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The touring season is off to one of the most significant starts in recent memory. It seems that nearly every major act in every genre is out as well as many mid-level shows and a bunch of up-and-coming acts. This represents a real challenge for us in terms of coverage as well as the Industry that is being stretched to provide appropriate support.

For this issue, we selected the Elton John tour as our focus. Not only is Sir Elton a treat to see performing, his show always provides an interesting look at the way he utilizes production resources. Many of the vendors are well-known established production companies and his crew is one of the most experienced well-traveled groups in the business and have been together for many, many years.

We filled the rest of the issue with some interesting tid-bits and an expanded group of advertisers. The magazine seems to have had quite a boost in interest and readership following the amazing success of the Tour Link Conference. The increase in online readers is especially gratifying.

Speaking of the conference…which I love to do…We have now launched the 2016 registration. If the past event is any indication of what to expect the next time, I would encourage everyone to jump on registration and hotel booking as soon as possible. Even though the property has 900 rooms, it is quite possible that it will sell out this time.

Larry Smith
Publisher
Sound quality and first-rate dispersion prove ideal for outdoor event!

Founded by former U.S. Navy SEALs, the BattleFrog Obstacle Race Series is an intense obstacle course race for all ages inspired by the challenges Navy SEALs face every day in training. BattleFrog transforms every race venue into a demanding obstacle course designed to test the strength, skill, and determination of any athlete.

On February 28th and March 1st, Miami area participants brave enough to take the challenge gave it their all on the BattleFrog 15K, BullFrog 5K, BullFrog Mile, and TedPole Dash 400M courses. Being able to clearly hear the instructions of the staff and others requires first-rate audio quality and, for this, sound reinforcement technology from Valencia, Spain-based D.A.S. Audio was placed into service.

Edwin “Haviken Hayes” Guerra is the Production Coordinator for BattleFrog Series, Miami and Director of Operations for Kenote Entertainment of Hollywood, FL. Working alongside festival directors Alex Cruz and Frank Mendez, Guerra served as the DJ/MC for the Miami main stage area in addition to being responsible for coordinating all production aspects of those areas requiring amplified sound. D.A.S. Audio Event and Action Series products were deployed at two sites. Guerra discussed his experience with the D.A.S. equipment.

“When queried about those D.A.S. Audio attributes that make this choice of equipment ideal for the BattleFrog Series, Guerra emphasized the systems’ speech intelligibility, dispersion, and power. “My voice has never sounded better,” he says. “You can see the audience react immediately when I make announcements about their heat’s start time. And the sound projects evenly across the entire area. The entire festival area was covered—without ever sounding harsh or fatigued. I’ve also been impressed with the equipment’s ease of use. This enables me to easily manage the rig even when skilled labor is limited or unavailable. The rigging is user friendly and flexible. With 18 races this year, we needed something that can handle the road while also having a low power draw. The Event series was the solution.”

With all this equipment, knowing there is competent and responsive customer and technical support available is a big consideration, as one never knows when questions may arise. Here too, Guerra was very complimentary of D.A.S. Audio. “We experienced a lot of rain on Saturday and one of the start line monitors became partially submerged under water. The Miami-based support team got the enclosure back to me that week in time for our next race. I’ve never received anything back that quick—even for minor problems—from other manufacturers. They really look out for us. I couldn’t ask for more.”

The new D.A.S. Audio loudspeakers are proving to be ‘just the ticket’ for the rigors of the BattleFrog Series. This equipment represents a tremendous upgrade from our previous system, which couldn’t even compare,” Guerra reports. “We’ve received numerous compliments from both event attendees and BattleFrog employees. Our D.A.S. loudspeakers really ignited our festival area, which is such an important part of the customer’s overall experience. Not everyone knows good sound, but they certainly know when it’s bad—and with our D.A.S. equipment, those issues are a thing of the past. My bosses were extremely pleased with the performance of our D.A.S. gear and that, of course, pleases me.”
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ITALIAN LOUDSPEAKER MANUFACTURER EIGHTEEN SOUND HAS ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF DWINDRED SHEENA AS DIRECTOR OF SALES, MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND PACIFIC RIM AND JEFFREY COX AS DIRECTOR OF SALES NORTH AMERICA.

Sheena will be responsible for managing distributors, as well as market development, in China, India and other key Asian manufacturing centers.

Davwinder comes to Eighteen Sound with an array of experience in the pro audio market. Based in Singapore, Sheena has guided sales leadership in various market quadrants in the Asian region for a number of name brands from the US and Europe.

“We are excited to develop this important region of the world utilizing the extensive experience and relationships that Davwinder brings,” explains Giacomo Previ, Eighteen Sound Director of Global Sales. “His fluency in so many Asian languages and his comfortable demeanor, make him the ideal teammate and representative of 18 Sound in the region.”

Cox, who has been handling marketing and business development duties for the Italian facility, will further expand his role by bolstering sales efforts and availability in North America. His goal is to more broadly develop 18 Sound’s client and market relationships in North America while continuing to strengthen the brand worldwide.

“We have worked with Jeffrey for the past 16 months, and it has become very clear that we need to continue to grow our presence in the United States,” adds Previ. “We have been preparing the organization to further development in the States, and I am confident our foothold on the North American market will grow exponentially in his hands.”

“Eighteen Sound has become a serious player over the last decade and the quality Italian design and engineering that the team has come out with over the years is really a step ahead of its class,” adds Davwinder. “I am looking forward on reinforcing both their distribution and manufacturing efforts in the territory.”

Cox concludes, “This is an amazing company that redefines quality when it comes to professional audio products. It has been a pleasure being a part of their continued growth. I am particularly looking forward to working with Italy, and directly linking companies in the States to 18 Sound, bringing their extraordinary loudspeakers to people everywhere.”
Understanding the limits, characteristics and safe procedures of the equipment utilized in entertainment production is paramount to the safety, reputation and perception of our industry. Toward this important goal, Mountain Productions hosted its 30th Annual CM Hoist School on March 9 – 13, hosting 60 students representing over 30 production companies, theaters and universities. The intensive training took place in Wilkes-Barre, PA at Mountain Productions’ expansive facilities.

Students engaged in hands-on seminars throughout the week that showcased proper and accepted techniques of production based rigging. Featured seminars in hoist maintenance, rigging, truss management, electrics, and fall protection gave each student a keen insight and appreciation for the importance of working in a safe manner. A week of training was capped on Friday with a jam-packed day of guest speakers and industry professionals.

Instructors were Dave Carmack, CM (Hoist Maintenance) and Eric Rouse (Rigging Principles). Guest Speakers included Mike Webb from Motion Laboratories; Richard Cadena with Lighting and Sound America; Mike Garl of Mike Garl Consulting; and Matthew Smith, DBI-SALA.

First year speaker Richard Cadena, Technical Editor at Lighting and Sound America commented about the CM Hoist School, “Now having seen it and experienced some of it, I know why it has such a great reputation...I was impressed with the whole experience.”

Matt Smith of DBI-SALA/Capital Safety helped with a Fall Protection Demonstration. He said the event was “impressive” and added, “the participants ask great questions, which makes it a pleasure for me.”

CM’s Jennifer O’Leary, Dave Carmack, Mike Dilallo, Jackie Nash and Wally Blount, the father of CM’s Entertainment Technology, presented Jim Evans, president of Mountain Productions, with a commemorative plaque signifying 30 years of training, service and support. Mountain Productions continues as a proud Master Distributor of CM products, and supports the quality and reputation of the CM brand.

The Hoist School began in 1985, President of Mountain Productions Jim Evans asked Columbus McKinnon to send technicians to instruct its staff on proper use and maintenance of CM electric chain hoists. The following year, Mountain Productions invited some of their clients to join the instruction. Over the years, word of the Hoist School grew, and more and more students and speakers attended each year. The school has grown to be very robust, the focus still on chain hoist maintenance and rigging, but with additional industry professionals.

The 31st Annual CM Hoist School will take place on February 29th – March 4th of 2016.

www.hoistschool.com
www.mountainproductions.com
The San Francisco Nest, Bay Area’s largest flexible production studio starts welcoming clients.

With the expansion of San Francisco and Bay Area businesses over the last few years the need for studio production and demonstration spaces has increased rapidly. In response to this growing need The San Francisco Nest recently opened its doors to a wide range of clients.

The SF Nest is one of the largest, versatile studio spaces in the Bay Area. This flexibility, coupled with its prime location (just off of route 101 and a ten minute drive to San Francisco International Airport), is making the studio a hit with clients. Ideally suited for just about any kind of production the 60ft x 60ft square space can host film, television, photographic and commercial shoots, music production rehearsals, green screen and motion capture as well as providing an ideal space for product launches, demos and corporate events.

Unlike other studios in San Francisco, The Nest’s location makes it ideal for projects that require quiet, or conversely, to be able to make significant amounts of noise. Rahn continued; “It’s far away enough from offices so we can really crank it up and make some serious noise without disturbing anybody.

And the location is good. You know, San Francisco is an incredible city… People in this region are always looking for the latest, greatest high tech stuff, whether it’s on the computer side or the audio side and people have been really responding to our systems.”

David Rahn, North American Sales Manager for Alcons Audio, who demonstrated their new LR24 large format line array system for the first time in the United States at The Nest commented; “The space is great! It’s very functional and acoustically it’s very well behaved… It’s (also) very isolated. It works really well as a commercial and production space and also for special events and green screen shoots, etc. I think you can really do some good stuff in here. It’s the right size, it’s not too big, it’s not too small. It’s a ideal space.”

New San Francisco Studio opens!

And the location is good. You know, San Francisco is an incredible city… People in this region are always looking for the latest, greatest high tech stuff, whether it’s on the computer side or the audio side and people have been really responding to our systems.”

The San Francisco Nest – Background Information

The San Francisco Nest was born out of the belief that the Bay Area needed a studio space that was extremely flexible, accessible and affordable. Its close access to air and road transit, coupled with extensive off-street parking and full in-house production facilities, equipment and staff, makes The Nest a unique production environment.

www.thesfnest.com

PRG and PRG Nocturne are proud to be part of the Script’s touring family. Congratulations and many thanks to Danny, Mark, Glen, Simon Moran, Bob O’Brien, Quinner, and Jamie Thompson.

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Outline Names Luca Giaroli Business Development Manager

New Position Created to Meet Record Growth and Global Market Expansion Initiative

Outline s.r.l., a leading European manufacturer of premier professional loudspeaker systems has announced the appointment of Luca Giaroli to the position of Business Development Manager.

An accomplished and skilled marketing manager, Luca also possesses the engineering, technical expertise, and practical experience that will focus his energy on expanding the company’s global presence on all levels. He will be responsible for building sales, imaging and branding, as well as field training and education initiatives for all of Outline’s professional sound reinforcement programs, and will report directly to the company’s Board of Directors.

“My mission here is simple, although challenging – I will be hitting the road to meet with our distributors, engage current and new customers; speak with sound engineers and technicians; organize demos and high profile events to showcase our proprietary technologies; spend time with friends and fans of Outline; organize international trade shows with existing clients; while exploring, identifying, and capitalizing upon new opportunities for market expansion. He will also share his experience and knowledge with our R&D department, management group, and the wider staff complement, helping us all to further enhance and exploit our skill sets.”

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UPSTAGING INTRODUCES NEW SABER LED VIDEO STRIP

Upstaging, Inc. continues to revolutionize the lighting industry with the introduction of the new Saber LED series. The Saber 1000, 500 and 250-10 mil double-row IP65 Video LED strip, allows unprecedented creative effects for any indoor or outdoor environment. The Saber is built by About Show.

Made with aluminum alloy and advanced LED technology, the versatile nature of the Saber allows it to fit into any design. The Saber is made with a 10.4mm video strip with two rows of SMD 3in1 LEDs attached. It is available in 3 sizes, 1000mm, 500mm and 250mm in length. The total fixture is lightweight and less than an inch wide with a depth of just under 3” without clamps, which makes for easy installation and various mounting options.

The 1000mm section weighs only 2.65 lbs. with a three-sided mounting track that allows for endless mounting options. Saber was designed to mount seamlessly end to end but can also be stacked and maintain its 10mm pixel pitch. The optional round diffuser is perfect for that classic tube effect. The square diffuser is yet another option that looks great stacked and surface mounted. Current mounting options include Bracket with Half Coupler, Joiner Bracket & Joiner Bracket with Half Coupler. Other mounting options are available for both production and architectural applications.

Upstaging has partnered with the U.K’s Brompton Technology to implement the user-friendly Tessera GUI processor that is customizable and easy to use. The Tessera processor is able to configure a unique Saber display. This information gets stored on a memory card in the Control Box that remembers the info even after the unit is turned off.

Upstaging has the Saber in stock now for rental applications.

For more information on how you could benefit from the Saber LED, contact SaberLED@Upstaging.com or call Mike Creager at (815) 899-9888.

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The howling bitter cold in Cincinnati, OH was not enough to deter Mobile Production Monthly from hanging out with the crew of the legendary Sir Elton John on the opening night of 9-show run of the Million Dollar Piano Tour before they head back to Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas.

The gear and crew load into nine Egotrips trucks and three Senators buses and the crew jokes their fuel of choice is “caffeine and Seinfeld jokes.” Elton John and the band fly in with Starflight Aviation.

DC Parmet, Tour Manager and Tour Accountant, is responsible for ticketing, maintaining the guest list, band travel, organizing meet and greets, and comic relief. “The only thing I don’t do is load out...I just get in the way,” he joked. DC has worked with a wide variety of acts including Tina Turner, Soundgarden, Ozzy Osbourne, and Sade. He landed a job with Elton John in 1997 and has been with him ever since.

DC said the first album he ever bought was “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” and laughed, “if you would have told 11 year old me that I’d be working for the guy on the cover, I never would have believed you.”

DC started his career in the music business in merchandising, beginning with Peter Gabriel’s “So” tour in 1986. Later, while still working in merchandising for Tina Turner, Rusty Hooker of Rock Steady Management, Inc. began teaching DC how to do tour accounting. Recalling life before computers, DC noted, “I did it all with paper and pencil and sometimes even paid the crew in cash. There would be a line outside my hotel room on payday. ”

Elton John's Tight Knit Circle of Lifers

by Jordan Haymaker, photo by Jordan Summers

Elton John's Tight Knit Circle of Lifers

by Jordan Haymaker, photo by Jordan Summers
The Elton John tour uses a tight knit, core group of 12-15 crewmembers. Each member has decades of prior experience, but eventually decided to stick to working solely with Elton John. The secret to maintaining such a loyal crew? Respect and very busy artists. “It’s not uncommon for Elton John to do 100+ dates a year, which keeps them all busy instead of scrambling for work,” DC said. He feels extremely fortunate to work with such a great group of professionals and pointed out one of the best ways to improve yourself is to be in the company of greatness. “Not a day goes by that I’m not thankful to work with such a great group of people and a fantastic artist,” he said.

Production for the Million Dollar Piano Tour

Staging by Tait Towers

Stage Carpenter, John Renner, is responsible for overseeing the construction of the Tait Towers stage. He has only been with EJ for 1 year, but has 8 years total experience. “He got his start with Bruce Springsteen when a friend called him saying the crew was in a pinch for help. He then found himself out on tour and says you really have to prove yourself if you want to keep finding work.”

Elton John specifically requests a 4½ foot tall stage so the fans can get closer. Although it’s a simple design, it has a very classy look with a golden “yellow brick road”3 illuminated on black that sweeps around the back to create a curved 40ft wide by 6ft tall wall sitting at a 45 degree angle.

At each stop of the tour, 8 local stagehands are hired to aide the 2 staff carpenters with construction. John admitted it can be tricky working with people who have never seen the stage, but noted that patience in high-pressure situations is necessary. They can get it built in 3 hours and torn down in ½ with the assistance of 4 hanging motors to lift it up, lower it on it’s rafters, and roll it down.

Rigging by Michael Gomez

Michael Gomez, Production Rigger/Production Assistant, has worked for 22 years, not only with EJ, but also Pearl Jam, Nine Inch Nails, and Cher. He is in charge of making sure the production runs smoothly and safely. He joked, “If something goes wrong, they point at me.”

He and the crew get up at 7am, mark the floor, and plan the layout to be given to the stage manager. They always consult with a local rigger for a site visit in advance to figure out the specifics of the venue. For productivities sake, Michael mentioned, “Once you load in, you immediately start thinking about load out.”

His favorite aspect of this show is how unique and tour friendly Mark Fisher designed everything. He continued, “It’s so gorgeous and elaborate, but can easily be stored away.” He loves having the opportunity to work on one of Fisher’s last designs, and isn’t the only one who thinks it’s pretty special and feels like a tribute to the late architect.

Michael claimed, “It’s always good to see everyone again,” he added. “It’s like wearing your favorite comfy sweater.” He also admitted he often sings along with Elton John’s songs, and loves working with a living legend.

Lighting & Automation by PRG Nocturne

Kevin “Stick” Bye, Lighting Director, runs the console, calls spotlight cues, makes sure the lights are consistent, and also helps with the design of the show. He’s been in lighting for 23 years claiming he only started because he lost a bet. He worked for the Vari-Lite company and was first on tour with New Kids on the Block. He has been with Elton John for 15 years.

This show has 96 moving lights from Vari-Lite and Clay Paky. Kevin loves that Vari-Lite fixtures are durable and the colors are so strong and consistent. “I used to constantly be fixing lights, and now I don’t have to!” he beamed. PRG Nocturne V-18 LED modules controlled by a GrandMA2 console display the content on the half moon at the back of the stage.

He loves running the show because it puts him into a focused state. “I have my own little performance going on by adding touches and accents,” he added. This show was designed by Patrick Woodroffe, but Kevin often collaborates with him on multiple projects too. Kevin stated that his main goal is to enhance the experience that the audience has with EJ and the band.

As part of the automation team, Lars Kristiansen looks after the LED elements and the chandelier. Beginning in Denmark doing load ins and load outs, he’s been in the business for 23 years. He moved to London for college at 18 and got a gig with Vari-Lite.

Since taking it over on the Yellow Brick Road tour last year, his baby is the massive chandelier provided by Tait with video content controlled through PRG’s MBox of media server at a breathtaking maximum height of 40ft with a 408 diameter, it is comprised of 1140 individual LED crystals. The outer rings are fixed, while the inner rings move up and down. The biggest obstacle is having enough height to hang it. “Some venues it will hover right above the band,” he said, “but the most important thing is that it doesn’t run into them.”

Video by PRG Nocturne

John Steer, Video Director, is in charge of the 4 manned cameras, hanging the lightweight 16x12 iMac projector screens, and communicating to the cameramen to get particular shots. He has worked with Lord of the Dance, Fleet of Fames, Billy Joel, Andrea Bocelli, Robert Plant, CITTA, and various music festivals. He helped build a new studio at his college in London and said he just fell into the business from there. Although he has “only” been with Elton John U.S. crew for 6 years, he’s worked with EJ in Europe and globally for the past fifteen. John Steer said that it’s a job you love coming back to. One of his crewmembers even gave up a 3-week vacation during the World Cup in Brazil to work for EJ.

John claims he has the best job ever and it’s like coming home to a family. In his
Massive Chandelier provided by Tait with video content controlled through PRG’s MBox Media server. At a breathtaking maximum height of 40ft with a 40ft diameter, it is comprised of 1140 individual LED crystals.
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local venues. They have a buffet style setup kitchen trailer and also a refrigerated van. He of Baltimore, Maryland. They have a mobile Brett Bond, with his wife Lucia Bond, owns FOH, a POV on the keyboard, and a robo on pit, a hard camera at stage left, a high angle at There’s a handheld on the stage, a dolly in the Digital HD recorders. There are 6 cameras all use Grass Valley Kayak 2ME terminal gear, and I give some direction for zooms and pans, noted that, “There is always one camera on EJ, John allows his crew a lot of freedom. He being able to hear 2½ hours of non-stop great production companies. Bill loves seeing Elton John and Billy Joel, and he’s been with Elton John for 19 years. A month after finishing technical school for live sound and recording, he was at the right place at the right time and found himself on the road with Frank Sinatra.

Elton John was given a Yamaha PM1D console for stage mixing from Clair Global. Alan likes it because it’s tough, always works, and has plenty of inputs and outputs. 4 12xM wedges that can easily pump out 1100 dbi surround EJ since he likes to be able to feel the music, and doesn’t use an in-ear mix. The band, however, has 2 stereo mics in ear, and drummer Nigel Olsson mixes his own. A 64-track recording is done of every show using SAWStudio digital software. Alan stated that his job is to make it loud and then turn it up, so the levels on stage are pretty high from EJ’s monitors. “They’re on the edge all of the time.” He continued, “I really have to concentrate...so I use headphones for better isolation to catch feedback before it happens.”

Alan mentioned that EJ has a great relationship with his crew and even gave them all a sneak peak of his new album for free before it was released. He said any problems are solved by simply buying a round of beer and mov- ing on.

Monitor Tech, Simon “Big Smooth” Mathews, has been working for 7 years in the US and 10 years in Malaysia. In 2006 he moved to the US, went to school at Full Sail University, and was then hired by Clair Global, of which EJ is the old- est client. He gained experience working with Jack White, Black Eyed Peas, and even worked on a Grammy winning al- bum back in Malaysia.

For this show, Simon flies the Clair 15s and 15s PA systems in the front, the 13s and 54 subs on the rear hang, and does all of the stage patching. He said the biggest difference working in the US is that peo- ple show up to work, whereas in Malay- sia they’re lucky to get half of a crew. He loves this crew because there’s no yelling, and everyone is always joking and laughing. Simon admitted, “At the end of the day we have to keep the piano guy happy!” He loves everything about his job, but his favorite part is looking at the crowd at the end of the show to see everyone smiling.

After 2½ hours, I looked around and knew exactly what Simon meant. Elton John had energetically played all of his biggest hits on a gorgeous stage leaving everyone in the sold out arena in a state of awe. It was a hum- bing experience witnessing one of the big- gest names in music history thank his fans, his crew, his band, lyricist Bernie Taupin, and even sign autographs along the entire front of the stage before ending with “Circle of Life.” I think DC summed it up perfectly, “How can you not love doing what makes so many people happy? Simply put, we’re in the business of selling happiness.”

John allows his crew a lot of freedom. He noted that, “There is always one camera on EJ, and I give some direction for zooms and pans, but these guys know what they’re doing.” They use Grass Valley Kayak 2ME terminal gear for its durability on the road with Aja Pro Digital HD recorders. There are 6 cameras all together from both Bogen and Thomson. There’s a handheld on the stage, a dolly in the pit, a hard camera at stage left, a high angle at FOH, a POVs on the keyboard, and a robo on stage that can hit anything.

**Catering by Taste Event**

Brett Bond, with his wife Lucia Bond, owns and operates ‘Taste Event Catering based out of Baltimore, Maryland. They have a mobile kitchen trailer and also a refrigerated van. He has worked with Brad Paisley, Billy Joel, and local venues. They have a buffet style setup with breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Their ser- vice also includes hospitality, stocking buses, and taking care of the after show food.

They make a little bit of everything, but draw from their east coast roots for their specialty crab cakes. They are known for also hiring lo- cal restaurants, such as Graeter’s Ice Cream for the EJ show in Cincinnati. They have 5 cooks, 2 dining room staff, 3 drivers in charge of stock ing the dressing rooms. There is an eme- rgency station for breakfast, a beef, chicken, and vegetarian option for dinner, and a juicing and smoothie station. Elton John’s crew likes it spicy; so lunch consisted of Indian cuisine, while dinner included sesame crusted was- abi tuna, sirloin strip steak, a baked potato bar, broccoli, rolls, and a variety of different cheeses.

**Audio by Clair Global**

Matt Herr, FOH Sound Engineer, grew up in Pennsylvania, so it makes sense that he now works with Clair Global. He has 22 years ex- perience working with acts like Michael Jack- son and Madonna. His first tour was in 1995 with Elton John and Billy Joel, and he’s been full time with EJ since 2004. Matt appreciates that, “There’s just a great vibe and we’ve all formed some serious bonds that you don’t get elsewhere.”

Matt runs the show on an analog Yamaha PM-5000 with 16 stereo channels. He prefers an analog setup because, “Anyone can push a button with digital, and EJ is deserving of analog sound.” The show is 100% live and they use no click track or playbacks. Matt uses Lake equalizers, a Lexicon 480L for vocals and background vocals. There are 27 mics on stage from Shure, 2 AKG, and Audio-Technica. EJ’s custom Yamaha grand piano with rolled black keys has a midi rail in it generated off of 2 monitors to get a thick sound.

Alan Richardson has 34 years experience, and has worked as the Monitor Engineer for Elton John for 19 years. A month after finishing technical school for live sound and recording, he was at the right place at the right time and found himself on the road with Frank Sinatra.

Elton John was given a Yamaha PM1D console for stage mixing from Clair Global. Alan likes it because it’s tough, always works, and has plenty of inputs and outputs. 4 12xM wedges that can easily pump out 1100 dbi surround EJ since he likes to be able to feel the music, and doesn’t use an in-ear mix. The band, however, has 2 stereo mics in ear, and drummer Nigel Olsson mixes his own. A 64-track recording is done of every show using SAWStudio digital software. Alan stated that his job is to make it loud and then turn it up, so the levels on stage are pretty high from EJ’s monitors. “They’re on the edge all of the time.” He continued, “I really have to concentrate...so I use headphones for better isolation to catch feedback before it happens.”

Alan mentioned that EJ has a great rela- tionship with his crew and even gave them all a sneak peak of his new album before sound check. He said there isn’t that one guy you just can’t stand like you have at most other jobs. Everyone has been in the business long enough, so no one gets offended if someone has an off day. He said any problems are solved by simply buying a round of beer and mov- ing on.

Monitor Tech, Simon “Big Smooth” Mathews, has been working for 7 years in the US and 10 years in Malaysia. In 2006 he moved to the US, went to school at Full Sail University, and was then hired by Clair Global, of which EJ is the old- est client. He gained experience working with Jack White, Black Eyed Peas, and even worked on a Grammy winning al- bum back in Malaysia.

For this show, Simon flies the Clair 15s and 15s PA systems in the front, the 13s and 54 subs on the rear hang, and does all of the stage patching. He said the biggest difference working in the US is that peo- ple show up to work, whereas in Malay- sia they’re lucky to get half of a crew. He loves this crew because there’s no yelling, and everyone is always joking and laughing. Simon admitted, “At the end of the day we have to keep the piano guy happy!” He loves everything about his job, but his favorite part is looking at the crowd at the end of the show to see everyone smiling.

After 2½ hours, I looked around and knew exactly what Simon meant. Elton John had energetically played all of his biggest hits on a gorgeous stage leaving everyone in the sold out arena in a state of awe. It was a hum- bing experience witnessing one of the big- gest names in music history thank his fans, his crew, his band, lyricist Bernie Taupin, and even sign autographs along the entire front of the stage before ending with “Circle of Life.” I think DC summed it up perfectly, “How can you not love doing what makes so many people happy? Simply put, we’re in the business of selling happiness.”

www.eltonjohn.com
ELTON JOHN CREW

ELTON JOHN.....................................................................artiste
JOHN FALLows...................................... 1st hair & make-up artist
JAMIE PRITCHARD................................. 2nd hair & make-up artist
LEON KIRBY.......................................... flight attendant
TREN HAVENSET.................................. general tour assistant
MARCUS SELHOFF.............................. artiste transportation co-ordinator
JIMMY CARROLL.................................. artiste security
STEVE GORDON.................................. artiste security
JD McGRADY....................................... artiste security
KEITH BRADLEY.............. tour director
DC PARMENT.................................... tour manager | tour accountant
JIN JOO MADDDY............................. band road manager | band wardrobe
DAVEY JOHNSTON.............................. musical director | guitar | vocals
NIGEL OLSSON.................................... drums | vocals
JOHN MAHon..................................... vocals | percussion
KIM BULLARD.................................... keyboards
MATT BISONETTE.............................. bass guitar | vocals
LISA BANKS...................................... background vocals
ROSE STONE...................................... background vocals
TATA VEGA...................................... background vocals
JEAN WITHERSPOON...................... background vocals
DENNIS MCMANUS............................ stage manager
JAMISON “PORKCHOP” HYATT................ 2nd stage manager
MIKE GOMEZ.................................... production rigger
KEITH HABERSTROH......................... artiste wardrobe
TONY SMITH...................................... keyboard tech | production
DALE STICHA.................................... piano tech
RICK SALAZAR.................................. drum tech
CHRIS SOBCHACK.............................. drum tech
ALAN RICHARDSON......................... monitor engineer
MATT HERR...................................... FOH sound engineer
CLIFF DOWNEY............................... systems engineer
SIMON MATTHEWS............................ monitor tech
SCOTT MEGRATH............................. audio tech
KEVIN BYE....................................... lighting designer
LARS KRISTIANSEN......................... automation
COREY TOM..................................... lighting tech
TOM RIDER..................................... lighting tech
JAMES THOM................................... lighting tech
DOUG EDER..................................... lighting tech
RYAN DUNN..................................... lighting tech
JOHN STER...................................... video director
NICK RUOCoo.................................... LED + PJ
BILL CROOKS.................................... video engineer
SCOTT LUTTON................................. video engineer
KRISTENa RICE............................... video engineer
KIM HAMPTON.................................. video engineer
RYAN FLOYD.................................... carpenter
JOHN REYNER................................. carpenter
CHRIS THOMAS............................... merch
PETE MILLS................................. MDP | ray Cooper percussion tech
LINDSAY VANNoy............................ MDP | piano tech

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Elton John Crew Members

Alan Richardson
Monitor Engineer

Brent Bond
Catering

John Renner
Carpenter

Kevin "Stick" Bye
Lighting Director

Bill Crooks
Lighting Director

DC Parmet
Tour Manager

Mike Gomez
Production Rigger

Simon Mathews
Monitor Tech

Lars Kristiansen
Automation

Matt Het
FOH Sound Engineer

John Steer
Video Director

Bill Crooks
Lighting Director

Dan Parmet
Tour Manager

John Steer
Video Director

Tour Accountant
Production Resource Group Announces Plans to Acquire XL Video

Production Resource Group, L.L.C. (PRG) recently announced it has agreed to acquire the XL Video Group, one of the largest providers of premier multi-market video services. PRG Chairman & CEO Jeremiah J. Harris and Lucas Covers, the Group CEO of XL Video jointly made the announcement.

XL Video, founded in 1995, has established itself as leading video services supplier around the world. The company is a multi-award winning provider of creative video solutions for concert touring, corporate events, exhibitions, automotive, television, sports, and theatre. Like PRG, XL Video supports creative designers and producers with full technical support in putting together cutting-edge video solutions for some of the most innovative and aesthetically daring shows in the world.

For PRG’s worldwide clients, this acquisition expands their access to the wide range of creative video technology and services that they already enjoy. They can continue to be confident in the quality of product, production expertise, and professionalism when further integrating video into their productions and events.

"By combining XL Video with PRG, we are creating a tremendously valuable resource for event and entertainment producers anywhere in the world," said PRG’s Harris. "The integrated company will be able to offer an exceptional breadth of production technologies and depth of industry expertise."

Upon completion, XL Video’s worldwide locations will become part of PRG’s network of over 40 locations in key cities around the world.

"As XL Video, we have worked on some of the largest and highest profile concert tours, television shows, automotive and corporate events around the globe," commented Covers. "We have established a client base that has become more sophisticated in their expectations of the standard of video production. As part of PRG, we will continue to exceed their expectations and raise the bar on video production."

Stephan Paridaen, PRG’s Global President and Chief Operating Officer, concluded, "PRG and XL Video are extremely well positioned to provide a multi-disciplined, integrated solution. Making the XL Video team part of the PRG family, will be extremely beneficial to our clients and this has been our top priority from the start."
A New high-resolution DEL Scoreboard at the Olympic Stadium!

A New high-resolution DEL Scoreboard at the Olympic Stadium!

To further meet the high technological demands of their customers, Montreal’s Olympic Park management retained Solotech’s services after a public tender, as the prime contractor to equip the stadium with one of the largest high-resolution screens in the country!

The two initial screens installed in 1992 were replaced by a single LED surface measuring 3380 square feet. In addition to the scoreboard, Solotech supplied and installed an electrical distribution system, a fiber video distribution system, image processors and a sports scoring system.

“It was a great challenge to integrate this new screen on an existing structure within tight deadlines while ensuring the safety of working at a height,” explained Alexandre Pecqueux, the Solotech project manager. The deliverables were met notably through preventive equipment evaluation: “Solotech has the advantage of having a very large workshop and this enabled us to carry out the preparation in our offices, and limit risks and interventions on the installation site”, continues Mr. Pecqueux.

For his part, Mr. Maurice Landry, Vice President of Construction and Maintenance at the Olympic Park was satisfied of the result: “We are satisfied with the work done by Solotech. All of the work was carried out according to our quality requirements and deadlines. The relationship between both organizations has been very smooth and the work was performed according to our expectations.”

Details of the screen:

33.408mW x 9.408mH
430 cabinets
Pixel pitch 16mm
Total pixels: 1,227,744 pixels

ABOUT SOLOTECH:

For over 35 years, Solotech, a 100% Canadian owned company, has been developing technological expertise made available to artists, producers and events in Quebec, Canada and around the world, including Céline Dion, Cirque du Soleil, André Rieu, Bruce Springsteen, Spears, Michael Bublé, Lady Gaga, Sochi’s Winter Olympics, 22nd Central American and Caribbean Games, Justin Timberlake and recently Bryan Adams’ tour.

This vast expertise has enabled Solotech to permanently outfit some of the most prestigious venues, amphitheaters and events around the world.

www.solotech.com
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