell Schlabach

Automation

Raff Buono, Jack Richard, Andrew Johnson

Props:

Head Prop Rebecca Sloan,
 Patricia Hamelin

Wardrobe:

Madonna Dressers: Tony Villanueva
 Lisa Nishimura
 Head Wardrobe – Lana Czajka
 Wardrobe – Deb Cooper, Pam Lewis, Kristle Rodriguez, Jessica Sheehan, Julie Sola
 Make-up – Chris Melone, Tiffany Saxby
 Lead Hair – Mischelle Navar
 Hair: Jennifer Blanchard, Jazz Cook

Dressing Rooms /Ambiance –Head Dressing Room Coordinator Maria Kraft,
 Stefan Warner, Lindsay McGoren.
 Dressing Room Catering – Gemma Daly

Lighting

Lighting Crew Chief – Ronald Beal
 Operator – Kathy Beer/Mark Cunniffe
 Moving Light Techs: Urko Arruza Urratia, Matthew Bright, Matthew Levine, Kevin Sherwood, Christopher Olk, Gregory Gore,
 Truss and Hoist Crew: Tom Dubas, Christopher Shelleck
 Dimmer Techs: Christopher Olk Robert Fry
 FOH Follow Spots: Russell Lyons

Video

Video Director – Stefaan Desmedt
 Technical Director – Emilie Scaminaci
 LED Lift Tech – Tim Brennan
 Camera Operator: Adrian Brister, Chris Jones, Nick O'Brien,
 LED Techs/Camera Operator: Nate Brister, Jason Lowe,
 Video Techs: Chaim Chavaria,
 LED Techs: Eric Smnacher

Audio

FOH Engineer – Tim Colvard
 FOH System Engineer – Mark Birch
 Monitor Engineers: Matt Naiper Sean Spuler
 Monitor System Engineer – David McPhee, Demetrius Moore



Audio Crew Chief – Mark Birch
Audio Techs: Daniel Blum , Clinton Reynolds, Wilson Tennerman, Arno Voortman
Eoin Collins

Power:

Power Techs: Jon Boss, Cisco Reyes
Stadium Power – Dennis Crespo, Justin Gordon

Merchandise: Richard Carter, Dieter Szczypinski

Drivers:

Lead Bus Driver – Dave Walters
Buss Drivers: Eugene Fields, Floyd Robinson, Gerald Cory, Hank Arrington, Rubin Garcia, Danny Autry, Brian Daigle, Nathan Evan, Joe Folk, Mike Mallatt, Wally Morrow, Geoff O'Connell, James Saam, Mike Sussino

Truck Drivers: David Heath, Scott Rottler, Matt Chesnut, Jeff Clark, Patricia Galbraith, Duane George, Joe Harrison, Charles Hunt, Chris Legner, Robert Marshall, Chad McKnight, Dorothy McKnight, Mike Meadows, Vardrick Minter, Anthony Morgan, Fran O'Keefe, Byron Risvold, Marty Sankey, Lon Simpson, Antwon Stigger, Don Conard, Gary Adair, George Berlingeri, Randy Cook, Dave Patch, Alex Zaharia, Terry Johnson, Scott Williams, Ron Hess, John Ferris, Mike Sackson

Tour Related Offices

Artist Management
Guy Orseary

Business Managent
Nigro Carlin Segal and Feldstien, LLP

Tour Producer & Promoter
Arthur Fogel

Artist Tour Management
Worldwide Touring Limited
Legal
Grubman Indusrky Shire & Meiselas Pc

Show Architech
Mark Fisher Studio
Ground Transportation (Entourage)
J Travel Management
Ground Transportation (Artist)

DPL
Travel Agent (Artist)
Music By Appoint Ltd
Travel Agent (Entourage)
Protravel International

Charter (Artis)
Glencoe Aviation Group

Charter (Large Group)
LeBas International

Staging
Stageco USA

Set Construction

Tait Towers
Tour Direction
Jake Berry Productions

Production Services/Crew Travel
SOS

Rigging
Five Points Production Services

Field Cover
EPS

Barricade
Mojo Barriers

Power
Cat Entertainment

Lighting
PRG Lighting

Sound
Eighth Day Sound

Video
Screenworks

Video Content
Moment Factory

Freight
Sound Moves
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Sequel Tour Solutions

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Pioneer Coach

Coaches (Crew)
Senators Coaches

Trucking
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Radios
AAA Communications

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Eat Your Heart Out

Laundry Services
Rock N Roll Laundry

Merchandise
Live Nation Merchandise

Internet Phones
Casbah Online

Guest Ticketing Database & Software
Bruce Kline – VirtuSoft Solutions

Guest Ticketing
Paul Okanaian
Tiffany Lyon

Producer/Directors
Michel Laprise
Jamie King
Tiffany Olson
Richmond Talauega
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Buford Jones

An Incredible Career That Was the Result of Just Another Day at the Office...And Another, And Another

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

It's often been said that the quietest person in the room is generally the smartest. That can obviously be debated well past the end of the next Mayan Calendar. However, in the case of Buford Jones, we see a southern gentleman who expresses extreme intelligence, discretion, and a refreshing sense of humor. Despite a resume' as a Front of House Engineer for some of the most legendary names in the history of our industry, Jones possesses deep humility. Jones is soft spoken and efficient with his words, but when he speaks it's worth the time invested in listening to what he has to say. Mobile Production Monthly recently had the pleasure of chatting with Buford Jones on the record. We invite you to listen in (as it were):

MPM: Let's go all the way to the beginning. How did your career begin?

BJ: I graduated high school in '67 and I went into college and got a two year degree in electronics. I was fascinated with repairing electronic items, but I really had no direct ambition to get into live sound. I was repairing stereos at a large service center for a couple years in Dallas, Texas and a friend of mine had mentioned to me that with my education and what I'm currently working on, I should go down and talk to these people at such and such company and that company ended up being Showco.

I made an appointment and spoke with them not really knowing what Showco did. I just knew that it was a possible job working with electronics and sound. When they interviewed me they liked the fact that I'd had a degree in electronics, that I was a musician and I had a recording studio. They also wanted to know if I was single. I was curious what that had to do with anything.

MPM: Gee I wonder why they asked that.

BJ: Yeah, that of course meant, 'can we send you on the road forever without your family complaining about it.'

So there it was. I took the job and on my first day at work I was soldering connectors onto audio snakes and Jack Maxson [one of the owners] came in and told me, "Pack your bags, you're going on to Atlanta tonight. You'll be on the Three Dog Night tour." I went home and packed my bags and on day one I was already headed out to be on tour with Three Dog Night, where they were headlining several stadium and large arena shows. The first gig I did was at Atlanta's Fulton County Stadium.

MPM: What did you do on the gig?

BJ: Jack Maxson was mixing the show and I was the assistant to him. I helped set up the sound equipment and that's where I began learning about live sound. That's pretty much how I got started in live sound reinforcement.

MPM: Backing up just a bit, you said you're a musician. What do you play?

BJ: I play guitar. My dad was a machinist and a wood worker and he played piano and guitar. When I was in high school, he made a couple guitars for me and I watched him make some peddle steels for some people. He was really good at working with wood. He made me my first guitars and I got to jam with my dad. When I left for college, some of my fondest memories were jamming with my dad. I think that's where I learned the very fundamentals of mixing, which was positioning our guitar amps where we could hear each other. I always liked to position myself where I could hear both amps, which is the very fundamental of all mixing, where two instruments (or more) together sound better than one by itself. That's what really got me playing. I also took classical guitar in college.

MPM: Do you still play?

BJ: No. I regret that I don't play

as much as I used to. It's sort of getting away from me. I put guitars on the wall and look at them, but I'm just not getting the time to play them that I used to. I can't seem to find the time to play guitar as much as I would like.

MPM: Do you still have the axes your dad built for you?

BJ: Yes I do. Both of them. Several years ago, I took them home to have him refinish them. He disassembled them, but he never got around to finishing the work. Unfortunately, now I only have the parts; my dad passed away a few years ago and wasn't able to finish the rebuild process. But I'm thinking I'm going to let my son finalize the work. It would be interesting to put them back together with my own son.

MPM: You also said that it helped in getting hired by Showco that you had a recording studio. So you were already into the audio game right?

BJ: Yes. I was always fascinated with recording. In high school I had a Sony sound-on-sound recorder, which was a fascinating technological piece of equipment for me to be able to play guitar on one track, roll the tape back and play another track on the same piece of tape. Shortly thereafter, I built up to multi-track recorders and put together a multi-track studio. Although I ended up in live sound, I believe that both fields, recording and live, are very much related. I've learned much from both worlds. The big difference is that live doesn't have a rewind button. You only get one shot to get it right! Whether I'm doing it in the studio or live I'm still blending instruments and vocals on an audio console and much can be learned from both situations.

MPM: So you started with Three Dog Night. How did that work?

BJ: Working with Jack was a great

experience. Jack did a great job. We were also doing Led Zeppelin, so occasionally I'd carry additional PA for the Led Zeppelin dates and Rusty Brutche mixed them. Those sounds were embedded in me and stayed with me still to this day. I think they were just colossal sounds. Even though we've had technological advancement to amazing degree and level, there was something about the energy and excitement and the sound of the systems of that time. It was those two people, Rusty Brutche and Jack Maxson and listening to their work that really embedded the notion of high quality sound in me and wanting to reproduce it and do it myself.

MPM: How long was it before you started doing it yourself?

BJ: ZZ Top was the first band I mixed. "Tres Hombres" was the album, the year would have to have been 1973. I had been on tour with Uriah Heap through the United States and ZZ Top had been opening for Uriah Heap in theaters and that's where I met them. One thing came to another and "Tres Hombres" went platinum and they wanted Showco to do the sound and they wanted me to come with them because I'd gotten to know them.

MPM: Obviously the technology has spun off into countless new areas of capability. But you were there in the beginning of all of this. Did you have the sense as your career was progressing that you were on the nosecone of a rocket?

BJ: No. I never looked at it that way whether it be ignorance or what [laughing]. When I came into the field I had no prior knowledge of live sound reinforcement it was all new to me. As a musician I quickly found that this was a way to play music professionally and to play with some pretty big names. Eventually I looked at sound mixing as playing a musical instrument, so

I was playing music with people like ZZ Top. Right after that I was working for Linda Ronstadt and because she was managed by Peter Asher who also managed James Taylor, I was mixing both of them. Amazing music. Amazing talent there and I was just so fortunate to be with them. My learning ground for years was Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor. What more can anyone ask for? I don't know. I look over the years and appreciate so much those opportunities that Linda and James gave me to establish myself in this business.

MPM: You did Pink Floyd's *Momentary Lapse of Reason* tour in the late 80's. That thing was massive. Do you look at that and see delineation between those huge productions and the work you did with Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor or were they all just as big a project for you, only in a different venue?

BJ: Because of my entry into the business this had become the normal work. It's another day at the office so to speak. Many people would just love that opportunity, which I did as well. But with the major acts that were coming into Showco at that time, they just couldn't build systems fast enough, so for all of us it was, "What major artist are you going out with next?" They were all truly major platinum artists. The thrill was amazing. When Pink Floyd came along I got excited of course. I had no idea the magnitude, but it was more a case of, "Wow, I've got another great band to work with and we'll be going out in a couple months." I don't really think the true magnitude of that tour hit me until close to the end. And still to this day I look back at it and find it hard to believe that I had participation in that tour. But it's very hard to match that against the other ones. I had amazing, indescribable moments with Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Don Henley, George Harrison, Eric Clapton and on and on. Some of those mo-



ments are priceless that you cannot describe to anyone. You just have to have been there and let it go through you. You can't reproduce it. Even if you have it on audio and video you look at it and say, "Well, that's nice. It brings back memories," but it doesn't bring back what actually happened. I keep saying it. I am so blessed and fortunate to have been a part of all of it. Yes it was wonderful to do the things that no one else was doing with the surround sound for the large audiences we had and in the size venues we played.

MPM: What made you get off the road?

BJ: I just think that through time there seemed to be an end to it all as an end comes to everything. There's nothing that steered me away from it. I just didn't think I could continue to travel like that and I think that to settle down with

a company, being that I was independently contracting my work out, started looking good. And then I came upon Meyer Sound. Meyer Sound just seemed like a most amazing company that I'd like to work for and it would be a steady job that wouldn't be touring.

MPM: Did it take a while to get into that groove?

BJ: I became very satisfied with that line of work and being the company's touring liaison and still having contact with the touring community, so the transition was very smooth for me. It wasn't like I'm not going to this anymore and I'm going to do this tomorrow. In fact, when I first came to Meyer Sound I was still doing a little bit of touring while I was working for them. Within a couple years I quit touring all together and did my work in tour liaison and education.

MPM: What was the last touring work you did?

BJ: Counting Crows and Clint Black. I was kind of doing them at the same time.

MPM: What time period was this?

BJ: That was 2005.

MPM: How did the Meyer Sound relationship come together?

BJ: Just like I've been so fortunate throughout my career, that came from them. I did not go to them looking for a job. Greg McVeigh, who was the sales manager at the time, called and asked if I'd be interested to work for them and I told him I'd give it some thought.

MPM: Did you have a predilection for Meyer while you were touring?

BJ: If I knew then what I know now I would have, but all of the companies I'd ever worked for had their own proprietary boxes. That's just the way the cards fell.

MPM: You mentioned tour liaison and education. What do you do in education?

BJ: It's what I call a mix workshop. Meyer Sound had an education department long before I got there where they teach system optimization and other courses and how to achieve the best results on the equipment that you work with. It's about audio and physics and studying wavelength. So we added the mix workshop because I figured it was all related. We had very talented instructors teaching the fundamentals of sound, the physics behind sound, how to set a system up correctly and I figured "I'll be the next to follow up on that; how to properly mix on that sound system

you just set up properly.” It fit into the scheme of things pretty well and it’s been accepted very well as I go around the world putting on these workshops.

MPM: In a world where technology debates abound - Mac vs. PC, iPhone vs. Droid- the discussion in the audio world is digital vs. analog. Where do you stand on that conversation?

BJ: It’s just an evolution that’s inevitable. It’s happening and that’s just the way it is whether we totally agree with it or not. The conversation will go on for years to come. I think digital technology has come a long way in the years that it’s been out and it’s very widely accepted. The main benefit that I see is the flexibility that digital gave us over analog. We just have so much more flexibility in using the tools that we need to achieve the best sound that we can, and digital gives us that compared to the old analog consoles and how large they were. They sounded great. The digital consoles are a lot smaller and we can do so much more with them.

MPM: What advice do you have for people just coming into the business? Or do you have advice for them?

BJ: I do. I would hope they’re inspired by music. Working with sound is working with music. It’s the common thread between everyone in the business. Like I said in the beginning, as a sound engineer I play music. I once got into a cab in New York and the driver asked what I do and told him I mix sound for Linda Ronstadt and he said, “Oh, she bakes the cake and you serve it.” I said, “Well put.”

Well put indeed.





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ED HOPSON LEAVES A WIDE TRAIL OF GOODNESS AND TEARS

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

On August 9, 2012 long-time Atlanta based production professional Ed Hopson passed away from cancer that had spread through his body at an enormous rate of speed. He was just 10 days short of his 57th birthday. From the day he was diagnosed to the day he passed was an interval of only eight days. "We thought we were going to have time to fight it," said Mary Ellen Jones, Ed's wife of 25 years. "We just never got that chance." By all accounts the two facts about Ed's life that come before all others are that he was no saint and that no one would complain were he referred to hence forth as "St. Ed".

"He was smart, funny, well spoken and he knew what he was talking about," recalled lighting director/technician David "Duck" Burns. "He was completely genuine in a business of people who aren't always genuine."

Under the broad umbrella of that genuine characteristic was Ed's ability as an audio engineer. In a recent interview legendary engineer Buford Jones was asked what advice he would offer to aspiring engineers just coming into the business to which he responded, "I would hope they're inspired by music."

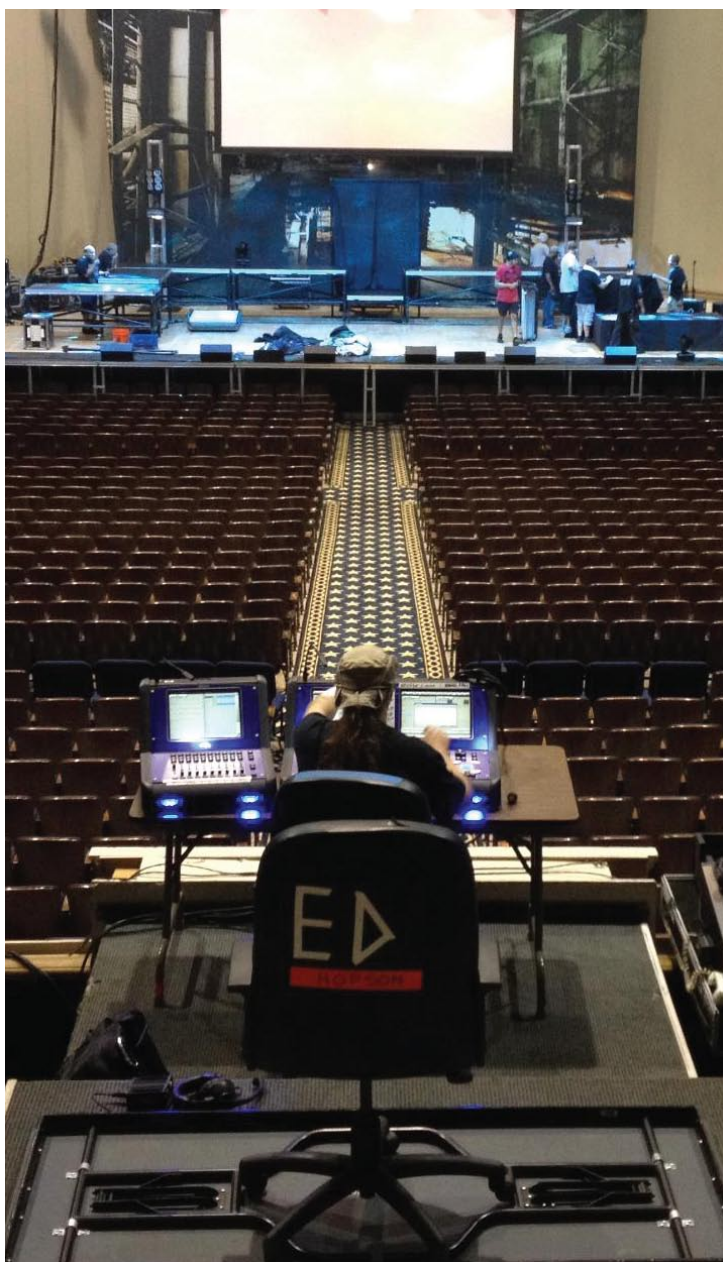
That inspiration came for Ed Hopson early in life. His first recording job came at the age of 10 years old wherein he was responsible for recording church services so the sermons could be distributed to shut-ins. "He would get the recording running and then go over to the black church and creep into the crawl space under the church and listen to the gospel music with all the dust falling through the cracks in the floor from all the people stomping on the floor to the music," reminisced Jones. "He said, 'I just loved the music.'"

While that love for music was a common thread that ran through every aspect of his life, it wasn't the first serious track he took. Ed went to school to study physics. While in school he also mixed sound on the side. During that time his physics professor would come to the shows and finally asked, "Why would you go into physics when you are so good at this?"

That is when Ed made the fateful and final course correction that not only changed his life but the lives of the countless people who shared his fire for the rest of his far too short life. "He was recklessly generous," said Jones. "When Robert McTigue took over mixing for Skynyrd, Ed gave him all of his mixing notes. I said, 'Ed, it took you years to get all that knowledge.' He just said, 'Yeah but it doesn't matter. It's more important that the band sounds great on the first day.'"

What ultimately drove Ed was not music or mixing. It was a desire to see that whatever he did was done as well as it could be done no matter what it was. If it was out of his reach he would learn to reach it.

That sounds like the perfectionist that ruthlessly pushes people beyond reason or compassion, but nothing could be farther from the truth. It's impossible to find anyone who didn't say he had the





biggest heart of anyone they knew. He was also a teacher at heart possessed of intelligence that was off the charts. "It was such a pleasure to be able to talk with someone that intelligent. He was gifted with the ability to bridge the gap between a normal person and that kind of knowledge," said Jones. "One of the things he'd say when I would argue about his amazing generosity of knowledge was, 'I know this stuff, they need to know it and there's always another gig.'"

Through the course of his career Ed mentored countless people. The impact he had on those people was realized in his last days when Mary Ellen talked the nurses in the ICU to allow his friends to come in – no more than two at a time – to visit with him on the premise that "these people are his family".

"It became a steady stream of people coming in to see him," recalled Jones. "Over and over I heard people thanking him for teaching them to be better to people and deal with people in a better way every day."

After Ed's passing a group of people decided to put together a memorial gathering at Atlanta's Center Stage, which is a 1,000 seat concert venue in Midtown. Because of Ed's popularity throughout the industry the event quickly became a serious production.

One of the people who stepped in and took control of the project was long-time friend Mark Parks. "He was my best friend," says Parks. "He was way more than my confidant. He knew things about me that no one else knows. He was my mentor. We were completely alike because of what I learned from him."

After an initial meeting it was decided that the event would take place in October. "I really didn't want to wait so long that when we did it would be

re-opening wounds for people."

When the get together happened it consisted of musical performances by The Blondes, Freddy Jones Band and Buddy Black with members of Kansas, The Producers, The Georgia Satellites, The Swinging Richards, Bareback, with Mothers Finest dropping in as well.

This was no easy undertaking. Volunteers for the project included Atlanta radio personality Kaedy Kiley (MC / Hostess), Albert Parks, Bill Abner, Monty Curry, Ashley Dennis, Chris Rushing and David Manion among many others. The idea was to remember Ed in the largest manner possible and raise funds to help with Ed's final expense. To that financial end there was a cover at the door as well as a donation site and a silent auction with instruments and memorabilia from celebrities throughout the industry.

Dubbed by David "Duck" Burns as an evening with Atlanta's Rock Royalty the event was summarized by one word... EPIC!

People's lives are defined by what they leave behind after they've passed on. Ed's life was certainly held up to that same standard and by every account he passed with flying colors. However, there is another guide by which only the best of us can be judged. These people are not only measured by what they left behind, but by how much they took with when they left. This can only be found in the size of the hole in the souls of those who loved them.

In the matter of Ed Hopson, the man who was no saint, the size of the hole he left in the people he leaves behind is too big to be measured.

Rest well Ed.



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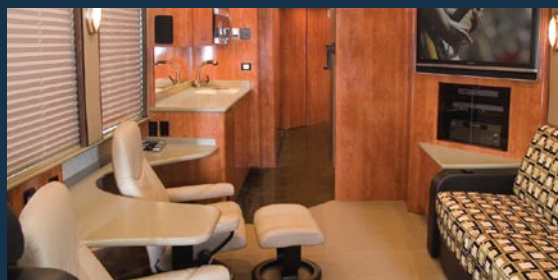


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