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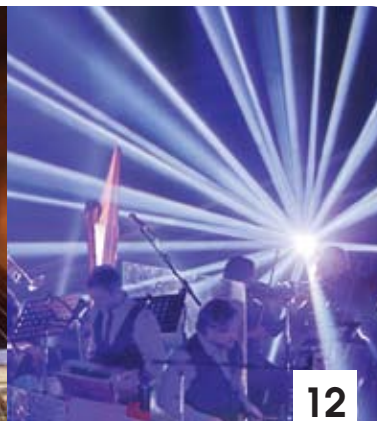
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Our lead feature in this issue is the KISS tour. This is one great crew, a fun production to see and the tour is headed up by Personal Manager Doc McGhee. Doc has been very influential in my career, and I know he has been a positive force for many others as well. He was the recipient of the Tour Link Top Dog Lifetime Achievement Award last year and was a joy to be with. The problem with giving Doc the award last year was that he is still a young man and keeps doing great things; what can we do next to honor this guy?

Also in this issue, we take a look at Nocturne, Apollo Jets and Pyro Pete, three vendors on the KISS tour. All three have an interesting story to tell of their support of this show. Nocturne, of course, is a long established leader in the touring video scene. They seem to be the class leader nearly every year when it comes time to vote on the industry awards. Although there is some serious competition this year from the other competitors, the guys at Nocturne seem to be around every corner when video is being discussed or used.

Finally, we have been watching a curious move by ESTA to form an alliance with London-based PLASA. We are not sure of how this may affect our industry, but it is a situation worth watching, and all of us should take a look and have a think. As more information comes to light, we may have some opinions to present. I encourage all of our readers to do the same.

So, as the year draws to a close, we hope everyone enjoys this issue and will soon be able to catch their breaths and slide into the holidays safe, sound and profitable.

Larry Smith

Correction: In the issue of *mobile Production monthly* with the Jonas Bros. on the cover we did a story on BML Blackbird. The writer, Michael Waddell inaccurately reported on the upsurge of the company. I should have written the following: BML Stage Lighting provided lighting and production services to several **HUNDRED** (not several) regional, national, and international tours with such clients as Aerosmith, Beastie Boys, Slayer, Run DMC, The Kinks, Ozzy Osbourne, Clash of the Titans, Billy Idol, Cindy Lauper, Roger Daltrey, Pete Townshend, LL Cool J, Fugees and many many others with a full time staff of 60+ people. Along with its touring activities, BML Stage Lighting also developed numerous "in house" vendor partnerships with four key NYC special event venues in addition to the NJ Convention & Expo Center with a full time BML staff on site in each location. BML Stage Lighting provided permanent installations in scores of venues, manufactured numerous proprietary products, some of which are still manufactured today.

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Hutton Hotel, a new four-star independent luxury hotel, opened on West End Ave. in late January, 09, is changing the way meetings get done in Nashville – and management is confident it will become the city’s leading destination for groups, luxury travelers and touring acts as well.

“Hutton Hotel will be the premier intimate, independent luxury hotel in Nashville,” said GM Steven André. “As Nashville’s only member of the Leading Hotels of the World, we will be the only independent hotel to offer the complete package of first-class meeting services and amenities sought by corporate meeting planners and tour managers.”

André pointed out, “In a city that is quickly being recognized by meeting planners as a Tier One destination, Hutton Hotel promises an elegant and totally ‘green’ experience for small groups as well as large.”

Location, Location, Location

Providing a fresh alternative to traditional downtown hotels, Hutton Hotel is situated on West End, offering a unique combination of central location, elegance and comfort. The Sommet Center is just blocks away and is ideal for touring acts.

The 248 room hotel includes 54 suites, cutting edge technology and green features

throughout, paired with custom-designed finishes and amenities. It is located steps from Vanderbilt University, from the city’s renowned music scene and from the most important Nashville museums, restaurants and sports and entertainment venues.

The hotel’s 1808 Grille provides a sophisticated, diverse culinary experience unique in Nashville, along with complete catering services.

Jon Cummins, Chief Operating Officer of Amerimar Enterprises, a Philadelphia-based developer that owns the hotel, said, “We are delighted to present this fresh new hotel concept to the meeting planning community and travel agents, at a time in the economic cycle when the desire for unique first-class experiences is combined with the need to provide value for every dollar spent.”

Cummins concluded, “Hutton Hotel offers the best of the city of Nashville - whose value and unique offerings are increasingly being recognized by event planners throughout the country.”

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Nashville’s newest signature hotel features unique guest experiences including:

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1808 Grille, a New American cuisine restaurant which blends traditional dishes with global flavors.

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- Highly efficient mechanical systems in the public areas and offices.



Rock Star Quotient

Hutton Hotel recently hosted the CMT/ People magazine post party for the CMT Music Awards, country's only fan-voted award show and one of the biggest nights in country music. The party was the hottest ticket in town with over 600 attendees and included celebrity guests such as Kid Rock, Sheryl Crow, Taylor Swift, Rascal Flatts, Bill Engvall, "Dancing with the Stars" champions Shawn Johnson and Mark Ballas, "Victoria Secret" model Karolina Kurkova ,

actor Luke Wilson and many others.

With its natural stone walls, original chandeliers and sweeping views of the Nashville skyline, the hotel's Vista Ballroom provided the perfect backdrop for CMT Music Awards branding. Chef Charles Phillips featured a food henge making the food stations interactive prepared by individual chefs specializing in some of the local favorites dishes from the malt and vinegar chips to the mushroom ravioli including an assortment of desserts.

The hotel's proximity to the Sommet Center, as well as the other many other entertainment venues close by, makes it a perfect fit for the bands and their crew that play in Nashville. The Hutton looks forward to more business in the future from concert tours and have the resources available that these tours need. ☺



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Sommet Center

Nashville, Tennessee's Sommet Center GM off to Boston

Hugh Lombardi, the manager of the Nashville's Sommet Center Arena, is leaving to take charge of the TD Garden in Boston, MA.

Sommet's President of Business Operations Ed Lang says, "On a personal note, we are happy for Hugh and his family to have the opportunity to return to his hometown area and to manage another of the premier entertainment facilities in the country, the TD Garden in Boston. At the same time, we thank Hugh for his contributions to Nashville and the Sommet Center during his years here as the facility has regularly been nominated for Facility of the Year. As we move

forward, the building will be hosting some of the major events Hugh helped bring here, from the SEC Men's Basketball Tournament to the 2014 Women's Final Four to the upcoming concerts such as Bon Jovi."

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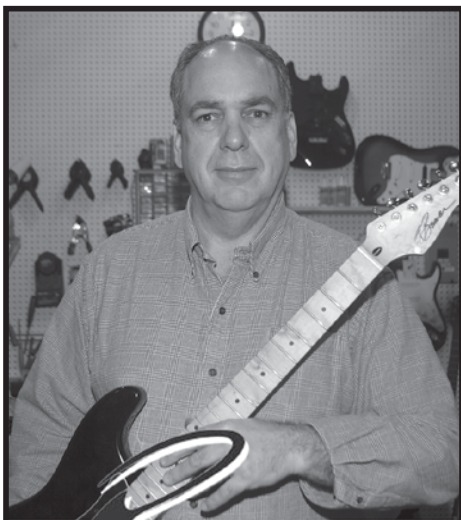


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DOT has New Action Plan to Address Motorcoach Safety




To view the action plan: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/reports/HS811177.pdf

The U.S. Department of Transportation on Wednesday, Dec. 16, released its Motorcoach Safety Action Plan that it says lays out concrete steps for improving motorcoach safety across the board. The action plan addresses major safety issues such as driver fatigue and inattention, vehicle rollover, occupant ejections and oversight of unsafe carriers.

“We are committed to making sure that bus travelers reach their destinations safely,” says U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “These improvements will not only help reduce the number of motorcoach crashes, it will also help save lives and reduce injuries.”

While motorcoach travel carries 750 million passengers annually, an average of 19 motorcoach occupants are killed in crashes each year, according to data collected by DOT’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Additional fatalities result among pedestrians, as well as occupants of other vehicles involved in these crashes. To address this issue, LaHood directed DOT’s agencies to take a fresh look at motorcoach safety issues, identify actions to address outstanding safety problems, and develop an aggressive schedule to implement those actions.

The comprehensive action plan proposes enhanced regulatory oversight of new and high-risk motorcoach operators, as well as the increased use of new technologies. To address driver distraction, it proposes to initiate rulemaking to prohibit texting and limit the use of cellular telephones and other devices by motorcoach drivers. It also discusses enhanced oversight of unsafe carriers and requiring electronic onboard recording devices on all motorcoaches to better monitor drivers’ duty hours to address fatigue.

In addition, the action plan proposes to better protect motorcoach occupants by requiring the installation of seatbelts and discusses additional measures such as the establishment of performance requirements for enhanced roof strength, fire safety and emergency egress. It also calls for safety improvements using technologies such as electronic stability control to prevent rollovers. 

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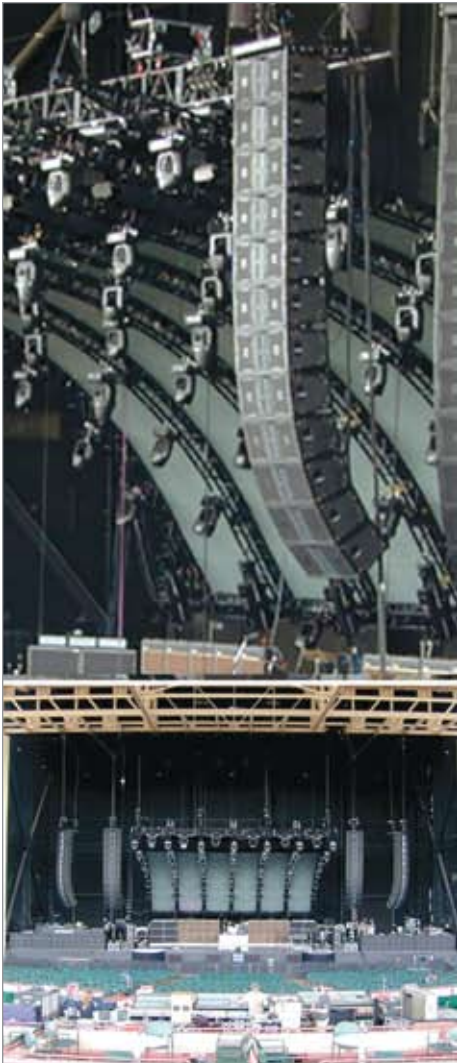
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HSL Supplies Final Winter Snow

BLACKBURN, UK

based lighting rental company HSL supplied lighting equipment, a Kinesys automation system and crew to the final leg of Snow Patrol's 2009 world tour, named "Snow Patrol Reworked". This follows HSL's servicing of all the band's UK and European sections across the whole tour, which kicked off in January 09.

Mike Oates project managed for HSL, once again working closely with the tour's LD Davy Sherwin, production manager Wob Roberts and tour manager Neil Mather. Mike Oates comments, "It's been really interesting to see how Snow Patrol's show has evolved and changed over the year. Each section has been unique and different, and of course it's been excellent working with Wob, Davy and Neil again - they are a great team."

Sherwin has been equally as happy working with HSL, commenting that "They absolutely rock" as an equipment supplier. Super-service with smiles has always been an HSL benchmark!

"Snow Patrol Reworked" was a departure from their standard 5 piece rock band set up, with 12 extra musicians onstage, bringing an orchestral feel to the show. These all had to be fitted into appropriate stage positions with due consideration for aspects like the separation needed between brass and strings etc., which was achieved with a series of risers. The risers were all at different heights to

avoid a uniform look, and the show featured a more intimate and close feel than the rock set up. This was also reflected in the itinerary, which included several theatres and concert halls rather than just the standard rock 'n' roll venues.

The songs were all rearranged, so Davy Sherwin went back to the drawing board with his lighting design, and come out with a

collection of completely new looks and ideas to accompany the new format. He programmed a total of 42 songs into his Hog 3 console, from which the band would choose the two and a half hours of material to be aired each night.

The main lighting fixtures in the rig were Vari*Lite 3000 Spots, which were used as specials and for plenty of gobo work; 12 of the new Robe ColorBeam 700E ATs, with their




"As always the equipment was in immaculate condition, HSL paid much attention to all the details, and working with Mike Oates is always a great experience."



mega-bright pencil beams used to great effect on the larger scenes and Vari*Lite 1000s, which were used as elegant profile spots and key lighting.

HSL commissioned Touring Custom Products to build 6 x 2 and 3 ft mirrored rotating snowflakes which were hung from the back truss and used in the first half of the show. These looked particularly spectacular with light projected into them. In the second half, 6 x 2.5 metre wide Rosco screen columns were dropped down at the back onto which custom content was projected from a Catalyst media server, operated by Dave Lee using another Hog 3.

HSL's other crew were – crew chief Johnny Harper, Kinesys operator Rupert Reynolds, lighting techs Tim Oliver, Rob Anderton and Production Rigger Jerry Hough. Sherwin concludes, "As always the equipment was in immaculate condition, HSL paid much attention to all the details, and working with Mike Oates is always a great experience." 

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Things That Go Bang in the Night

A Conversation with Pyro Pete

By MICHAEL A. BECK

There are many names in the pyro end of touring production, and it's tough to say who the best is. Indeed, engaging in such folly is like running wind sprints through a mine field. But there is one guy who has been around for a long time and left a huge mark in his path. **Peter Cappadocia** has been a fixture in the business since the early 80s. When you say the name "Pyro Pete" you can find the rookies in the room by the number of people who say, "Who's that?" There aren't too many people who have been blowing things up on concert stages longer than Pete has. So it was a true pleasure to get to sit down and talk with him on a recent KISS gig in Atlanta and again later by phone. Get comfortable, you're going to enjoy this...

When and how did you become "Pyro Pete?"

Pyro Pete: I was a theater major in college, and I thought I wanted to work with sets and props. I was 19 in my first semester. My friend's sister went out with this guy, Rob, who did effects for the Plasmatics. The Plasmatics were going to hire someone to handle the backline gear, so I said I'd help. Since this guy Rob got me the gig, I'd help him out by set up his pyro. Working around the northeast, we'd go away on Thursday and come back on Monday, and he would teach me how to do pyro. He soon began doing B movies and decided he didn't want to tour anymore, so the band asked me if I wanted to do the pyro. I said, "Well I don't know...SURE!" I went to the warehouse where they kept all of the pyro stuff and we spent about a week buying all kinds of supplies and product. We took it all back to the studio the band had been renting and went up onto the roof to start practicing with it all. With that, I became the Plasmatic's pyro guy. Soon thereafter on a tour, the Plasmatics opened up for KISS and that's where I met Tom DeWille who owned Luna Tech and PYROPAK.

mPm: Did he know of you already?

Pyro Pete: Yes, because we had been buying a lot of product from his company. He came out and thanked me for buying his stuff and

he told me that if he ever needed another pyro tech he'd give me a call. About a month later he called and said he had a gig for me. He put me out on Def Leppard's Pyromania tour and I stayed with Luna Tech. That's when I did AC/DC and Judas Priest and all that stuff. Then I started having different ideas on gear that I wanted to build and different ways of doing things. I met these other guys who were selling other product and I decided that I would start my own company and make my own gear.

mPm: When was this?

Pyro Pete: That was in the mid 80's. Until then, the model was that the pyro guys worked for a company and that company was where they bought their product. I turned it all around and started buying from several different pyro companies, and that gave me a lot more flexibility in what I could do. Then in the 90's I started hanging around some guys in Hollywood who were designing flame systems in movies, and I started working that into my shows.

Weren't there flame systems before then? We were seeing KISS with those huge flames in their shows. What was that?

Pyro Pete: No. Back then, the best way to get flames was lycopodium powder. It's a fungal spore that has high carbon content. It was

housed in a canister about twice as high as a coffee can and it would have holes around the top of it. When you'd blow the lycopodium into the air, past an electrical heating element, it would ignite into a huge flame. Propane is a much more controllable source and you can do more with it. With lycopodium, you could only shoot vertically, but with propane, you can shoot on angles or even down! You can set up all kinds of burners systems. Look, stage pyro has been an interesting evolution. For a long time we would take the table scraps from the movie industry. They had the money, so they were the ones who were doing all of the real serious R&D so we would come along and see what we could adapt to our needs. Now in the last ten years or so it's changed over. Now there's big money in the touring industry and companies like myself are designing and building our own stuff, and my friends in the movies are asking if they can use this or that in the films they're working on.

Let's talk about your accident if you don't mind. That got a lot of press in the industry.

Pyro Pete: Yeah, that was an interesting thing. I was working for myself and I was using a PYROPAK firing system. Lots of people have gotten involved, and to this day, nobody has figured out what did it.

mPm: What happened that you do know? Can you elaborate?

Pyro Pete: I was loading the concussion mortars. I was backstage pouring the powder into one, and the last thing that I can remember happening was ... and I can only guess at the sequence of events; I think I dropped a large aluminum flashlight onto the metal exterior of the mortar and it caused some sort of friction and it went off. Gun powder is shock sensitive to a point. It takes a lot for it to go off. I think there must have been some small amount on the outside of the mortar and it ignited. The problem with that is that the flashlight wasn't damaged enough for that to be the case. We sent the firing system back to the manufacturer and they checked it all out and it was all working properly. No one can figure it out. Look ... everybody who does effects knows someone who died doing effects. It's a dangerous job. My good, good friend Kenny Kennard, who did Janet Jackson and the Stones with me, died unloading a truck at an air show.

mPm: It's got to be a little tough tracing it back to the source of the problem.

Pyro Pete: Yeah, that is the problem. Usually when you have these accidents everything is destroyed. In my case, the igniter blew up, the powder, blew up and I got sent back on my ass. I had a piece of the igniter wire that got embedded in my face. I was in hospital for about a week and a half. I didn't know if I was going to see again because it flashed over my eyes.

mPm: So it went off in your face.

Pyro Pete: It went off right in my face! I remember rigger Norman Gomes came over and pulled me away. He handed me over to someone else and the fire department came. It seemed pretty horrific on my side. In the end it wasn't all that bad. It was all flash burns. I didn't have any real scaring.

mPm: The frightening thing is that you can't go back and write the book on how to avoid this in the future because you don't know what happened in the first place.

Pyro Pete: Exactly. I'd love to say this will never happen again, but I can't so I take precautions. I wear a head lamp instead of a big MAG light that everyone carried back then.

mPm: Usually I hate the rumor mill in this business, but in this case it was pretty accurate. What I heard immediately after it happened was remarkably close to what you just told me. I also heard that the industry response was pretty supportive.

Pyro Pete: Oh yeah. It was absolutely phenomenal. AC/DC kept me on salary even though I wasn't going to come back for four or six weeks. I was going to miss a third of the tour and they said, "No, come back when you're ready." Everyone in the business was calling and asking what they could do. It was really, really great support. That is just the way it is in this business. We're a family.

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KISS

COMPLETE ESCAPISM!

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THE DEPTH OF THE CAVE ONE WOULD HAVE TO LIVE IN TO NOT BE AWARE OF THE LEGENDARY SHOWMANSHIP OF **KISS**. THESE GUYS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ALL WHOLLY SHOW AND NOTHING ELSE. LIKE THE MUSIC OR NOT, YOU HAVE TO LOVE THE WAY THIS SHOW PEAKS AT THE FIRST NOTE OF THE FIRST SONG AND NEVER EVER LETS UP UNTIL THE HOUSE LIGHTS COME BACK UP. MINUS THE VIDEO, THE SHOW HAS MANY OF THE SAME "SHOCK AND AWE" ELEMENTS AS IT DID BACK IN THE LATE 70s AND IN SOME CASES, IT ACTUALLY PRODUCES SOME OF THE EFFECTS IN MUCH THE SAME WAY.







Walking through the loading dock to the stage in Atlanta's Phillips Arena, it was a bit mystifying to see an old dry ice fogger. While that wasn't the method of delivery for all of the fog in the show, it did play a legitimate part in the process along side of the cryo-fog that was used as well. It was, according to one crew member, part of a desire to have parts of the show performed as they were back in the beginning.

There were several such aspects of the show that were designed to maintain a connection to the earlier days of this phenomenon. Chief among them was pyro, and it was only fitting that the legendary Peter "Pyro Pete" Cappadocia was on the job. Where you would have expected a show like this to call for a nonstop artillery barrage, Pete took a different approach. He explained, "Right now we're up to about 400 pieces. When we started we had about 280 pieces. But we're battling this huge video display out there and even though they're turning down the wall and the lights for the video cues, we still needed to bring out more stuff. So if we had eight pieces on a given cue, we're now using 12." Pete went on to say, "You can have too much of a good thing

though. We have a lot of wow in the show. But I'd rather have ten cues of 40 pieces than to have 40 cues with ten pieces."

While the overall pyro presentation was truly impressive, it was the daring placement of the colored flames on either side of the platform on the downstage truss that seemed most striking. At one point during the show, bassist Gene Simmons was snatched from his position at mid-stage to the fore-mentioned areal platform. While Simmons was up there, Pete unleashed four green colored flame units.

In keeping with the non-stop aggressive nature of the show, Pete wanted to never look backward with his effects. "I try not to show the crowd the same thing twice. I like to layer it. That's a challenge. We've got a lot of stuff that's custom made for us and that helps us to keep every cue fresh."

The lighting rig was also what one might expect out of a KISS show. It was a massive canopy of light designed by Australian based Sean "Motley" Hackett during a run of festival shows back in

the spring. "Yeah, we were doing those festivals and I was just carrying a Grand MA and plugging into the systems that we had at each show," Hackett told *mPm*. "It really was a great way to try out new ideas before I committed to a system for the tour."

Both Hackett and Production Manager Patrick Whitley (who had left for Trans-Siberian Orchestra by the time we got to the tour) were looking to put up an 80's type wall of lights with lots of ACL's. However, the video presentation was so bright that the ACL's never could have competed, so the decision was made to go with VL-3500 Wash's and VL3000 Spots. The rig was rounded out with and upstage array of Syncrolite B-52's that hit like hammers and added sensational highlight to every scene they were used in. It was all flown off a system of straight truss. This decision was made to maintain visual continuity with the 60 foot wide video wall, the wall of 52 video boxes used to replace the cliché wall of Marshall stacks on the upstage line.

One thing that Hackett was particularly sensitive to was over moving his movers. "I don't have a lot of movement in this





THE BAND

GENE SIMMONS, PAUL STANLEY
TOMMY THAYER, ERIC SINGER

show.” he told us. “I do some sweep outs and roll downs and I have the Sychros doing some ballyhooing in the first song and then the whole thing goes nuts during “Rock & Roll All Night” at the end. I find that when you do too much of that stuff, the show winds up getting pretty boring real fast.”

Apart from the movement in the beginning and the end, Hackett is mindful to keep his ego in his pocket and out up big colors and chorus looks. This allows the rest of the show to do what it’s there to do... within rock solid frames of light. In short, he lights the money!

Did we mention there was video in this show? The primary display was a 60 foot wide NocturneV9 wall flown upstage. On the stage was the array of video boxes each of which were loaded with 16 V9 tiles. Video Director Dave Neugebauer did an amazing job of interlacing IMAG and video content together for a look that was nothing short of thrilling. And while we’d love to say more about the video look in this show, what more can be said than OMG!!!

As one can imagine this production was gag heavy. The show had four scissor lift risers as well as one out at the mix position. The Drum lift and the lift at the mix were both rigged with rotating platforms.

The drum lift placed drummer Eric Singer positioned at the bottom center of the video wall during a dazzling solo that made for a spectacular image.

The show had two fly gags. One was the snatch unit that was discussed earlier in this story. It was a straight vertical lift that took Gene Simmons from mid-stage to a platform in truss in roughly two seconds. It was easily missed if you didn’t know just when it happened. The other fly gag picked Paul Stanley up off of the off stage left riser and flew him out to the lift platform at the mix.

In addition to everything mentioned so far there was also a confetti shot that caused a whiteout condition in the room.

At one point during this show, Paul Stanley addressed the crowd saying, “There are bands out there that are completely focused on the problems that we are facing today. They will tell you who to vote for, how to spend your money and how to live your life. If that is what you’re looking for, you’re in the wrong damned place. We are here to offer an escape from that for one night.”

The show was as close to complete sensory overload as this writer has ever seen. And the escape - a complete success.



photos by Michael A Beck





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Risk Management DANNY FRANCIS
Band Assistant SPIRO PAPADATOS
Tour Manager MIKE AMATO
Production Mgr PATRICK WHITLEY, ROBERT LONG
Production Assistant DIANE WHITLEY
Production Coordinator SHIRLEY MINNE
Stage Mgr PATRICK MURPHY
Gene Bass Tech MIKE RUSH
Paul Guitar Tech FRAN STUEBER
Tommy Guitar Tech JIM SERVICE
Eric Drum Tech PAUL BASSETT
Wardrobe LANA CZAJKA, RENEE SOLA
Hair Stylist DAVID MATHEWS
Meet & Greet DEAN SNOWDEN
Lighting Designer SEAN HACKETT
FOH Sound Engineer FRANK PRINCIPATO
Monitor Engineer DAN HORTON

Riggers MICHAEL DUNN, RICKY ACEBO
Rigger / Carpenter RANDY WILSON
Branam Rigger STEVE DAVIDSON
Carpenters SHAWN SHEBETKA, ERIC FULLER, CASEY LONG, DAVE BREWSTER
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Sound Techs BRETT STEC, DAVID FERRETI, ANSON MOORE, PAOLO JOAQUIM, CHARLIE HERNANDEZ
KISS Set Lights ANDREW FIGUEROA
Lighting Techs SEAN KOHL, TONY DORMAN, RHANE RHODES, JOE EAGER, SOONER ROUTHIER, MIKE TENGDIN
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Long Journey Home... by MIKE WHARTON

A Conversation with **Bob Brigham & Todd LePere** of **Nocturne Productions**

Nocturne Productions currently is touring with KISS, a long term client that has been both friend and inspiration in the company's development. *mobile Production monthly* spoke with Bob Brigham, Co-CEO of Nocturne, and Todd LePere, head of Touring and Logistics about the company's beginnings, growth, transition and its proprietary product, the V-9 LED.

For the KISS Alive 35 2009 Tour launched in September, video design discussions with Brigham, legendary band manager Doc McGhee and Patrick Whitley began in July of 2009. "This time around," says Brigham, "Doc really wanted to do a show with a ton of video. The band and its Production Manager Patrick Whitley also wanted to go with a more visual look behind the band as opposed to the traditional heavy metal huge amp line."

A major change was to move the Kiss sign down in front of the drum riser. Then, (57) 3' x 3' deck sections of his res V-9 LED flanked either side of the riser. "Sometimes we put speakers on it so it looked like an amp line, other times we put video up so it could be anything it wanted to be. The end result was a bigger video look than they had ever had which is what they were seeking to achieve," said Brigham.

Integral to achieving this look was the product created by Brigham's business partner Ron Proesel, the V-9 LED. Proesel's background was in computers, designing peripherals, hard drives and storage units. "He's pretty amazing with the products he has developed with LSI-Saco up in Montreal," says Brigham, "just off the charts."

Brigham took Proesel and his wife to a KISS show in 2000. Nocturne was the video vendor on the tour, sub-renting an LED screen from another company at the time. Brigham recalls Proesel taking a real

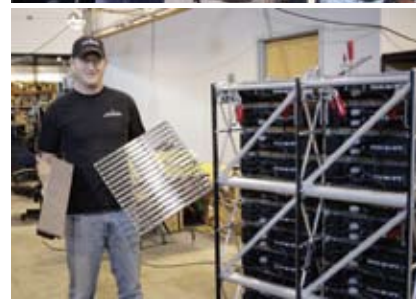
interest in the LED screens. "He said to me," "If you don't own your own LED it's going to be very hard to get these tours because it's all display driven. If some band wants a big huge LED screen, whoever owns that LED screen can force their way and say they want to do cameras too. The band will look at you and say 'sorry Bob, he's got the LED screen we want and anybody can get cameras.'" Proesel suggested they start an LED business.

Vidicon was launched as a sister company to Nocturne in 2001. Having been very successful with his previous computer enterprises, Proesel was able to purchase substantial inventory of BARCO D7, creating a successful launch into the LED business. "Ron enabled us to be in a position to play the game at a very large level," says Brigham. Inventory and clientele increased accordingly.

There was just one glitch. It had outgrown its facility in the China Basin, a onetime warehouse district turned artists' lofts, of San Francisco. This had been his home since the 1970's when Nocturne had been formed as the production company for Journey by band manager Herbie Herbert and its guitarist Neal Schon. Brigham worked for Herbert, managing artists as well.

Herbert, Brigham and Proesel, along with Paul Becher currently own Nocturne.

In 2005 it was obvious to the owners of Nocturne determined a move to DeKalb,



Pictured above: Owners - Ron Proesel, Herbie Herbert, Paul Becher, Bob Brigham
below: LePere is holding a V9 tile in his right hand and a VLite tile in his left hand. He is standing behind a frame V9.

Illinois was necessary. Several factors contributed to the choice of DeKalb, one of which was so Brigham could be closer to his family. The football stadium at Northern Illinois University is named "Brigham Field" after Bob's father, who was the athletic director at NIU for 30 years. In addition Ron Proesel and his family live in DeKalb as well.

At this time, Paul McCartney was also building his "US" Tour with designer Roy Bennett and wanted the whole stage to be an LED screen. The V-9 was created to meet this need. BARCO indoor 10 mil screens were originally proposed by Nocturne, but discarded when Barry Marshall, who produces all of McCartney's tours, posed a question to Brigham. "What do I tell Paul if he wants to play a free show in Central Park for 200,000 people?" he asked. "That he has

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Spreads Its Wings Even Wider

by MICHAEL A. BECK



Earlier this year *mPm* wrote about an air charter brokerage firm in New York, NY called Apollo Jets. Apollo caters not only to corporate and sports clients but also has a growing entertainment clientele as well. Among its many clients this year were Shaquille O’Neal, Cheap Trick, Britney Spears and KISS.

apollojets.com

In recent months Apollo has expanded its reach to include west coast exposure in Los Angeles and southern coverage Miami. Sales director Dean Giaci explained, “In addition to the presence on the west coast and in Florida and the outstanding people who come along with it, this move also allows us great leverage where pricing is concerned.”

Giaci went on to discuss the matter of funding. “We have experienced steady growth since we talked with you earlier this year. That growth has allowed us to set up relationships with a few select vendors, which make it possible to find aircraft more efficiently at increasingly lower prices.”

Add expanded funding to the enlarged staff and what comes out on the other side is a well oiled and much larger machine that will most likely have the competition saying, “uuuuh, uh oh!”

It must be clearly understood what exactly Apollo does. Being a brokerage house and not an FBO (fixed base operator) offers tremendous pull in locating aircraft. Because Apollo doesn’t own its equipment it can present a virtually endless inventory of planes and helicopters of all sizes and classifications. This air-born cornucopia is also more readily available than an FBO could ever be.

If a band that is usually traveling by bus has to get from a gig in Phoenix to Alberta, Canada for a last minute engagement fast, it has two choices; It can either shop around with FBO’s until it finds a

plane that will do the job, or it can call the folks at Apollo who will say, “Well the Citation X is the fastest plane in the world and we have five of them in Phoenix and one in Mesa. When do you need to take off?”

Apollo Jets is able to take care of every imaginable need there is. There is no sense in listing what this company can do because there is quite simply nothing that can’t be arranged. And now Apollo is looking into handling cargo as well. “It only

“Everything that we’ve said we were going to do we have done”

makes sense,” says Giaci, “If we’re already handling the A party, why not move the gear too. That way it can all be kept under the same umbrella.” The move into the world of cargo looks to take place as of Q one of 2010.

Anyone can say that his/her business is great and that it is growing like a weed, but until the numbers show up it’s only so many words flapping in the breeze. Apollo Jets Managing Director Al Palagonia gave

us the numbers, “Dean and I started this company almost exactly a year ago and it was four people working on this thing. Now we have close to 40 people. Last year we were recruiting people to come work for us. We don’t have to recruit people anymore. They’re coming to us. We told people what we were going to do and nobody joined on. By May and June they all started coming around and our revenue and number of flights have basically tripled since then. Next year we’re looking at doing from 35 to 50 million dollars in revenue depending on which way the economy turns.”

Going forward into 2010, the expansion of Apollo Jets seems to have the tone of “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.” In addition to the ever deepening reach into all of its markets and the foray into cargo, the company is working on creating a strategic partnership with a charter company to be named later. This partnership will spur a hyper-exponential growth in assets and services and, of course revenue. When we asked Al Palagonia what the company would look like when this partnership takes place he simply said, “We would be part of a billion dollar project.”

There is one very good reason to look at this company as the leader in its industry with all of its competition fading in the mirror. It’s in a statement that Dean Giaci said early in our conversation...

“Everything that we’ve said we were going to do we have done” 🍀

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Rock-It Cargo: ROLLING KISS AROUND THE WORLD

by BILL ABNER

Rock-It Cargo has been on the road with **KISS** for almost 20 years. During that time, the company has moved the supergroup to all corners of the globe: Europe, Asia and even South America where the group continues to play to sold out crowds night after night. “We’re considered to be some of the old school people in the industry,” says **Barry Becker of Rock-It Cargo**. “KISS, Motorhead, Motley Crue, Machine Head, we’ve moved them all, but KISS has been one of our customers for almost my entire 22 years here.”

“We’ve met with some pretty tough challenges along the way, but we’ve never missed a show,” boasts Becker. Once back in 1997, the tour was heading to Kobe, Japan (where they are still Rock Gods!). The ship, loaded with about fifteen ocean containers full of KISS gear was arriving at the port just as Japan was undergoing an 8.2 magnitude earthquake. “Fortunately, the ship had not made it into the harbor yet or the containers would have been strewn about like all the rest in the harbor. Before the ship could make port though,

it was diverted out to Taipei. Naturally, we assumed the show was going to be cancelled, until the Japanese promoter called and said ‘We have a show!’ So we took fifteen containers of gear off of the ship, and put it on a chartered 747. Because of our worldwide presence, and our ability to meet crises head on, the gear still made it back to Kobe in time for the shows to go on schedule. The band actually did a free show for the earthquake victims during that trip.”

Events such as this are what relationships are built of in this industry, and Becker explains that it is true for his relationship with KISS. “Probably the thing I’m most proud of is that these guys have achieved such a level of comfort with us, that they know that whatever they throw at us, we’ll step up. They know that their gear is going to get there safe and on time. That’s the most exciting part of my job. I’ve been doing this so long that I can look at a tour itinerary, see what may be trouble spots, and anticipate how to head it off.”

Looking forward, Becker sees a lot of good things coming for the new year. “We’ve just heard that KISS is going to do another world tour next year, so we’ll be in the middle of that, and it sounds like Mariah Carey is going to be heading back out on tour, and that is very exciting for us.” That is very exciting news for all of us Barry! 🎸

So flash forward 20 years. How has the industry changed for you?

Pyro Pete: The whole overall flavor of touring has changed. It's become incredibly corporate. It never was like this before. In the past, the band would put together the tour. You didn't have the corporate entities, but you had all of the different promoters. Now the promoters buy the entire tour. You have promoter reps who travel on the tour with you. In that respect it's a little easier because you're only dealing with one company.

mPm: Don't you think this was bound to happen? There's a lot more money out on the road these days. The worm has turned, and this is where bands are making the real doe as opposed to back when you only toured to support an album.

Pyro Pete: I remember back in the 80's that was the whole focus. Merchandise was the real money maker. I was out with Def Leppard and they were crushing everyone in merch numbers.

mPm: Remember the leather bomber jackets on the Rolling Stones "Steel Wheels" tour?

Pyro Pete: Oh yeah. When I was a kid and we went to the show, they had a tee-shirt you could buy, and now they have found every way possible to extract

every penny out of the gig. Now you have VIP experiences and VIP autograph session, and you can go visit the room next to the dressing room.

mPm: But if they hadn't done that it, ticket sales would have dried up. Ticket prices are what they are, and they couldn't pull that off if they didn't offer a whole lot more than ever before.

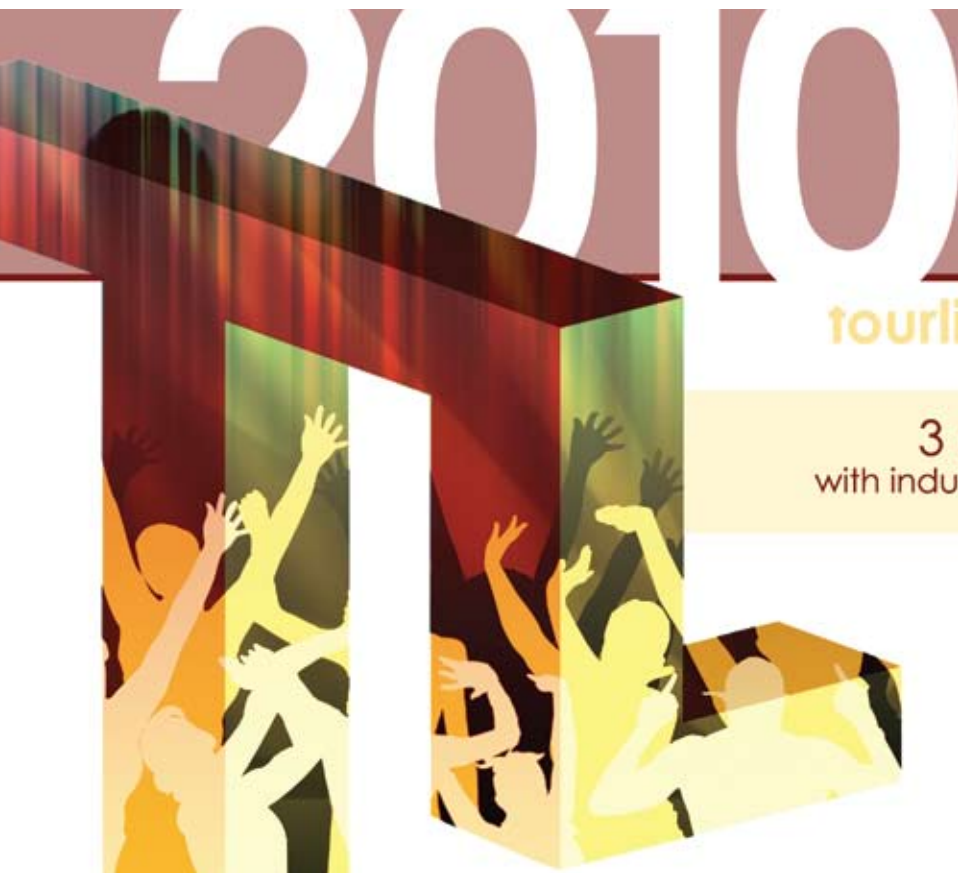
Pyro Pete: I know. They had to make it an event. That has helped me out because now it has to be a *production*. There are still the shows that just go out there and do a concert in the classic sense. Then there are the bands that go out there and rip the lid off and make a big thing and the next time out, it has to be even bigger and better. Either way the people are getting their money's worth. But...

mPm: It's an awful lot of money.

Pyro Pete: It's a huge amount of money. It used to be that a concert was a couple of bucks and all you got was a couple of lights.

mPm: Yeah, but back then you were getting what the technology of the day had to offer. It's the same thing today.

Pyro Pete: Yeah you're right. In the end, live theatre, which is what this is, is an escape and that's what we're out here giving them. 🤘



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to pick a sunny day because if it rains the stage is not waterproof and the 6 million dollars of LED will be ruined?"

Brigham approached Proesel with the challenge, and then flew to Montreal on May 5th, 2005 to meet with LSI-SCao. That afternoon Proesel and Bassam Jalbout from Saco designed what would become V-9 LED. On May 15th Barry Marshal approved going forward. Aug 15th the stage was loaded out of TAIT Towers for McCartney's tour. "So it took 90 days to go from start to finish for a product that didn't exist," states Brigham. "So we really have Paul McCartney, Barrie Marshall and Roy Bennett to thank for V9 being invented."

Throughout all this, Brigham was in the process of closing down the SF operations and moving to Illinois. He brought Todd LePere, a graduate of Northern Illinois University, on board to manage the logistics of the relocation.

"I just hit the ground running,"

says LePere. "At the beginning of '05 we had a few tours on the road and a core group of people that had been with Nocturne for a long time who we kept very busy. With the introduction of the V-9 came a tremendous amount of rapid growth." Currently it has 25 to 28 tours out and staff has tripled.

Parts are manufactured offsite, then shipped to the DeKalb facility to be built, reconfigured and assembled.

LePere attributes the V-9 product line's high demand not only to its "killer, stunning display," but to its cost effectiveness and road worthiness as well. "Ron has done some amazing things with LED such as putting power and data in every tile which allows us to use only 2 fiber optic cable runs to the wall," he adds.

The High Definition LED is the V-9. The medium resolution is the V-lite 28 millimeter resolution. The V-Brite is their low resolution product.

LePere cites a story of an incident which occurred 2008 in Europe. Nocturne had an "A" and "B" system out with Metallica, leap-frogging stadium to stadium when it received a request for assistance from another tour in Europe with a logistical problem of getting its own video screen to a venue on time.

The "B" system was available. Nocturne assured the requesting production it could accommodate them, though serious doubts were voiced by all concerned on the other end. At load-in for "The Police" in Belgrade amidst stop watches and dropped jaws, the 24' high by 75' wide screen was loaded in and show ready in 37 minutes. Load-out took under an hour. "A "normal" screen that size takes eight hours and twice as many stagehands to have show ready," states LePere.

This man loves his job, and the people he works with. Not just the clients and artists either. He cites Damian Walsh, Ops Manager, Jim Laskowski, LED operations and

controller Steve Adam as vital. "It almost feels like it's too good to be true," he says.

States Brigham of his continued love of his work, "The creativity and the fun of being in the design phase, working with some of the top designers in the world, contributing what we can, and often being asked to do something that hasn't been done yet is just great! It's a pretty cool feeling to be in Montreal after seeing all the work that went into the production at Lady GaGa's opening night and hear 15,000 people just go absolutely nuts. We know what we do well and concentrate on trying to doing it better every day."

LePere also points out that Nocturne through Brigham, along with Ron and Nancy Proesel, contribute a lot of charity and humanitarian efforts to the community and through international organizations such as Film Aid International. 🇺🇸

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