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volume 1 issue 1

by TOUR GUIDE

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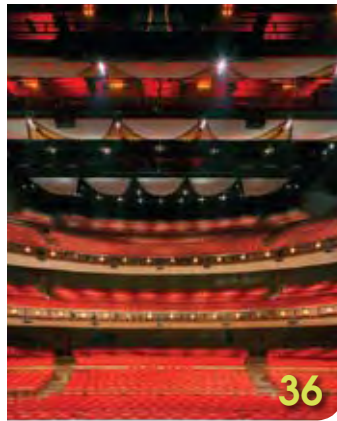
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Welcome to the premier issue

of *Mobile Production Monthly*, presented by *Tour Guide Magazine*. What you will find in this, and subsequent monthly issues will be an expanded scope of coverage. Last year, we expanded our coverage of production to include the Detroit Auto show and the Air Force Thunderbirds, to name a few. The response we received from the industry convinced us to include more of this type of coverage in the future.

As our plans for expanded coverage in the industry materialized, it became obvious to us that a name change for the monthly magazine was in order. We did not want our readers to think that our coverage was limited to only concert touring. Clearly, that is and will remain a primary focus for our publications, however, it is not limiting us in any way.

Another thing you will notice will be a wider diversity of writers and subject matter. We have been fortunate to attract quality people to present their ideas and impressions in our publications and we are committed to increasing the accessibility of our pages to qualified people.

We hope you will appreciate these changes and continue to support our work as you have for the past nine years.

Larry Smith



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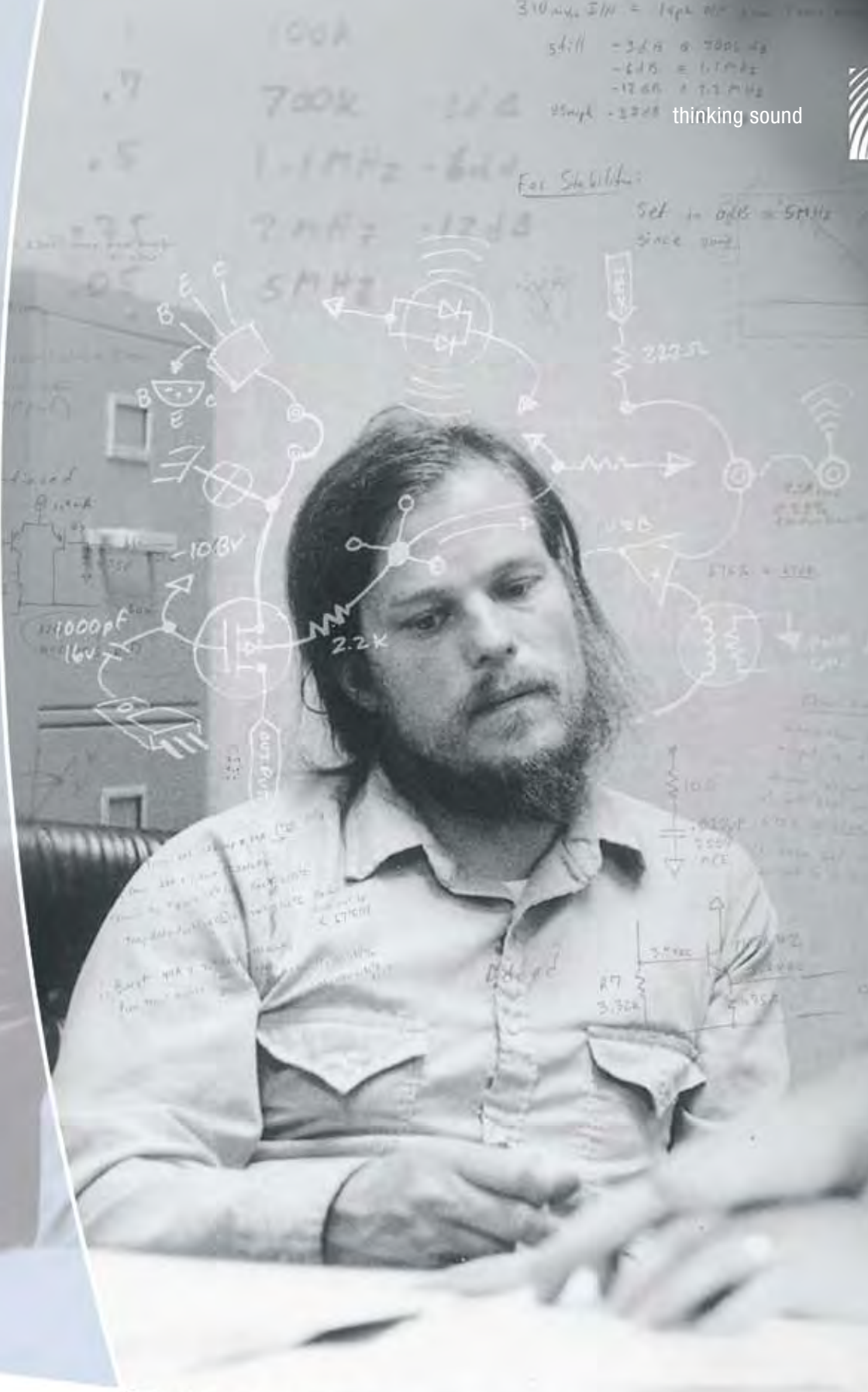
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Present a radical idea, and everyone's there to question it. But if it works, suddenly it's more than a good idea, it's an industry standard. Even before Meyer Sound was founded in 1979, the idea of self-powering was in John Meyer's mind. The HD-1 studio monitor realized his concept of incorporating amplification, processing, limiting and crossover into one cabinet, the MSL-4 brought it to sound reinforcement. At the time, there were skeptics, but now that we've been making self-powered sound reinforcement loudspeakers for more than 11 years, John Meyer's sound thinking is not in question. The real question is: what will he think of next?

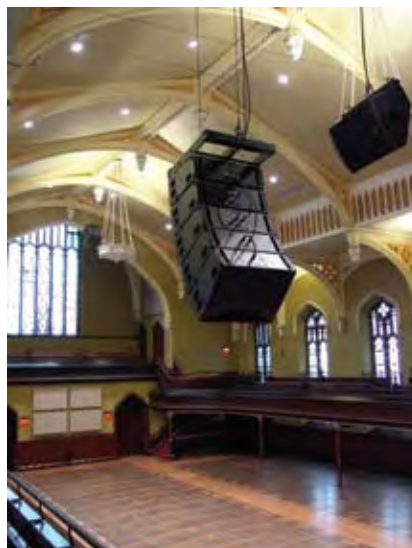
genesis of the first meyer sound self-powered sound reinforcement loudspeaker: the MSL-4

KUDO DELIVERS RIGHTEOUS SOUND AT BABEVILLE

Singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco recently played the opening nights of her hometown’s newest music venue, Asbury Hall, a 1,000-capacity performance space within a 19th century church in downtown Buffalo. The Church facility and Asbury Hall, known collectively as Babeville, are actually the latest grand-scale DIY project for the folksinger, always a champion of community and social activism as well as independent music. DiFranco and her partner in Righteous Babe Records, Scot Fisher, saved The Church from demolition, purchasing the historical site from the City of Buffalo, and kicking off a long restoration process back in 2000. Klondike Sound specified and installed an impressive sound system, made up primarily of L-ACOUSTICS components, including the KUDO line array.



Klondike Sound owner John “Klon” Koehler began working with DiFranco in 1996, a pivotal year for his company. “We made a leap of faith in ‘96 to buy an L-ACOUSTICS V-DOSC(r) line array and there’s still nothing better,” Klon shares. “The decision I made back then has led me all the way to this incredible installation. Ani has always understood how art and science come together—that a full-fidelity sound system would help her deliver her message. When we started touring regularly with Ani, we began using the V-DOSC system and people all over the U.S. and Canada were commenting on how amazing her shows were. In the ten years since, L-ACOUSTICS has always been our loudspeaker of choice.”



photos: *above* Babeville is, indeed, a truly “righteous” venue. *left* A rear view of KUDO and 112XT from a side balcony.

The Church and parish building make up a large complex that DiFranco and Fisher have put to good use—the sanctuary is the performance space, and the attached parish building and basement spaces house Righteous Babe Records’ headquarters, as well as Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center. Klon got involved in the Asbury Church restoration in January of 2002, being called on to assess the suitability of the sanctuary for live performance and to make recommendations regarding rig-

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ging points, electrical power distribution, stage size and access, and to begin designing a sound reinforcement system. “Scot Fisher understood how important it is to the success of a show to accommodate the needs of touring production,” Klön shares. “Basically a show starts and ends on the loading dock and if you don’t have a reasonable flow of equipment, building services and accommodation for tour personnel, the show will suffer. The objective here was to provide the best possible production conditions.”

Once the roof-off renovation was completed and the building could be safely occupied, Klön addressed the acoustic challenges. “I sought the opinion of my friend Sam Berkow, who came to The Church with me in September of 2006 and made some recommendations, which we followed to the letter,” Klön reports. “We wanted to preserve as much of the 19th century aesthetics that this venue had, but bring it to a 21st century level of production quality. Sam did a great job of specifying acoustical treatment in places where it wouldn’t be noticed and brought down the adverse reflections in the room considerably.”



photos: *left* A dV-DOSC array covering the rear center balcony area. *right* KUDO for FOH, plus 112XT for side balcony coverage

Conceived as a multipurpose venue, though primarily for standing-room-only music shows, the Asbury Church performance space needed a sound system to suit multiple venue seating arrangements. Klön summarizes: “There are 31 L-ACOUSTICS loudspeakers in the room, all very carefully time-aligned and aimed to serve a variety of seating configurations, with no compromise for concerts. We went to L-ACOUSTICS with architectural drawings early on--this was a design/build opportunity and we wanted the optimal system design.”

Jim Kinkella, head of engineering services for L-ACOUSTICS US, used the manufacturer’s SOUNDVISION acoustical modeling software to help visualize the performance of various L-ACOUSTICS

products in a variety of locations around the room. “We came up with very uniform SPL coverage mapping to achieve the end results,” notes Klön. The system, installed over September 7-8, consists of two five-element L-ACOUSTICS KUDO arrays arranged left and right, and powered by eight L-ACOUSTICS LA48a amplifiers. The arrays serve most of the main floor and the side balconies. A pair of 112XT coaxial loudspeakers covers the tips of the horseshoe balcony, out of the pattern of the main speakers, and a small cluster of three dV-DOSC enclosures serves just the rear balcony; both are powered by a total of two L-ACOUSTICS LA17a amps. The front-fill system consists of four L-ACOUSTICS 8XT coaxial speakers, on the front lip of the

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ZZ TOP ROCKS OUT

During 2008 Orange Bowl Halftime Show

Aero Series loudspeakers strut their stuff before national television audience



This year's Orange Bowl football game between the Virginia Tech Hokies and the Kansas Jayhawks was a spectacular event in and of itself, but the real action came during the much anticipated halftime show. Headlining this year's event was "That Little Ol' Band from Texas," ZZ Top. Playing to a capacity crowd of better than 75,000—not to mention a national TV audience—ZZ Top's spirited performances were brought to life by the audio team at Interface Sound—using a collection of loudspeakers from the D.A.S. Audio catalog.

Based in Miami, Interface Sound has grown from a modest start in 1985 into one of the leading audio/visual, staging, and lighting companies in the Southeastern United States. Spearheaded by owner/operator Ralph Alvarez, the firm handles a wide variety of live sound and corporate/industrial events, and is the logistics organizer and

equipment provider of audio and staging for Carnival Miami, an annual event in Miami's Little Havana district that attracts upwards of one million people.

For this year's Orange Bowl halftime show, Interface Sound constructed an audio system consisting of sixty D.A.S. Audio Aero

38A powered, 3-way line arrays and twelve Aero 182A 2k powered subwoofers that surrounded the playing field and faced out toward the stands.

Moving the equipment onto the field at halftime was no small accomplishment in and of itself, as Alvarez explains, "From the moment the whistle blew signaling halftime, we had exactly three minutes to get everything into position. This included two 32 x 16-foot stage platforms, which were on casters, as well as the dozen custom-made carts for the loudspeakers. Like last year's show, we had 200 volunteers helping us with this task."

The actual sound reinforcement system on the field consisted of twelve mobile carts that were pulled



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into place at halftime by a dozen golf carts. Each cart consisted of five Aero 38A line array elements and one 182A 2K subwoofer. There were four carts on each side of the playing field, along with two carts at each of the end zones. Connections were accomplished by two cables between carts (one each for subs and highs) plus a single phase, 60-amp Hubbell connector plate. To maintain signal strength and integrity, twenty-four channels of RDL line amplification were placed into service.

“This configuration worked really well for us in the past, so it made sense to repeat it again this year,” notes Alvarez. “We were able to reach all the way up into Level 400—known to the audio crew as the ‘nosebleed’ section. Using D.A.S. Audio’s version of EASE Focus, we configured our system’s coverage quite easily and it all worked out exceptionally well. Frank Martinez, our company’s Chief Engineer, handled all programming and signal routing for the project.”

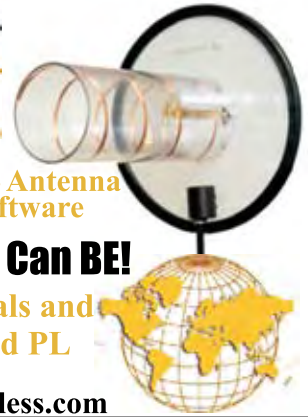
FOH responsibilities were handled by Danny Fernandez. For this event, a Yamaha PM5D digital mixing console was deployed for redundancy while two Digidesign Venue consoles were used to mix FOH and monitors. Mixing live to the FOX TV feed was Joel Someillan.

“The biggest challenge of this project was signal routing and power consumption,” says Alvarez. “D.A.S. Audio’s self-powered products use Class D power amplification, so they don’t require a lot of amperage. They’re highly efficient.

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ADAMSON INTRODUCES a built-in Pole Mount Socket in the Metrix Sub



The Adamson Metrix Sub, officially introduced at the AES show in October 2007 now comes standard a built in pole mount socket for use with Metrix Wave-t's pole mount kit. It is designed for use with one or two of Adamson's 15° Metrix Wave-t enclosures providing 120° horizontal by up to 30° vertical coverage. The pole mount supports 3 different positions for the bottom Wave enclosure: -5°, -10°, -15° and can be mounted on top of a ground stack of Metrix Subs, or used indepen-

dently with a stand. The Metrix AIR™ Rigging system on the Wave enclosure allows three positions; 10°, 13°, and 15°.

The Metrix Sub-t is a compact convertible cardioid sub, boasting two new 15" ND15S Neodymium Kevlar drivers, is flyable within the main array or behind the array using two light weight-t series aluminium rigging frames and a frame link adapter when trim heights are limited. The Metrix-i series sub is a non-flyable option for installations requiring only pole mount or stacking applications. ☺



CROWN UNVEILS MACRO-TECH “Anniversary Edition” Models

*Limited production run of copper-faced MA-2402, MA-3600VZ, and MA-5002VZ
celebrate Crown’s history of ingenuity and craftsmanship*

Having recently crossed its 60th year, and more than two decades of producing the industry-standard Macro-Tech Series of power amplifiers, Crown International is commemorating both milestones with a special, one-time production run of its MA-2402, MA-3600VZ and MA-5002VZ as “Anniversary Edition” models.

A very limited quantity of these amplifiers will be produced--only 600 in total will be available worldwide--each of which will feature a visually striking copper-plated front panel (including handles, knobs, buttons, etc.) and be shipped in a custom wood crate. The product will also be accompanied by a special brochure chronicling the history



of the product from its initial concept through today as well as a specification sheet detailing the actual benchmarked performance of that very amplifier, signed and numbered by Crown Senior VP of Research Gerald Stanley, whose patented technologies and innovative design philosophies ultimately made the Macro-Tech Series a global success.

“Over its 20-plus years, Macro-Tech has long been widely regarded as the touchstone in high-performance pro

Orders for the Anniversary Edition models, which are expected to sell out quickly, are being taken now and will deliver within 90 days.
crownaudio.com

audio amplifier design,” says Brian Divine, Crown Market Director, Engineered Sound/Touring Sound. “In fact, between Macro-Tech and its smaller sibling, Micro-Tech, we’ve shipped nearly 275,000 units worldwide, which translates to approximately 54 million watts into 4 ohms or 65 million watts into 2 ohms, so there can be no doubt that this is a highly significant product in terms of pro audio’s history. With the new Macro-Tech Anniversary Edition versions, we are giving a select few the chance to own a unique piece of that history for themselves.” ☺

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GARY MOORE DOES JIMMY HENDRIX

DiGiCo Seamingly Intergrates With Pro Tools



Guitar Legend Gary Moore toured the UK and Europe at the end of 2007, including the Jimi Hendrix Live at Monterey theatrical screening and 40th anniversary concert London on his trip. For this concert, Moore was a member of the all-star tribute band, alongside Jimi Hendrix and The Experience musicians Mitch Mitchell on drums and Billy Cox on bass.

Dave Wooster has been in charge of FOH at Moore's recent performances and for this latest tour he chose a DiGiCo D1 console. Of course, any DAW on the market can be connected to a DiGiCo console, but Wooster went with Pro Tools.

What did you use for the show?

We used a DiGiCo D1. It was the first time I'd used one outside of turning up at a festival or a one off show and just having to use what is there. I've actually had the chance to play and programme the console. Alongside the D1 we had a Pro Tools HD1 system that seamlessly integrated into the desk, which made my life a lot easier during rehearsals.

Why did you need the desk hooked up to Pro Tools?

The idea of recording the show is to give Gary some further material to use for various things, whether that's a full release, a release of bonus material or a release as a digital download. Alongside that, it was being recorded as a production tool for me to use. I could work on the sound checks and the show without needing Gary and the band. At the end, I think we did 18 shows worth of multi-track recordings.

What did you do back at your studio in Luton?

We took the material back to Koolworld, cleaned it up, edited it, and mixed it down as a final master

Gary Moore Praise for XTA On His Latest UK Tour

for Gary to listen to and choose what he wants to use. The integration between the live recording and the studio was completely seamless: the material lived on the hard drive and we dropped the session file onto the machine at the studio and ran it instantly.

Did you use the internal digital effects?

Yes, we used no outboard gear whatsoever. The effects were actually really nice, and the reverbs were very transparent and open. The low-end response of the compressors were really good and very true to what we were actually getting. So I was very impressed with it.

How did the D1 compare to other consoles?

Acoustically the D1 is far, far better than anything I've used to date. At the end of this we will have a nice bank of settings that we can transfer into Gary's shows at a later stage, whether we use a D5 or a D1. ☺



When guitar legend Gary Moore toured the UK at the end of last year to promote his latest album *Close As You Can Get*, Front of House engineer Dave Wooster once again joined Moore and the band, arriving, as usual, with his much loved XTA audio management systems.

The Irish guitarist and vocalist Gary Moore played at 1,200 to 3,000 capacity venues where Wooster used Capital Sound's Martin Audio system, controlled via an XTA DP448 and three XTA DP226s.

Two of the DP226s controlled the main flown Martin Audio W8LC line array, left and right. The other DP226 was used for the LC ground-stack system that was also in a left and right configuration. The DP448 was used as an overall system drive, as well as running the Martin Audio W8LMs in-fills and driving the Martin Audio subs.

The digital feed came from a DiGiCo D1 console, and was into two pairs with one half of the DP448 controlling the flown system, whilst the other half was able to control anything on the ground, including graphics, parametrics and delays, all totally integrated within one software package.

"I've been using the DP448 since it came out. I'm quite insistent that it be at the front-end of my system, whether it be just as a drive

distribution unit into other crossover systems or whether it's integrated, preferably, within an XTA system," says Wooster. "I still really like the EQ variations, not only the graphics but the options it gives me for excellent EQ with the minimum need for phase corrections within EQ. The parametrics are the most powerful EQs that I've used within any form of digital system crossover."

Wooster connected his XTA SiDD across the stereo bus on the DiGiCo D1 desk. SiDDCore control software allows remote control of XTA's AudioCore product DP324. Up to 32 units can be controlled via a PC computer using either RS232 or RS485 interfaces, or via TCP/IP wireless Ethernet link. It is compatible with Windows 98/ME/2000, NT and XP.

"I use the XTA SiDD, wherever I am, it's an amazing tool for that live fix during the show rather than having to dive into the XTAs," explains Wooster. "Sometimes it's easier to have three or four bands of parametric that you can easily access. The dynamics within Gary's set requires a small amount of dynamic EQ compression at around 3kHz where the guitars and his vocals sometimes get a little bit edgy. I don't have to worry about it because I know the SiDD's taken care of it." Wooster also uses his XTA SiDD at his studio (www.koolworld.co.uk) for both tracking and mixing duties, again a tool for all jobs.

XTA is Wooster's unit of choice. "I don't think people out there are fully aware of the true power of the EQ algorithms that XTA have created," he concludes. "The phase cohesion that they give is truly exemplary." ☺

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XL Video UK has been awarded the prestigious ISO14001 status, recognizing its environmental management system.

MD Lee Spencer says, "Being awarded the ISO 14001 accreditation is a great achievement for all the staff at XL as it highlights the company's commitment to the environment and the local community"

Hemel Hempstead based XL is the UK's leading live entertainment video rental specialist.

The company has been segregating and recycling waste since 2005 and working closely with a local waste contractor. Paper and cardboard are segregated for reprocessing and locations are designated throughout the offices and warehouse to deal efficiently with these waste streams, along with plastic, metal and green waste, light-bulbs and batteries. Plastic cups, a far greener option than conventional mugs, are also collected and recycled.

Low energy light-sources are used throughout the UK warehouse and office building where possible, complete with automatic lighting controls to minimise wastage.

Energy saving settings are activated on



(c)david morrell & louise stickland

all the office computers, paper consumption has been dramatically reduced and recycled paper is used for the majority of office applications. Printer cartridges are also always recycled.

XL's Transport department makes one of their largest environmental impacts. The entire delivery van fleet has been replaced with the latest Euro IV specifications, complete with new satellite tracking and navigation systems that ensure optimum routing. Speed limiters have been fitted to vans and driver training now includes guidance on good environmental practices.

The toilets have reduced or dual flush options, and reliance on chemical cleaners and solvents has been minimised, with biodegradable alternatives employed.

All these initiatives are constantly reviewed and a staff committee meets regularly to monitor progress and look at new ways of waste reduction and energy conservation and efficiency.

XL Video is also working with its clients and suppliers to promote environmental awareness and influence positive and proactive environmental behaviour.

XL's operational and working practices were rigorously scrutinized before the ISO 14001 status was conferred. Lee Spencer states, "Environmental issues and the recognition that everyone can make a difference is vital for our future, and it's also a phenomena embraced by many areas of the entertainment industry. As a responsible and caring business, we understand the need to ensure an environmentally conscious operation".



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PHIL CELIA

Named Crown Eastern
Regional Sales Manager

Crown International is proud to report that Phil Celia has recently joined the company to serve as eastern regional sales manager. Celia reports to Deb Frantom, Crown's director of U.S. sales, who made the announcement.



A familiar face to the professional audio industry, Celia is best known for his 14-year tenure with Fostex America, where he spent the past five years as general manager. Prior to Fostex, Celia had worked in pro audio sales and as a recording engineer.



Contact Phil Celia

CALL >> 603.643.4992

EMAIL >> pjcelia@crowintl.com

"We are absolutely elated to have Phil as part of our organization," offers Frantom. "As a 30-year veteran of the pro audio and music industries, he has an excellent background in sales, marketing, manufacturing, international business and general management. Plus, as an engineer and musician, he truly understands things from the end user's perspective as well. Again, we're thankful to have him here at Crown and eagerly look forward to his leadership in our eastern region."

Operating out of a satellite office in Hanover, New Hampshire, Celia oversees Crown's independent representative network handling the manufacturer's eastern territory, stretching from Maine to Florida. Aside from working with reps and the dealers in their respective territories, he is also being called upon to provide personal support for consultants, contractors and end users.

"Crown has such an outstanding heritage," notes Celia, "and I'm pleased to be considered an asset to the company. I do agree that my years of experience in this business have well prepared me for this new role, and I am excited about the opportunity to help grow Crown's relationships with its reps, dealers, and customers." ☺

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MUSIC CITY COACH TAKING THEIR CRAFT(S) TO THE NEXT LEVEL

by DESLEE GONZALES

With the Music Industry proving to be dynamic as ever, the things that remain constant may be few and far between. However, the newly owned Music City Coach hopes to be one of those entities people can always count on. The company's philosophy is to "strive to provide our clients with exceptional service that will leave no doubt we care about them and that we are committed to continuous improvement." Music City Coach, located in Gallatin, TN, has a history of over 25 years of experience in the entertainment industry and the future looks bright.



Gaylon Moore, the new president, purchased Music City Coach last November. A 29 year bus driving veteran, Gaylon began building towards owning his own fleet in 1992. He founded ACTS Coach Inc. in 2001. Still a bus driver at heart, Moore continued driving for his company. And even after purchasing Music City Coach on November 1st, 2007, still occasionally drives today. Cheryl Tucker, Moore's personal assistant has been with him since he owned ACTS and according to Moore, "she (Tucker) is my right hand." Apparently, the apple didn't fall from the tree when Moore's daughter, Misty Moore joined him in 2001 as General Manager at ACTS and now deals with the bus drivers and DOT qualifications at Music City Coach. Christy Ellingburg, has been at Music City since November, holding down the front desk and taking care of all the account payables. Jason Humphreys serves as the company's leasing agent and has been with Moore since he

purchased Music City Coach. Joel Donegan, the bus interior mechanic, has over 30 years experience. Greg Childress is the operations manager and shop foreman while Don Townsend is the parts manager. And where would a bus company be without its mechanics? Kelly McFarland and Randy Basham complete the staff as Music City's maintenance team.

"We strive to provide our clients with exceptional service that will leave no doubt we care about them and that we are committed to continuous improvement."

This company's staff is committed to maintaining the best-kept coaches on the road. The parts department retains a large supply of not only common mechanical and conversion parts but also rarer parts - providing a quick turn around service repair time. The current fleet consists of approximately 40 coaches made up of Prevosts H3-45s, Prevost XLIIIs,

*Starting back row: Gaylon Moore, Misty Moore, Cheryl Tucker, Joel Donegan, Kelly McFarland, Jose Vasquez, Christy Ellingburg
front row: Greg Childress, Jason Humphrey*



and Renaissances that range from 2002-2005. Each bus is maintained to reflect expert interior workmanship with many extras, allowing clients an especially comfortable ride while on the road. The company's website explains that one of its goals is to offer user-friendly features in order to assure all that clients have to worry about is enjoying their trip.



This includes “a state-of-the-art full service maintenance shop where our primary duty is to keep our own fleet of Entertainer Coaches serviced, well maintained and on the road.”

Music City Coach is proud of its drivers and maintains that, “Our professional drivers are among the best in the industry and are there to serve our clients’ needs to the best of their ability.” Speaking of clients, Music City’s long list of clients include: Vince Gill, Amy Grant, Merle Haggard, Elton John, Bon Jovi, Michael Bubble, Deanna Carter, Pam Tillis, Toby Keith, Oak Ridge Boys, Trick Pony, Lee Greenwood, Jars of Clay, Clay Walker, Mark Wills, O.A.R., Patty Loveless, The Del McCoury Band, The Coors Light Tour, the WWE and many more.

Moore hopes to continue to build that client list and, “take Music City to the

CONTINUED ON page 42



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VERTEBRATE ANIMALS WALK THROUGH THE HAZE

Walking With Dinosaurs! - The Live Experience North American Tour

Take 15 “live” dinosaurs, add in elements of escapism, excitement and factual information, and what’s the missing piece of the puzzle? If you answered “special-effects”, you’ve nailed it down. And so have the talented folks at Illinois and California-based theatrical lighting company Upstaging, Inc., who used Look Solutions’ water-based Unique2 Hazer for the new theatrical production Walking With Dinosaurs - The Live Experience North American tour.

A largesse show slated solely for arenas, the production calls for the thin, translucent atmospheric effect that the Unique2 Hazer delivers for visual enhancement.

Dinosaurs return to the earth in this live theatrical arena show. Based on

the award-winning BBC Television Series and after playing for ten sold-out weeks in five cities in Australia, Walking With Dinosaurs is now on tour in North America for two years. 350,000 Americans have already seen the production since it opened in July 2007. The show also incorporates other technologies borrowed from the film industries, like computer hardware and software used to con-



ontrol the “animatronic” creatures featured in this riveting show.

The German-made Unique2, a follow-up of Look Solutions’ Unique Hazer, incorporates a plethora of features

heretofore non-existent in a hazer, such as an Internal Timer and the new Haze-Density Control System (allowing for an individual profile of a show to be programmed). Staging personnel appreciate Unique2’s minimal (approximately 60 seconds) warm-up time, continuous output, adjustable (at the touch of a button) pump, fan, density and output, minimal sound and easy-to-read LED display (for the reading of adjustable data). And one can of fluid (guaranteeing minimal fluid consumption) ensures up to 50 hours of continuous output.

“We love the Look Solutions products for their dependability,” comments Upstaging’s Equipment Manager Tony Skiroock. “The hazers have been low maintenance with no serious issues.”

The current tour dictates that the Dinosaurs will continue to walk into the future. ☺



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pictured right: Baby T-Rex stands before Mother T-Rex.
"Baby T" is operated by lead suite performer,
Harley Durst. photos by Michael A. Beck



photo by michael a. beck

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS



YOU JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THIS PRODUCTION!

by MICHAEL A. BECK

If you have been in the production business for many years, it is easy to get a little jaded and think you've seen it all. But one look at *Walking with Dinosaurs* and you are brought face to face with the old saying, "You ain't seen nothing yet."



Walking into the show you have no idea what to expect. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges that promoters of the show face is marketing because the production is so hard to describe. In order to discuss the technical aspect of this show, one has to first describe the show itself.

The whole idea is that there is the paleontologist who walks the audience through some 190 million years of time when the dinosaurs ruled the earth, beginning with the split of Pangaea (one massive continent). The concept is to show the various prehistoric periods of the earth as animal and plant life came to be.

In the beginning (as it were) Walking with Dinosaurs was an animated BBC production. Then came the idea to bring it to life and take it on the road. Back off and think about that for a moment. We're talking about taking life-sized animatronic dinosaurs!

Australian special effects designer Sonny Tilders is one of the primary players in the development of the "puppets" (many of which would be larger than an African elephant). He explained how it began, "The first idea was to wrap the creature around a skeleton of existing technology such as a boom lift. The problem with that is that a boom lift is designed to move to a fixed position, hold fast and move to another position. It's not meant to have the fluid motion of an actual living creature."

What became instantly apparent was that the dinosaurs would have to be built on a custom designed hydraulic platform from the ground up.

The first dinosaur to become operational was Torosaurus and those who were there speak of its first steps as if seeing a child come to life. It's important to note that these are the largest animatronic creatures ever built. They are full-scale dinosaurs.

There were many factors to be considered. Of course, the most being reality. These creatures would be performing within 20 feet of the audience. Brachiosaurus stood 45 feet tall and measured some 70 feet in length. It had 18 axes of the movement that had to be controlled throughout its neck, tail and head.

These movements had to take place smoothly, gently, even subtly. And most of all, had to look like a dinosaur. Muscle tone was achieved through the use of inflatable bladders and beanbags. Once it was



determined how the inside of the animal would be constructed and functioned, it was time to look at the outside.

The skin was critical not only because of how it would look and perform, but because of how much it would weigh. The first thought was latex. But the skeletons couldn't have held up to the weight in a static pose much less in motion. The final answer wound up being spandex with latex texturing.

The skin requires as much attention as any other part of the system. One more by-product of the fact that none of this had ever been done on this scale was that there was no idea how the skin would hold up.

As the skin and bones were being developed, there was also neurology to be considered—how to take a very realistic model of T-Rex and bring it to life. After all, the show is called *Walking With Dinosaurs*.

Each dinosaur took three people to actually come alive. The actual walking was done through the use of a very small cart directly under the creature. The dinosaur was balanced in an upright post that came out of the cart. The cart controlled the actual walking. Where it went during the show was the responsibility



pictured left: **The colorful inflatable flora appears with the look of time lapsed video and adds great life to the show.** photos by Michael A. Beck

On the occasion when *Mobile Production Monthly* showed up to catch the show, the production experienced its first serious breakdown of the American leg. This is important to note because the dinosaurs were all prototypes. By the time the show reached Atlanta, it had covered the entire country without a major hitch. So, while this mid-show breakdown was catastrophic in that it stopped the show, it took the crew to a place where it had only been one other time when a similar situation occurred in Australia.

There is a part of the show when two 'Torosaurus' were performing and the neck of one of them broke. The show was stopped and the creature was helped off the stage to applause as if it were an injured athlete being helped from the field.

Here's where it got interesting. Once Torosaurus got off the stage, there was a sizable delay. The real problem was that these two creatures had specific roles to play in this segment of the show. The one that had just left was actually supposed to be on stage after the other one left. Because the

show is so tightly scripted, the Voodoo operators had to actually switch software from one station to another in order to be able to improvise long enough for the next part of the show to take over.

This was the first time the team had ever dealt with this kind of issue, yet the protocol was tightly laid out in advance along with plans B, C, D and more if needed.

There were also smaller creatures (Liliensternus, Utahraptors and Baby T-Rex) that moved on their own power without the aid of a car underneath them or the remote puppeteer. That is to say that they had a person inside of them known as a suite performer. The suite operator performed every function of these creatures. The suite weight was roughly 90 pounds.

There were several times during the production when the dinosaurs' heads and tails would whip violently from side to side or up and down. Lead suit performer, Harley Durst spoke to us



**Lead Suit Performer/
Baby T-Rex
Harley Durst**

of the driver who sat in the very tight enclosure.

The feet of the dinosaur were connected to the car via linkage to create walk-cycle so that the motion of the feet was directly proportional to the revolution of the wheels. This was, of course, calibrated to be proportional to the size of the particular animal that was being driven.

In the larger dinosaurs, there were also speakers in the cars to aid in keeping the sounds of the dinosaur localized. More on audio later.

The rest of the movement was controlled by the "Voodoo" operators. These were the puppeteers. There were two per animal. The puppeteers controlled head and neck movements as well as tail, eye and mouth movements. That was all done, obviously, via UHF radio frequency from whatever balcony could be found in the arena where the puppeteers were.

While there is an actual actor in the show who plays the role of Huxley the paleontologist, the life and personality of all of the other characters of the show are given to them by the puppeteers.



pictured above: **Mother and baby brachiosaurus stand up to 50 feet high and must be lit from head to toe anywhere they go.**
left: **Mother Brachiosaurus' driver in his car shows the true size of the dinosaur.** photos by Michael A. Beck

about that, “It took a little doing learning how to work with the suite rather than against it. There’s a lot going on in there and it all has to be done in a way that creates fluid movement.”

The first try at staffing the suite performer positions was aimed at finding puppeteers to fill the roles. Then there was kinesiology of the suite, and production managed to make it look smooth and realistic. Now there was the another part of the equation. This was the raptors—among the fastest animals of their time. They had to move with explosive speed. This took immense core strength. So the staff went in another direction.

They started looking at physical performers such as acrobats and (in the case of Durst) stunt performers who could be taught to run the suites.

As is the case with any touring production, people come and go. As new suite performers, car drivers, or Voodoo puppeteers come into the show, they are run through the paces of learning the routine. The nightmare of these huge creatures out on the floor running into one another is something no one wants to even think about, so the process starts at the most basic level.

Performers gather around a scale model of the floor with models of the dinosaurs and move them around the floor by hand until they feel comfortable then they hop and go for a spin.

There has been frequent mention of the stage or floor of this show. In the case of this show, the stage deserves much more mention than passing reference. The show took up 20,000 feet of the arena floor. The first question that arises is why have a stage in the first place?

We spoke to Adam Davis of Tait Towers who explained, “The problem to be solved was that the dinosaurs weigh tons and all that weight is positioned on three small, extremely heavy duty casters. So if we were to let these things run over any surface that was presented, they would have punched right through.”

The challenge became to come up with a surface that could expand and flex up to two inches and take the extreme point load that would be imposed on it. It took over 150 tries to come up with the solution. The answer was a 5 x 5 foot panel that locked together seamlessly and distributed the load without coming apart.

Each panel was made of a custom designed plywood core sandwiched in between layers of specially designed fiberglass. This was banded around the outside with a custom designed aluminum extrusion that allowed the floor to flex and undulate under the specified loads.

The other issue was speed. The entire set was

pictured right: **Baby T-Rex stands before Mother T-Rex. "Baby T" is operated by lead suite performer, Harley Durst. photos by Michael A. Beck**

painted in grey scale, which allowed the lighting to be more effective. The floor was obviously a part of that design. Given that the floor had a specific paint scheme, the panels couldn't go together at random. Davis spoke to that matter as well, "That was a big issue. How do you deploy 800 panels over 20,000 square feet in one hour knowing that every panel has a specific place in the floor? It was all about choreography."

It all becomes about how the panels went into the set carts the very first time at the Tait shop. From there on in it was all a matter of following directions.

But wait, there's more about Tait's involvement. The outer edge of the floor was a barrier of panels set on end to give elevation to the look while visually separating the floor from the audience. Tait also created these panels. These panels didn't have to lock together as did the floor sections. They pretty much leaned into position. They were made of hard coated polyurethane foam. Davis explained that as well, "This stuff is new for us. It's very lightweight and very tough. You could take the claws of a hammer to it as hard as you can and not leave a mark."

Tait Towers also designed the carts that the dinosaurs traveled on. In a show of this kind, the phrase "some assembly required" is not something anyone wants to hear. Therefore, it was imperative to devise a way to travel the dinosaurs with as little dismantling as possible.

Thus the 40-foot set cart. And while Production Director Jake Berry didn't see it as anything as complicated as rocket science, he did say that there were some serious concerns, "Bigger than the issue of building a cart that can carry a 40-foot long dinosaur on it was the matter of coming up with a way of getting the dinosaur up on to the cart. And once you get it up there, you want to be sure that it's not going to tip over when it gets there. So balance was an issue as well".



Production Director Jake Berry

The set carts were a matter to be considered by the venues as well. After all, where does one store ten carts anywhere from 25 to 40 feet long?

The set was not just comprised of decking and fascia. As the timeline of the show moved along it went through periods of time when vegetation showed up on the Earth. In some cases it was just greenery. At other times it was flowers of all kinds.

This had to happen quickly in order to keep up with the script. The design choice for this was utterly in-



pictured above: **Torosaurus being loaded into its truck. photos by Michael A. Beck**



pictured above: **Dino drivers and Voodoo operators work out blocking and choreography with a new driver with scale models. photos by Michael A. Beck**

genious. Inflatables. On the outer perimeter of the stage, outside of the fascia panels, were large boxes with holes on the top and fans inside them. The plants were inside the boxes and were inside out.

So when they were deployed, they grew out of themselves going at slightly random speeds giving the look of time-lapsed photography.

Among the first things that happen in the show is the split of Pangea. The Pangea continent is made up

CONTINUED ON page 43



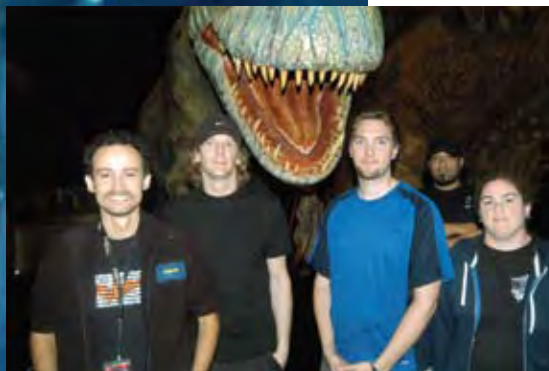
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Tour Promoter - Arena Networks
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Power - CAT Entertainment

PICTURED ON OPPOSITE PAGE
Top to bottom, left to right

left Richard Everit – Lead Driver,
Theresa Everit - Driver
right Steven Richards – Lighting
Tech, George Reeves – Lighting
Tech, Richard Allison – Lighting
Tech, Jonny Tosarello - Lighting
/ Crew Chief Board Op, Michael
Kennedy – Lighting Tech

left Dino Engineer, Larry
Aeschlimann works on T-Rex
right Daniell Flood, Edward
Boyle, Gavin Sainsbury, Terry
Ryan, Brian Parker, Matt McCoy,
Graeme Haddon and Nigel
Hodgson



left Back: Lindsey Haney – Video
Director, Dave Moss – Engineer,
Front: Eric Lee – Video Technician
right Dino drivers, engineers
& controls: Cameron Malacari,
Ryan Floyd, Michael Hamilton,
Ash Cole, Dennis Crespo, Brett
Bennett, David Fulcher, Roger
Quinte, Casey

left Maeve Laverty driving one of
the Pangaea pieces during the
show.

right Ash Cole tending to the skin
of one of the dinosaurs.



left Cameron Wenn - Resident
Director, Katy Pitney – Stage Mgr,
Mundi Ross - Assistant Stage
Mgr, Lucy Kennedy - Deputy
Stage Mgr

right Riggers: Todd Mauger,
Robert Slepicka

PICTURED LEFT

top Conrad Hendricks - Audio
Director, Gene Phillips - System
Engineer, Josh Flower - System/
RF Engineer, Rudy Paniagua
- System Tech, Lisa Mishkin -
System Tech

middle Carpenters: Mike
Howson - Head Carpenter, Tas
Dimitrikakis - Carpenter, Andrew
Johnstone – Carpenter, Maeve
Laverty – Carpenter, Dan Gurchik
- Carpenter

bottom Carter Baynham and Amy
Meyers our Automation Crew



crew list

Executive Director - Bruce Mactaggart
 General Manager IEA - David J E Thomas
 Production Director - Jake Berry
 Production Stage Mgrs - Jon Boss, George Reeves
 Tour Coordinators - Dori VENZA, Kari Stehens
 Business Mgr- Mike Klein
 Resident Director - Cameron Wenn
 Company Mgr - Tanya Miles
 Set and Video Design - Peter Englund
 Lighting Design - John Raymond
 Show Director - Scott Faris

Tour Crew

Stage Mgr - Pamela Kekos
 Deputy Stage Mgr - Lucy Kennedy
 Assistant Stage Mgr - Mundi Ross
 Carpenters - Mike Howson, Maeve Laverty, Andrew Johnstone, Hajime Minatodani, Dan Gurchik, Martin Capiraso, Brian Blumeyer, John "Pinky" Hurd
 Head of Creatures - Dennis Crespo
 Drivers - Angela Dufty, Michael Hamilton, Brett Bennett, Michael Olson, Roger Quinte, Ryan Floyd, Lear McClellan, Madison Harris
 Skins / Suit Dresser - Rebecca Sloan
 Skins - Shauni Wall, Brittany Kiefer
 Engineers - Morgan Durst, Larry Aeschilimann, David Fulcher
 Controls 1 - Nigel Hodgson
 Controls 2 / Swing Driver - Casey Ross
 Automation - Carter Baynham, Christian Hindley
 Associate Sound Designer - Arnie Hernandez
 Sound - Gene Phillips, Rudy Paniagua, Lisa Mishkin
 Comms - Josh Flower, Atiba Riley
 Lighting / Crew Chief Board Op - Jonny Toasello
 Lighting - Steven Richards, Michael Kennedy, Richard Allison, Christopher Ubinger
 Riggers - Todd Mauger, Robert Slepicka
 AV - Lindsey Haney, Eric Lee, Dave Moss
 Truck Drivers - Richard Everit, Theresa Everit, John Ferris, Wayne Cameron, Les King, Selwin Champion, Lon Simpson, Gary Adair, Carl Iverson, Tim Kutzler

Cast/Puppeteers

Suit Performer - Chad Colton
 Lead Voodoo Puppeteer - Ed Boyle
 Huxley - Jon Bliss Warren, Robert James
 Lead Voodoo Puppeteer - Gavin Sainsbury, Graeme Haddon
 Lead Suit Performer - Harley Durst
 Suit Performer - Jonathan MacMillan, Justin Terry, David Ely, William Figueroa, William Landsman
 Swing Puppeteer - Matthew McCoy
 Auxiliary Voodoo Puppeteer - Dan Flood, Brian Parker, Terry Ryan





Is Happy To Be a Part of Something Bigger

by MICHAEL A. BECK

In a recent conversation about what's going on with Upstaging Lighting, John Huddleston came off with a style that is as humble and down to earth as the company's Sycamore, Illinois address. John told *Tour Guide Journal*, "We don't think of ourselves as the company that's out there giving the audience what they paid for. That's the job of the artist. We are just a small part of that."

However, the people who do get their money's worth are the productions that hire this company. While the other major lighting companies have offices worldwide and Upstaging only has its one office, one has to ask how it can keep pace.

"By keeping it all under one roof, we are able to stay much more focused on what we have to do to keep the quality of the product as high as we do," Huddleston replied. "It also allows us to cut out much of the administrative infrastructure needed to maintain multiple offices in multiple countries. It keeps it more personal."

John admits to being caught in the '70s when it comes to doing business, "Not

only do I remember when deals were cut by two people leaning on a road case chatting over a cup of coffee, but I still do that."

For a writer, trying to get in touch with Huddleston can be a daunting task. While he doesn't try to make it that way, he does admit that it's because he tends to spend more time getting close to his clients, which takes up an enormous portion of his time.

When asked what he brags to his friends about regarding Upstaging, his answer was quick and easy, "I love the people who work here and the way we do things both on the road and here at home."

There is a strong focus for keeping it light around the shop. Every Friday (weather permitting) there is a company cookout - garage doors that separate the outside world from the full-sized kitchen open, and everyone eats on the house.

When asked where this idea came from or how it came about, Huddleston simply said that it's just the right thing to do. "Back in the beginning when it was just a few of us, we'd put a grill out on a sunny day and make lunch," he reminisced.

But once lunch is over, there is still work to be done. And this place is built for speed and comfort. The rehearsal/programming facility is a joy to behold. It can hang three shows at a time. It



has an isolated programming room so that the LD and programmer can work outside of the noise of the rest of the building.

The company has also recently begun its own fabrication work. “We’re not into building huge sets or anything like that,” Huddleston explained, “We just don’t want to be limited to where we put gear in a system by standard building blocks of the industry. So if we can do our own fabrication, we have that much more freedom to put gear where the designer wants it.”

When talking about the projects the company has, John lit up. “Hannah Montana is an amazing production. I love what that show is doing. Everything

on the show is absolutely first rate. They could have cheated out and made it a little kid show. But they went all the way with a top line crew and the best of everything. It’s a great show that people can take their kids to and not worry about what’s going to happen on stage, and this is going to be the first concert experience these kids will have. I can’t say enough about that show.”

The humble way that this company strives to fit in and is a part of something bigger than itself is also evident in how involved it is at its home base. Upstaging was recently honored by the town of Sycamore for the work it has done through its involvement with local schools, not to mention lighting parts

of the town (such as the historic courthouse) for various occasion throughout the year.

Whether on the road with Walking with Dinosaurs, Hannah Montana, The Police, or Paul McCartney (to name just a few of its clients) or keeping the home fires warm, there really is no way to look at this company and see anything that isn’t appealing. When world class LD Dino DeRose passed away, one long time friend described him as having done his work with a lurking cool that seemed to always keep him out of the political light of the gig. Those words are as applicable to Upstaging Lighting as they were to Dino. ☺

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SCREENWORKS

Pulls From a Deep Well

by MICHAEL A. BECK



In the wild, wild world of mobile video production in the concert touring industry, the field of major players is relatively small. It's difficult to say who is at the top of the heap. However, with touring projects out like Billy Joel, The Police, The Rolling Stones, Walking with Dinosaurs and Kenny Chesney, Screenworks has to be considered one of the top companies in the game, by any standard.

The most unique touring production on the road right now is Walking With Dinosaurs. In this production Screenworks is doing the obligatory side stage IMAG screens, which are fed by three cameras with long lenses. But the main video presence is provided by four Christy projectors on a massive screen at the proscenium through which the Dinosaurs enter the show.

This offers stunning background to the action taking place in the room. There are some 80 video cues that feed the screen. The interesting part of this is that when the dinosaurs enter the room through the proscenium, they do so through an iris drape which is comprised of one drape on a roll drop that flies in and out over a split traveler. There are times during the show when the iris drape actually closes in sync with the video.

On Justin Timberlake's 2007 tour, which drew the harshest possible criticism from the touring community, there were high marks regarding the use of technology. Among

them was the German software that was employed to allow projectors to hit a curved surface without keystoneing.

The way it worked (in a nut shell) was that they drew a digital image of the surface and painted the image onto that surface and sent that to the projectors. The result was a perfectly focused image that contoured the scrims with equal perfection.

Concert video production is not the only focus of Screenworks. The company also has a major presence in sporting events such as the Super Bowl, NASCAR as well as many of the largest festivals in the country, including Bonnaroo, OzzFest and many others.

Screenworks is a subsidiary of NEP Broadcasting along with its sister company NEP Studios, which is said to be the largest television production service provider in New York City. Among other siblings of the parent company is Denali, a mobile television production facility focusing exclusively on entertain-

ment events and programming.

Another company, Visions, is a mobile television sports production provider in the UK and is among the largest in Europe. There is also Supershooters, which provides super high end production services for such events as NASCAR, PGA Golf and many other major sporting event.

And finally, there is Broadcast Services International (BSI), which specializes in offering full service technical production, consulting and engineering services for broadcast in both television and radio worldwide. This includes project planning and management, contracting TV mobiles and facilities, equipment rental, design and build of broadcast operations, commentary support, signal delivery via fiber optic or satellite, on-site supervision and crewing.

The well from which Screenworks pulls its production expertise is seemingly bottomless as is its technical backing. ☺

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COBB ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

First Class Amenities For The Touring Professional

by BILL ABNER



Atlanta has a new star in performing arts venues. The Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre is a powerful example of state-of-the-art technology and design, complimenting both the performing arts and the production arts. The venue, home to no less than the prestigious Atlanta Opera, opened its doors in September 2007 and is turning out to be as popular with artists, crews and production managers, as it is with guests.

The 2,750 seat John A. Williams Theater seems to have been designed with the touring professional in mind. Michael Taormina, Managing Director for the venue, met with *Mobile Production Pro* to show off the remarkable space. “From a tour perspective,” says Taormina, “the big things are our amenities backstage.”



The 145-million-dollar structure features such well-thought-out and designed elements as easy load-in/load-out with four dock spaces, less than a 50 foot push over smooth flooring from the truck to the stage, and convenient tour bus parking which includes three 50-amp shore power interfaces and plumbing hookups for each berth. Additionally, the entire building, including the backstage area, is covered by free wireless internet. Those, however, are just a few of the many amenities the touring professional will find to his liking at the venue.

Taormina and his cadre of friendly and knowledgeable in-house staff are understandably proud. “When you ar-

rive here, it’s like you’ve just checked in to the Ritz-Carlton.” This venue appears to have met the challenge of designing a space with all of the features that modern touring shows and productions find desirable and increasingly necessary. The full-service backstage business office frees people from running to the box

office to fax or copy. The venue also offers on-site catering featuring four-star Executive Chef M.G. Farris overseeing the menu in the sit-down dining room

Technically, the structure also rises well above the norm. Michael Cronin, Technical Director of the venue explains, “It is literally a building within a building. The stage is both sound and light isolated. Once the blast doors are closed, we are completely isolated from the outside, and you have to go through sound and light locks before getting on stage.”

A total of 96 linesets, spaced six inches apart, fit comfortably within the 55 feet

deep stage. The grid, which is painted high-contrast yellow for easy differentiation between the grid and the linesets from below, rises 82 feet above the stage floor and can be rigged from at any point on the structure. The room also features an additional fore-grid that extends 15 feet out over the orchestra pit. In addition, another set of beams extend from the first catwalk to the second catwalk, for a full 40-foot fly out into the house.

Although some of the bigger Broadway-type shows may have to utilize some truck storage, the 15' x 30' hydraulic orchestra pit lowers to the sub basement below, allowing ample room for dead case storage for the average rock show or concert.

On-stage power is well addressed in the building also. Four 400-amp services on the jump gallery, both 400 and 200-amp

disconnects upstage left, and isolated 200-amp audio services upstage right and upstage left, will be enough access for most productions that come through the new venue.

"We have the first fully *Strand* lighting system in the southeast," continues Cronin. "The system incorporates 736 dimmers split between the stage and the house positions, and they are controlled by two *Strand Light Palette* consoles -- a *Light Palette Live* and a *Light Palette VL* -- so we can do both conventionals and moving lights."

Head Audio Engineer Chris Moore has lots of tools at his disposal, too. "We're fully Meyer," states Moore. "Meyer MICA curvilinear arrays make up the main stacks with MID's for under fills, Meyer CQ1s and CQ2s for the center cluster, and UPAs and UPJs for the delays."

For the tour pro, FOH is a breeze. The production manager has his choice of two locations: the Broadway position at the rear of the house, or the concert position midway into the house in a 30' x 12' area that can be recessed one foot into the floor to help preserve sightlines. Both positions incorporate 8-inch conduits heading back to the stage for snake runs.

"We are turnkey; everything you need is here," says Taormina. The venue comes well appointed, with installed sound, lighting, and video systems each representing the state of the arts. With amenities that are first class and a staff that is friendly, seasoned, and well versed, the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre leaves little to be desired for the touring professional. ☺

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LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER

First Major West Coast Facility To Require ETCP Certification For All Rigging Supervisors

The Los Angeles Convention Center (LACC) is the first major west coast convention center to take the lead on requiring all its rigging supervisor hires to be certified under Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP). In an effort to enhance client and patron safety while meeting the challenges of ever increasing technical demands, LACC has revised its criteria that companies must meet in order to qualify for placement on their list of approved rigging contractors. One of the qualifications is that all rigging supervisors and managers must be ETCP Certified. New vendors must meet these qualifications immediately to be considered for placement, while previously approved vendors have until the end of 2008 to certify their lead riggers.

Thomas Fields, Building Superintendent of Show Operations at the Los Angeles Convention Center, initiated the revision to the center's criteria stating, "We consider public safety to be paramount. We take necessary steps to assure we have prudent procedures and safeguards in place to protect the public." Fields further added that, "proper knowledge of rigging principals, components, equipment, related engineering, and the application thereof is vital to assuring public safety. With the creation of the ETCP Credential, we now have a means of measuring the knowledge of riggers in our industry."

There are three ways employees can be tested to receive certification. The exams are available for computer based-testing and a candidate can make arrangements to take the exam at one of 190 testing centers around the U.S and in Canada. If a company has as few as ten candidates interested in taking the exam, ETCP can arrange for on-site test administration. The examinations will also be administered in conjunction with the USITT Conference & Stage Expo in March 2008 in Houston, TX. Those interested in taking the exams at USITT must submit their application by February 15, 2008.

If companies are looking to hire a competent rigger or entertainment electrician who is dedicated to safety on the job, the list of Certified Entertainment Technicians on the ETCP website is searchable by name, city, or certification type. Not only did these technicians pass a rigorous assessment, they also signed an agreement to abide by the ETCP Certified Entertainment Technician Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. ☺

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The conference features Ben Cameron, program director for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, who will present a must-attend session on the impact of technology on the performing arts. Because technology changes so fast, no arts manager can afford to miss this highly rated subject expert!

Outside of sessions, PAMC attendees can take tours of some of Arizona's premier facilities while interacting with the venue managers who make performing arts events happen across the United States.

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The Wheeler Opera House, a world-class theater located at the epicenter of downtown Aspen, recently installed a new digital Soundcraft Vi6™ console at front-of-house. Built in the 1880s, the Wheeler is a Victorian proscenium-style theater restored most recently by the City of Aspen in the early '80s. Improved once more with its new Soundcraft console, the Wheeler offers a unique show-going experience as an intimate 500-seat house with acclaimed natural acoustics and picturesque setting at the base of Aspen Mountain.



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The Wheeler's production co-manager, Gordon Wilder, contacted Audio Analysts of Colorado Springs last year to discuss a new console for the venue. Ken Toal, executive director of Audio Analysts' commercial division and account manager on the sale to Wheeler, describes, "They were interested in all the benefits of a digital console--programmability, scene recall, etc. We got a Vi6 demo unit in and invited Gordon down to take a look."

The Wheeler Opera House has been technically well equipped since the extensive multi-million dollar



renovation completed by the city to not only restore the room to its original Victorian glory, but also create a memorable performance venue in this popular destination town. An active, three-way, full range loudspeaker system stacks up left and right of the proscenium in side boxes with a balcony fill system above those speakers, left and right, and a mono center fill system

positioned at the stage lip.

Wilder chose the Soundcraft Vi6 digital live sound console to replace an analog board. The Vi6 provides 64 mono input channels, 35 outputs, 24 insert return pairs, 32 group/aux/matrix busses, and main left/right/center and left/right busses.

All input channels on the Vi6 feature 16 VCA groups, sweepable four-band parametric EQ, compressor/limiter, phantom power, gate, and de-esser.

"The sound quality of the Vi6 has the width, depth and transparency we were looking for in a digital console," says Wilder. "Many of the other choices we

looked at were opaque in quality and did not reach the audio performance of quality analog desks we were accustomed to using.”

Audio Analysts installed the Soundcraft Vi6 at the Wheeler in early October. According to Toal, “Tom Der from Soundcraft and I went to Aspen in October to commission the console as well as train the Wheeler staff.”

The Vi6 made its debut on October 10 with a John Denver tribute concert, featuring members of Denver’s band, and has since worked numerous shows, including performances by Suzanne Vega, Burt Bacharach, Linda Eder, Richie Havens, Asleep At The Wheel, and Robert Earl Keen. “We chose the Vi6 for its sound quality, processing power and accessibility to non-digital savvy audio system operators,” adds Wilder. “The Vi6 is indeed user friendly. We recently hosted a music group from Africa and their Malian, French-speaking FOH engineer presented us with an almost total language barrier. Without the ability to speak with him he was still able to use the desk to an excellent result having never seen the Vi6 before.”

The Wheeler Opera House is now full swing into its busy concert season, which stretches the length of the ski season--Thanks-giving until Spring. Upcoming shows at the Wheeler include Lyle Lovett, David Brenner, Duncan Sheik and Art Garfunkel. A new fan of the digital console, Wilder adds, “The Vi6 has performed just fine for us so far and we are looking forward to the possible advances planned for future software upgrades.” ☺



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stage, powered by an LA4 processor/amplifier. Another eight 8XT on custom brackets are installed on the underside of the side balconies, spaced about 15 feet apart down the length of the room, and powered by another LA4. Four L-ACOUSTICS 112P self-powered speakers round out the loudspeaker complement and can be used as additional front fills or stage monitors.

The Asbury Church install was Klon's first experience with certain L-ACOUSTICS components, on which he comments: "I am very impressed with the horizontal directivity control of KUDO, and also the quality control in terms of driver-to-driver matching. L-ACOUSTICS products are evenly voiced from V-DOSC down to 8XT. Also, I'd say the 8XT, of which there are a dozen in this installation, are good enough to be project studio monitors."

Klon mentions Craig Chapman of Buffalo's RPM Entertainment as the system's co-installer. "He handled everything upstream of the XTA DP226 and DP224 processors, including the Whirlwind snake system and 24-channel Soundcraft GB8 mixing console. We felt that the front-end components should be handled locally, since there's so much flexibility needed in this area."

According to Klon, Berkow's acoustical recommendations and the L-ACOUSTICS system has truly optimized Asbury Hall as a concert venue. "The hall had a 'soft-opening' without a proper audio system almost a year ago and had developed a reputation as being inappropriate for amplified music," explains Klon. "But, within 24 hours after the opening on September 11, there were three promoters in Buffalo all ready to produce shows there based on rave reviews from the audience and press." ☺

next level by maintaining a client oriented, driver friendly coach company. Our goal is to not to become the biggest coach company, but rather the best and most service oriented coach company in the entertainment transportation industry." He also wants to make sure that, "we give a client everything and more they pay for." Moore plans to continue building a solid, first-class coach company by surrounding himself and the company with good, honest, and dependable people. Lastly, Moore expressed, "I am excited! I am enjoying the challenge and I look forward to the company being an asset to the entertainer bus industry. I am also really looking forward to continue working with old friends as well as meeting and working with new friends along the way." ☺

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ZZ TOP CONTINUED FROM P. 7

Combine this with the fact that the Aeros are very predictable in terms of their dispersion patterns, and you have a great system that ends up being easy to work with and provides great coverage throughout the entire arena. Everyone was really pleased with the system's performance."

Reflecting on the Orange Bowl halftime activities, Alvarez was particularly appreciative of the support he received from D.A.S. Audio and the show's producers. "D.A.S. Audio's Miami support crew was fully behind us," said Alvarez. "The company's customer and technical support groups are really responsive, and when you're on the front line, this is exactly what you need. I'd also like to offer my thanks to the folks at ACT Productions— Bruce Orosz, Nick Boushehri, and Carlos Henao— for all their support. By pooling our resources, I believe DAS Audio, ACT Productions, and Interface Sound made this year's Orange Bowl event a really memorable occasion." ☺

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of three set pieces that are parked together in the center of the floor. At the moment in the show when the continent splits, the three carts pull away from each other to their next positions.

The Pangaea carts were built and driven by hand driven forklifts like one would see in any major warehouse. These were prototypes as were the dinosaurs and given the option, there isn't one person who would jump at the chance to redesign them. The floor was built on an aluminum frame. Everything from there up is steel and there is no easy way to put them together. It's just a whole lot of muscle and "MIND YOUR FINGERS!"

However, once they are built, they were pretty impressive. Because they had to be self-sufficient, (as in, no cables) all lighting and control had to be handled onboard. During parts of the show when it was raining or there was volcanic action, this all came out of the carts. Therefore, the carts had smoke machines, inflatables (that grew out of the top of the set piece), lighting power and control all running off of a battery system.

The lighting of this show provided by Upstaging, was nothing short of inspirational. The show boasts one of the largest lighting rigs on the road with over 300 automated lights including Highend Systems old standby Cyberlights.

Said Lighting/Crew Chief Board Op Jonny "Tosser" Toasello, "I'm loving every minute of this! It's completely different than anything I've ever done before. It's theater."

Indeed it was a very theatrical design and execution. But there was a catch. The characters in this theatrical show were as high as 50 feet in some cases. That means that the system has to smoothly light something on the order of 600,000 cubic feet of area in order for it all to be seen from top to bottom.

Because of the massive space that this show took up in the room, the atmosphere lighting was not only to create the environment for the show to take place in, it was also used to place the audience in a space that hasn't existed for millions of years.

Highest possible marks to Designer John Raymond who, in a conversation with Jake Berry, responded to a concern about a logistic issue with trucking the lighting system, "I don't design my shows to fit in trucks."

Screenworks provided video on this show. For the most part it filled the function of background video at one end of the stage area that served as the proscenium for the show through which the dinosaurs entered.

The vehicle used to reveal the creatures was an iris drape created by one drape that flew in and out on a roll drop over a split traveler. This is where the video got a little tricky

because as the iris drape closed or opened, the video image had to open or close at the same pace.

The only time the dinosaurs interacted with the video was the opening of the second act when Ornithocheirus, the largest winged creature to ever take flight (wing span of 40 feet and 9 feet from beak to tail) flew into position in front of it. If the show had a weak spot, this was it.

The video content on the screen behind it was from the perspective of the viewer flying out in front of "Orni" (as it is lovingly known) and the control system banks and pitches it according to the video perspective. The only problem is that it only really worked for the audience seated directly in front of it.

In addition to the main screen, there were the obligatory offstage IMAG screens where the front on effect of the gag could be seen.

Clair Brothers handled the audio aspect of the show. This was yet another fascinating aspect of the show. Clair I-3 speakers were placed in the air and at floor level all the way around the stage area. The system was then designed to follow the action on the stage. The result was that when T-Rex was shouting at the people on the house right side of the room, they got the full dose from the house system as well as the speakers onboard T-Rex herself.

The people on the other side of the room did indeed get the effect, but it was the effect of seeing this thing yelling at someone else and not them. Their time would no doubt come.

One of the biggest challenges of the tour from Berry's perspective is to take a theatrical production of this magnitude and tour it like a Rock and Roll show. He explained, "The challenge arose when the show did 60 sold-out shows in Australia and then had to think about how to move it around the States. There were certain changes that needed to be made in order for that to happen while maintaining the high production standard that had been achieved over there."

He went on to add, "There is always the potential for difficulty when you start crossing the line between theatrical and concert mindsets. We're very proud of the way the two factions have come together and made this thing the great success that it is."

In the 3,000 plus words that have been written in this story we have only scratched the surface. One could be forgiven for imagining that classes will someday be taught on the subject of Walking With Dinosaurs and how it got down the road so gracefully. If for no other reason than to be a wide-eyed child again, you have to check this show out. ☺

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