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NICKEL BACK

The Sum of Some
Very Impressive Parts

STAGE & EFFECTS Engineering

Living a Pyro
Guys Dream

HOTEL GUIDE 101

It's Rock 'n' Roll
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**NICKEL
BACK**

contents

volume 2 issue 4 2009

cover photo courtesy of Fran Strine

FEATURES

6 Logistical Technology
CAPS Universal
We Pay, You Roll!

8 Let's Chat
Life's Circle
a conversation with
Bobby Schneider & Dave Brown

10 FX
COLDPLAY
Desires More Confetti

12 Hotel
Hotel Guide 101
It's Rock 'n' Roll Not Rocket Science

14 Venues
Nokia Theatre
Overviewing a World Class Venue

16 Lighting
Oasis Debuts Bad Boy to the World

18 Robe Selects a Song for Slovakia

20 Nickelback
The Sum of Some Very Impres-
sive Parts

26 Nickelback Tour Crew

28 Stage & Effects
Living a Pyro Guy's Dream

36 Advertiser's Index

BREAKOUTS

26 Nickelback
Dark Horse Tour

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22



6



8



10



12



28



It is about time for Summer. We are all ready for a change of seasons and a change in this weird economy.

While the government is busy bailing out Wall Street and Detroit, maybe we need to send a delegation to Washington to present the case for our industry. There have been several serious calls for a delegation to explore the possibility of securing some changes in the way our business is impacted by government. Most of us would prefer Uncle Sam to stay away, but it may be time to re-think some of our old concepts. This is a subject that needs serious exploration and discussion. We are inviting our readers to join in an open exploration of this subject in print and on our website.

Now, on to other lighter subjects. In this issue, we profile the Nickelback tour and our friends at Stage & Effects Engineering and CAPS Universal. This tour just seems to keep growing and the vendors are doing a pretty good job of keeping pace. We think you will enjoy our coverage of this show as well as the other tidbits in this issue.

Also, we invite you again to take a look at our new website, **mobileproductionpro.com**. We are adding features nearly every couple of weeks and already the response to our work has been most gratifying. The search engine is global in nature and contains the most comprehensive database ever assembled in our industry. Best of all, it is **FREE**, and we are trying to keep it restricted to industry people only. We do request that users **sign up, establish a password & username**. This will allow us to better screen the site and keep it viable for our industry. We also invite you to send in any changes or corrections necessary to keep the data accurate and current.

Finally, we are moving time sensitive information to the website as well as many of the press releases we receive. We want the monthly magazine to be a focus point for issues, company profiles and items that require expanded coverage. We have increased our offerings to the industry in order to be more effective in our mission to inform and support this business that we all love.

Larry Smith



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PUBLISHED BY

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CAPS Universal

We Pay, You Roll!

by JESSI WALLACE

Consolidated Artists Payroll Service, otherwise known as CAPS Universal, is a one-stop shop for concert touring employer of record payroll services. CAPS Universal has serviced the entertainment industry for almost 50 years, starting with movie, television and commercial production and later expanding into the music industry. Its services are extended to venues and festivals as well. In a nutshell, CAPS Universal is a customer-centric organization that focuses on improving the workflow of its customers, really behaving more like a thinking partner to provide state-of-the-art solutions through systems integrations and excellent communications..



(left) Ron Shirley and (below) Adam Fast



mobile Production monthly got a chance to connect with Ron Shirley, Vice President of Live Entertainment, and learn more about CAPS Universal's services. He summed it all up for the readers: "CAPS Universal is a leading provider of payroll and benefits administration services to the major studios, independent film and television production companies, live entertainment tours and events producers, venue operators, entertainment industry business managers (accountants) and video commercial producers. Its payroll and benefits administration services include payroll processing services, such as time and attendance, calculation, preparation, and delivery of employee payroll checks; calculation, reporting and

payment of employee contributions to pension, health and welfare trust funds and private employer 401(k) funds; W-2 preparation; withholding employee taxes from paychecks for social security, Medicare, federal, state and local taxes and remitting to the proper taxing authority; payroll and HR related reports; unemployment claims support; workers' compensation insurance coverage; and risk management services."

CAPS Universal makes the financial side of concert touring a much smoother process with fewer headaches. It takes care of W2s, pays wages and reports the W2s, files the taxes, provides unemployment coverage and workers comp, all while managing the claims for



Everyone has been buzzing about CAPS Universal's latest innovation, the CAPS Expense Card, due to roll out this May.

is registered in all 50 states and any city that has withholding. CAPS reports the wages earned by crew (etc) and makes sure the customer is definitely not over-taxed. Thus, the artists and crew are protected. Using CAPS Universal is a way to minimize the administration effort on the client as well as provide the protection needed from improper tax withholdings.

Everyone has been buzzing about CAPS Universal's latest innovation, the CAPS Expense Card, due to roll out this May. Shirley shares, "It [the card] provides a way to significantly limit the amount of cash a tour needs to take on the road. It reduces their loss in various ways. They can track expenses, where as if you pay in cash, it's so much effort to assemble the receipts and match it all up. It's a huge burden to pay in cash. We're rolling out

both. *mPm* learned that in recent years, states have become aggressive in going after large and small tours for payroll taxes. Turns out, wages earned by crew (etc) are supposed to be reported in the work state and appropriate taxes are to be paid accordingly. If not, the artists are liable after the tour is over and all the crew is long gone. CAPS Universal

a service where the tour can issue debit cards to their crew for their per diem or petty cash." The debit cards will have a bank associated with them, and they will be backed by MasterCard. A bank in Nashville, TN is lined up to be the home bank for the debit cards. Just like a normal debit or credit card, it can be personalized with the company's and/or cardholder's name.

It's important to REMEMBER
that there is no competitor like
CAPS Universal

If the card is used for per diem, there are no transaction fees when used as a MasterCard. However, there are ATM fees associated with its use for cash withdraw and a few other services. While a non-personalized card has a \$500 limit, a tour can easily fix that problem by instantly adding additional money (via the CAPS Card website) to the cards allowing for additional ATM withdraws or transactions. The card is protected with locking features as well. Many times on a tour, someone needs to run to a store and pick up something. Instead of using cash, the runner can be sent with a debit card that has a limited amount on it. If during the run, the person's purchase is going to cost more than the allotted amount, an administrator can instantly up the limit on the card to cover coverage. The card can also be limited to specific stores. This protects the card holder from fraud. The card can be used anywhere debit cards or MasterCard's are accepted, even online. CAPS plans on eventually making cards to be used as payroll for those who need it.

Shirley explained to *mPm* some of the other upcoming innovations, "We're starting to integrate

time and attendance programs so everything is electronically captured instead of manually. We're talking to a ticketing and pass vender who is developing a budgeting system. We're also developing a budgeting and accounting system that will be available online," he says. CAPS Universal just recently signed a number of new artists like Kenny Chesney and Phish. With a diverse clientele and nearly 50 years experience, CAPS Universal is ready to take the music touring industry's payroll needs by storm. 📞

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Life's Circle a conversation with BOBBY SCHNEIDER & DAVE BROWN

by MICHAEL WADDELL

Twenty-one years ago, from the ash of a heavy metal rock show, a local runner and a tour manager met for the first time. Dave Brown was working for Belkin as a runner at the Akron Rubber Bowl on June 23, 1988 when Bobby Schneider came in to do a show with Metallica as the band's tour manager at the time. In the midst of tour shopping, a friendship was forged.

"We'd been wanting to work with each other ever since," Schneider told *mPm* backstage in Nashville's Sommet Center at a New Kids On The Block performance. Schneider is the production manager and Brown is the tour manager on the tour. The NKOTB tour marks the first time since that portentous day in June '88 these two gentlemen have worked together. "We've stayed in touch over the past 20 years," said Brown, "and have run into each other on occasion when Bobby came through with a tour, and I was a promoter rep."

Brown and Schneider have tried in the past to work on the same tour, but the stars simply weren't aligned properly. Schneider told us, "When I got the call from Irving Azoff's office to do this gig and they told me that Dave is the tour manager, I said 'Great, he's my favorite guy in the world to work with.' They said, that's funny, that's what he said about you."

Their journeys have been linear and parallel. Over the last two decades Brown has built his career in tour management with some of the worlds biggest pop stars. "I'm the king of pop, not Michael Jackson," Brown jokes. In fact, this is his third boy

Schneider on the other hand, has toured in the heavy metal circles as tour manager and production manager, sometimes both on the same tour which could explain the two never having the opportunity to work together.

"There's been a month between shows, and we've been able to keep the same team. In short, this has been a great experience. Dave and I really work



"On top of having such a great team to be travelling with," continued Schneider, "it has been great working with Azoff, Jarad and Paul Geary because they allow us to do what we need to do. They trust us and have faith in us."

"They're the managers that let you do your job," interjected Brown, "unlike some companies that aren't around anymore."

The experience of these two old friends

NKOTB touring office staff Tour Manager Dave Brown, Accountant Jeff Mauss, Live Nation Rep, Mike Bess, Production Assistant Iowa Wong and Production Manager Bobby Schneider

well together and enjoy working with this management team, so I hope we get to work together again," said Schneider

"The fact that we have such a good team working with us on this tour has certainly enhanced the experience of finally getting to work with each other," added Brown.

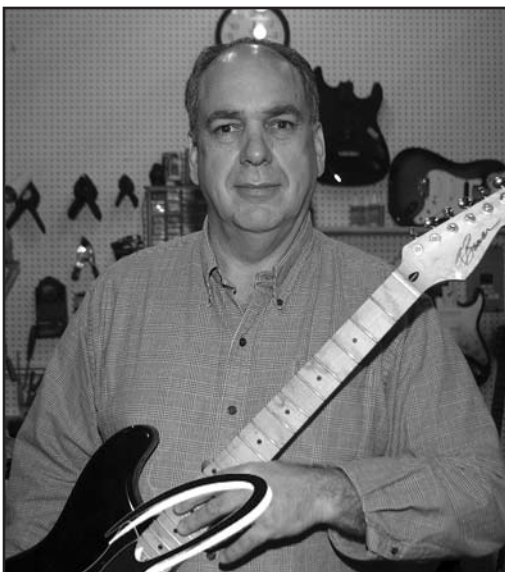
working together has been a very good one, but it doesn't end there. "We've got Jeff Mauss (Tour Guide's 2008 Tour Accountant Top Dog winner) and Earl Gabbidon (Venue Security) who's been with NKOTB back in the day, Jimmy Pettanito on loan from No Doubt. Our great team includes, Butch Allen who



designed this with truck space in mind, Harry Sandler for his guidance, all the crew, the hardest working driver's in the Pop World (this is the dart board tour), Brad Wavra & Live Nation Touring, all the Local reps, our great vendors Clair Bros, Epic, Nocturne, Accurate Staging, B&R Scenery SOS Transportation, Access Pass & Design, Shockwave Cargo, Rockit Cargo, Hemphill Bros, Bravado, Center Staging (our home away from home) and Tour Supply." Bobby then added, "The five guys who are the best group to ever work for – Danny, Donnie, Jordan, Joey & Jon. Most importantly, thanks to all our families who have not seen us in months. It's almost over Sophie! I miss you all."

Bobby and Dave are happy about finally working together. Brown puts an exclamation point on it by saying, "It's amazing how small this business is and how small the circle of people that are touring is."

After finally having the opportunity to work together, these guys will take with them an affirmation that their instincts were right about each other 21 years ago. 🍷



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COLDPLAY

Desires More Confetti

by JEANNE O'BRIEN COFFEY

Chris Martin of Coldplay had a strong vision for how he wanted confetti to drop during the song "Lovers in Japan" on the Viva La Vida tour— millions of oversized glow-in-the-dark butterflies drifting gently over the audience - a vision that required Chicago-based Strictly FX to get very creative. The full-service special effects company was brought in by lighting designer Paul Normandale, who had worked with them on the Bjork tour since 2007.

"The artists wanted everyone in the audience to have the same experience, no matter where they were sitting," says Mark Grega, a partner in the company, which is providing confetti and lasers for the tour.

The custom-designed butterflies were challenging to shoot from the outset, but the sheer coverage the artists envisioned over an extended time required creative thinking on the part of the Strictly FX team. The initial order of four floor-based units shooting up and eight truss-based units that allow the confetti to fall onto the audience, creating a more delicate effect, distributed a tremendous amount of confetti, but Coldplay wanted more — so much more that the company

invented a new way to shoot confetti. After adding eight of the company's patented CO2-powered Confetti Cobra™ (truss-mounted), which give a huge burst of confetti but cannot produce a continuous stream, it still wasn't enough for Martin. Brook Blomquist, Strictly FX Confetti Tech on the tour, worked closely with his team to design a new type of machine that could throw the heavy, oddly shaped confetti while producing an impressive continuous effect.

"Coldplay really sent us back to the drawing board, demanding a much larger instant effect," Grega recalls. "And just as importantly, they wanted to avoid the show consumable of CO2 rental and hundreds

of feet of high-pressure CO2 hoses in the main lighting rig A/C loom."

As if that wasn't enough, the units had to be designed, prototyped, tested and manufactured in a matter of weeks while the band was touring.

The new A/C-powered truss-mounted units, which made their debut late last year, are specifically designed to move a sizeable amount of air over the confetti to maximize throw. This distributed 16 pounds of this large awkwardly shaped confetti about 40 feet horizontally and completely emptying in under two minutes. The patented process makes use of both thrust and vacuum to create





a perfect environment inside the unit to propel contents further and in larger amounts than other units on the market. The result is impressive – and finally fulfills the artist’s vision.

In addition to the confetti, Strictly FX is providing lasers on four songs during the tour. Although the band chose to add them on short notice, it was no problem. With a week to do all the programming and get the equipment prepped and shipped, Strictly FX trotted out four of its new 10-watt White Light Arctos Diode lasers. These air-cooled machines run off 110 volts and each one fits into a very small road case. Vastly easier to transport and set up than traditional water-cooled lasers, these sophisticated machines are popular in Europe but there are very few available as yet in the U.S. because they are quite costly.

For Coldplay, the sophisticated programming and more thorough coverage was well worth the additional expense, says David Kennedy, who handled the laser programming for the tour. “Since the air-cooled lasers have such a small footprint, the source is spread around and we’re able to get lasers into positions that weren’t really comfortably possible before,” he says, adding, “The scanners and lasing technology allow us to target multiple specific areas to get a really good coverage. Where we might have been blocked in an area before and just needed to avoid that spot, we can now split the image to cover more of the venue space around different obstacles.”

That time saved in set up can be devoted to programming, giving Strictly FX the ability to get very precise with laser cues. “A fundamental strength of the

laser show as a whole is the great detail in the design of the cues,” says Mike Hartle, Strictly FX laser operator and crew chief. “Each song with lasers has its own style and feeling. We have gone to great lengths to capture the emotion and movement of the music through our choice of color, animation, and timing of the cues. The songs ultimately dictate what we visualize and program, and staying true to the quality of the music allows us to add a dimension to the show that compliments the artist, and the show as a whole.”

Strictly FX will be accompanying Coldplay throughout the band’s tour this year, which is slated to continue through the fall. With a number of stadium dates on the agenda, the band plans to go even bigger with the special effects. While the details are still under wraps, suffice to say the audience will get an amazing show. 🎆

it's rock 'n' roll Not Rocket Science

Hotel Guide 101

by JESSI WALLACE & NICK GOLD

Contracts & Adjustments: The Bottom Line

It's a hotel's choice to accept or reject a booking without the contract. It is a piece of paper; it does commit, but sometimes it can have some adjustment to it. Gold is fond of removing attrition but choosing cancellation if needed. Neither is necessarily *wanted*, but a hotel may be asked to pick one. "Attrition isn't

good because the band is either there or not there. Cancellation is better. Bands don't attrition. Hotels need to learn that this is not an attritional business unlike corporate and event planning," Gold says. Travel agents and tour managers need the hotel to be flexible to the possibility of adjustment. "If the hotel wants more busi-

ness, they'll be flexible to some reasonable changes. 30 days out isn't too close, they *can* resell the rooms. I'm not saying 24 hours before we get there we're going to cancel 30 rooms. That's a different animal. When we have two weeks or more and a couple changes come in, I like to think a hotel will work with us."

Arrival & Departure: Avoiding an A/D Nightmare

It is important for the travel agent and/or tour manager to confirm with the hotel the band's arrival and departure. The hotel must pay attention to the details. A/D may change based on show days, off days and if the bus driver stays or not. The hotel must understand early check-ins, late check-outs and half day room rates. It's never a good thing when early check-in has been guaranteed and already paid

for, the band arrives, and the rooms aren't ready. When the room has been paid for, the client from the previous night must be out in time, or don't sell the room for the previous night. Gold shares one nightmare fresh on his mind, "I've had times where we've prepaid and pre-blocked some rooms for late check-in... it gets to midnight and the hotel sees we're not there so they sell them to someone else. The band

walks in at 3 a.m., the hotel doesn't have the rooms. I had it happen a couple years ago and the hotel had the front desk manager fired. I was furious because it was the beginning of a two weeks stay. Just because it's midnight and someone hasn't picked up the keys, doesn't mean the group is not going to be there. It's prepaid. All the documentation shows they will be in late." Avoid a nightmare, pay attention.

Folio, oh Folio... Where art thou Folio?

Gold shares, "If the front desk is now aware of how the group wants to check out and how they want their folio and the hotel contracts a group out after 9:30 at night because its computer shuts down, well then tell us that. Tell us to come down and pay at 8:30 or 9:00 and have its folio ready."

Separation of folios is key; room, tax and incidentals. Some hotels still have trouble figuring it out. It's important to give the tour manager a master folio at the end of the day so he can have it for his receipts and for his accounting. If for one reason or another the folio isn't ready, the hotel

often says it will fax the folio later but then for one reason or another, it doesn't happen. The travel agent tour manager hotel relationship will be improved if the communication is there. Gold believes today that there is a larger number than a smaller number who don't necessarily *get it*.

Communication is Key

It is known that hotels have management/department meetings to discuss key elements for when a band is coming in. A major problem is the amount of info that goes missing in that meeting. Hotels are sent information that is relevant to the accounting department, yet it doesn't make it there. "For some

reason it's a big secret that our information doesn't get to the accounts department, so when a band is there, I get a phone call two weeks later from accounting asking questions.... and I say, 'Didn't you talk to Mary in sales?' and they go 'Oh... no.' I find a tremendous amounts of hotels who don't share

our documentation with the rest of the departments, and then we see problems with an unpaid bill, incidentals where they don't know where they go. It's always been with sales... so the coordination of in-house paperwork in these meetings is incredibly important in what we do," stresses Gold.

All over the world, hotels of all shapes and sizes claim to be entertainment industry friendly, but many don't quite get it. Nick Gold of Entertainment Travel has over 20 years of experience booking hotel rooms for tours. *mPm* recently caught up with Gold to recap some important issues that were brought up and briefly discussed at the Tour Link Conference. In 2006, (when *mPm* was *TG7*) Gold found that it would be beneficial for hotels to have a basic check list of important do's and don'ts in order for them to capture and keep the entertainment market post Tour Link. Since then, it has been requested that the checklist be revisited, revised and printed again for hotels to follow. Keep in mind that as a hotel who wants the business, it is imperative that the travel agent is taken care of in a number of ways so repeat business is likely. With pleasure, *mPm* and Gold present to hotel readers **Hotel Guide 101**.



The Sales Department: Use the KISS Method

Ensure that a sales manager or coordinator is on hand rather than a sales assistant. It is imperative to have a key sales person at the hotel to advise the wishes, needs and desires of the band for its stay. (I.e. the number of rooms, the dates needed and the budget). Gold shares, "I like to go

through the sales manager... whoever he/she gives it to in house to manipulate in their own system, I don't care. As long as I don't know about it, I'm happy to be dealing with Mary... but if I have to deal with a Jane, Sally and Mary, someone will miss something." Keep it simple.

The Sales Department: Use The KISS Method.

Contracts & Adjustments: The Bottom Line.

Arrival & Departure: Avoiding an A/D Nightmare.

Folio, oh Folio... Where Art Thou Folio?

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www. EntertainmentTvl.com

Bus Parking: Keep it Close

The bus parking is an equally important factor because simply, the busses have to be put *somewhere*. Hotels should always be able to say that bus parking is available, even if it isn't necessarily theirs to give. An agreement should be set aside with some location for the busses to go. It is also important to share *where*

the bus parking is... how far away is it and can it be easily walked? Some hotels have been known to offer bus parking upon the room booking, but upon band arrival, the truth is the bus parking is five miles away and no one was told beforehand. The sales team *must* be informational.

DO NOT DISTURB

It's quite simple really... the "Do Not Disturb" sign means exactly that... *do not disturb*. Especially when there are several in a row down the hall. Gold points out, "The housekeeping, the vacuum cleaners... I know they all understand it, but

amazing enough they *still* don't get it. Again, it's a coordination of that department meeting. If you have four of those signs in a row on doors then don't bring out this high velocity vacuum cleaner and start banging the walls!" Enough said.

Commissions: Want Repeat Business?

Hotels send out questionnaires to the travel agents after the stay. Gold feels if a hotel can take the time to send out a questionnaire, then it can take the time to send out the travel agents' commission, which oddly enough, is a reoccurring problem. According to Gold, "There are some hotels out there, who for some reason, don't send out commissions unless you ask for it. When you ask for it, they suddenly want an invoice. When you send the

invoice it takes another 30 days. The band has already been there two months ago... if I had a band that left the hotel, forgot to pay the bill, and I decided to pay the hotel in 60 days, it wouldn't be happy. If it isn't happy in its world, why should it be happy in the travel agent's world? Getting commissions out of some of the hotels is like pulling teeth. I have a computer system that manages this... it's an escalated problem and they have countless excuses."

Nokia Theatre

overviewing A World Class Venue

Nokia Theatre has twice won Tour Guide's Small Venue of the Year Top Dog Award. Its venue in Grand Prairie, TX won it in 2006 and Los Angeles in 2008. We wanted to take this opportunity to give the readers a brief overview of the three Nokia Theatres.

Los Angeles, CA

Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE opened on October 18th, 2007 with six sold-out concerts featuring the Eagles and Dixie Chicks. Destined to become the preferred indoor venue for performers and fans alike, the 7,100-seat venue offers guests mid-sized intimacy, with no seat further from the stage than 220 feet, exceptional comfort and amenities never before offered to guests at similar theatres.

Anchoring the new L.A. LIVE entertainment district, Nokia Theatre L.A.

LIVE will host nearly 120 events per year including the most popular concerts and performances, awards shows, family shows, corporate showcases, product launches, speaker series and television broadcasts emanating from the largest stage in southern California.

Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE is centrally located within L.A. LIVE, a four million-square-foot, \$2.5 billion downtown Los Angeles sports, residential and entertainment district adjacent to STAPLES Center and the Los Angeles Convention Center. LA LIVE features a 54-story, 1000-room convention "headquarters" hotel. The hotel combines JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton brands and 224 luxury condominiums (The Ritz-Carlton Residences at L.A. LIVE). Also featured is Club Nokia L.A. LIVE, a 2,200 capacity live music venue, a 14-screen Regal Cineplex, "broadcast" facilities for ESPN, along with entertainment, restaurant and office space.

L.A. LIVE is a one-of-a-kind sports, entertainment and residential district in Downtown immediately adjacent to

STAPLES Center and the Convention Center. The campus features; Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE, the GRAMMY Museum, Conga Room and Club Nokia, giving L.A. LIVE more music per square foot than anywhere else in the world.

Grand Prairie, TX

Nokia Theatre in Grand Prairie might be one of the most flexible and advanced indoor performance space in the United States. It is the first venue of its kind. Many touring artists have already called NOKIA Theatre at Grand Prairie "the theater of the future."

With its 6,350-indoor seating capacity, this venue was conceived and designed to accommodate a wide range of stage productions, including pop, rock, country, comedy, magic, Broadway and family shows. Since its February 2002 opening, the facility has hosted everything from the Eagles to Jeff Foxworthy to the Radio City Rockettes.

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Times, Square, NY, NY

Nokia Theatre Times Square is a 2100-capacity venue operated by AEG LIVE and designed by the award-winning architect David Rockwell of the Rockwell Group. The venue officially opened in September 2005 and has the capability to hold a wide array of events, including concerts, live television, web broadcasts, live recordings, award shows and event parties.

The marquee is an 85-foot long LED high definition screen which can display

L.A. LIVE

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213-763-6030

visit: nokiathatrelive.com
email: booking@nokiathatrelive.com

at Grand Prairie

For Booking

contact: Larry Fontana
972-854-5050

visit: nokiathatredfw.com

Times Square

212-930-1950

nokiathatrenyc.com

both live and digital video. It is one of the largest marquees on Broadway and is directly connected to the MTV marquee. Its interactive text messaging capabilities and the ability to broadcast events live from the stage directly to the marquee (in real time) make it truly impressive, to say the least.

Want to make your next meeting unique? Nokia Theatre Times Square is a full service facility offering event planners a variety of modern event spaces with unlimited possibilities. The venue is available for a large variety of special events, including corporate meetings, private concerts, banquets, receptions, award shows and much more.

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Oasis

Debuts Bad Boy to the World

Production Resource Group, LLC, (PRG) celebrated the debut of its Bad Boy™ luminaire on the recently completed first leg of the Oasis Dig Out Your Soul tour. Of his fixture choice, lighting designer Rob Gawler said, “The Bad Boy was just what I had been looking for—a big bright large-format luminaire, that could be used as a narrow washlight with a couple of gobos as a bonus.”

From a Roman amphitheatre in Vienne near Lyon, France to stadiums in South America, with sold-out dates throughout Asia, Mexico, Western Europe, the US and the UK, Oasis has been literally touring the world with production support from PRG’s Concert Touring group. Oasis’ *Dig Out Your Soul* tour marks the largest tour the band has ever embarked on with stops in several countries for the first time, including dates in Lima, Peru and Taipei City, Taiwan. Gawler turned to PRG’s Concert Touring group knowing it could effectively handle the global aspect of the support as well as the wide range of venue types.

Providing 48,000 lumens with precision speed and control over color and gobo changing as well as spot to flood zoom and full-field dimming, the PRG Bad Boy was exactly the unit Gawler wanted. “The units worked great ‘out of the case’ and I was pleasantly surprised at how

many different beam looks I could really get out of the unit. I was initially a bit unsure about the fixed color mixing but it is working out fine, in fact it is nice to see all eight lamps the same color rather than the three or four hues that you get with some of the ‘true’ color mixers.”

In addition to the accurately matched colors, several of the Bad Boy’s other features, including optical clarity and smooth fluid control of focus, zoom, dimming and imaging—thanks to high quality lenses and high-speed servo motors—have been ideal for Gawler’s Oasis design. “I wanted a design that would fit into a number of different venue formats and scale between them well, without compromising the overall look. I knew I wanted to use a selection of contemporary fixtures but to create a look that is reminiscent of a more progressive, psychedelic period.”

Gawler also points out, “I like that it’s relatively simple to hang and once it’s up there it is going to work. I especially like being able to zoom it down to an almost parallel intense spot beam, or when I drop a gobo in and zoom it out, it just keeps going, until you have a sharp image covering a surprisingly large area of stage, cyc, or even the back of the house. It may seem a bit big in the road case but the power consumption is reasonable. And the status display on the fixture is intuitive to use, as well as informative. While the units we have out on Oasis have proven very reliable, it is clear that maintenance has been carefully considered.”

Gawler is enjoying the tour and working on the next leg. “The challenge is to put on a consistently good show, without being dependent on rigging capacity, load-in time and specific production elements. It has been an exciting design challenge and PRG’s Concert Touring group has been fantastic to work with—they have provided good kit, fantastic crew and great support.” 🍷

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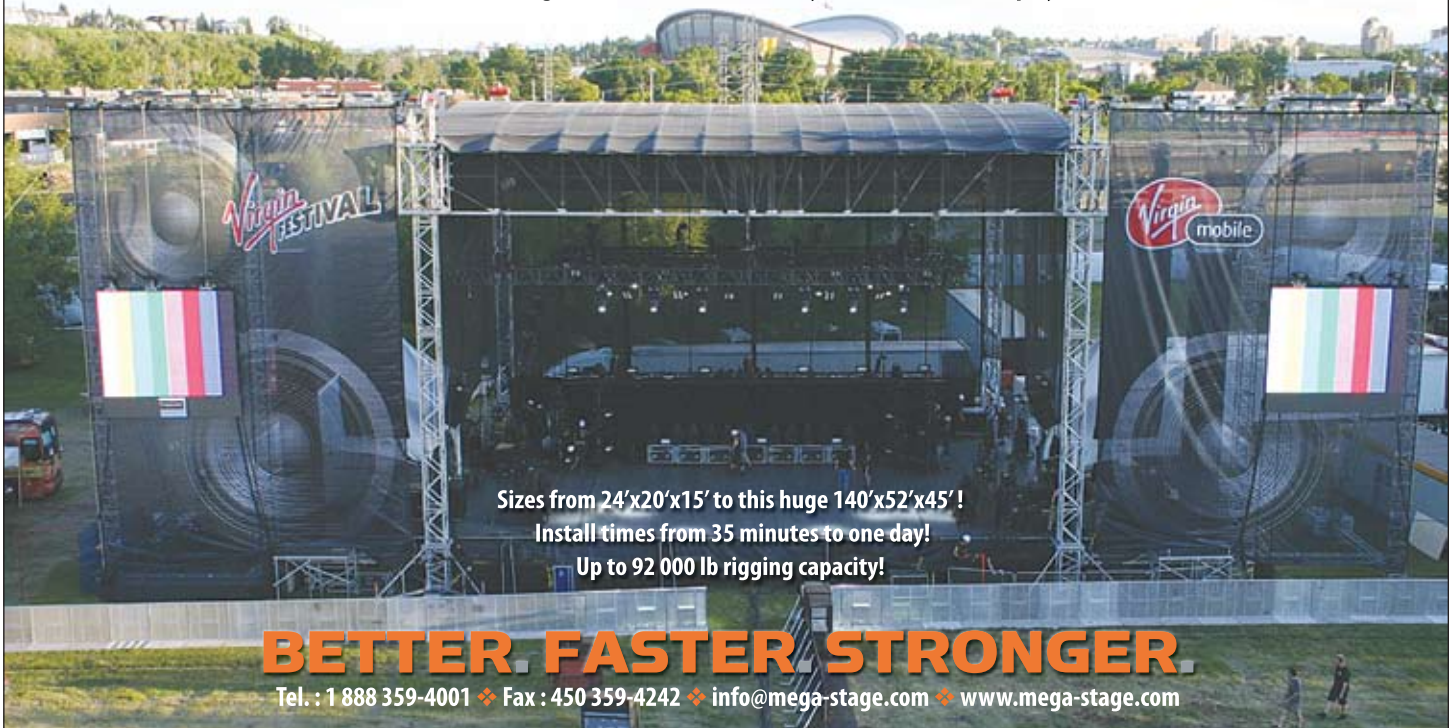
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Robe

Selects a Song for Slovakia

Slovakia's top lighting designer Martin Kubanka used Robe moving lights and REDBlinders at the core of his design for the live TV show that selected the country's 2009 Eurovision Song Contest entry.

This was staged in Studio 4 of the Slovakian Television HQ in Bratislava and broadcast live on STV1, breaking new ground in terms of presentation and spectacle.

The basic visual concept hatched between Kubanka and set designer Marek Hollý was to create a 360 degree arena style show in the studio, which included an area for 300 dancing fans to the side of the live audience seating stands. This set up produced many lighting challenges, and the aim was to bring depth, dimension and dynamics to the space with lighting and video, fulfilling the dual functionality of looking equally as good on TV and live.

LED walls were positioned around the space, and to mirror these with moving lights, Kubanka needed very bright light sources, which is one of the reasons he chose Robe.

All lighting and LED technology

used on the show was supplied by top Slovakian rental house, Q-99. The rig contained 22 Robe ColorSpot 1200E ATs, 18 ColorWash 1200E ATs, 24 ColorSpot 575E AT and 8 REDBlinder 196s.



These were positioned on the stage and rigged in the studio roof above the audience and fans. Some of the ColorSpot 575E ATs were integrated into the set behind the stage. To the sides of the dancing fans, ColorWash 1200E ATs were used as 'contra lights' and for high-impact light-wall effects behind those camera shots.

Kubanka made extensive use of all the features and effects offered by the assorted Robe units, which gave him infinite variety to cover a wide range of musical styles and genres, making each contestant's set look unique. The fast strobe facility was particularly effective for the up-tempo songs and the winners announcement.

Q-99 also supplied a wide selection of other lighting fixtures including searchlights and effects, plus 4 different types of LED surface for the event.

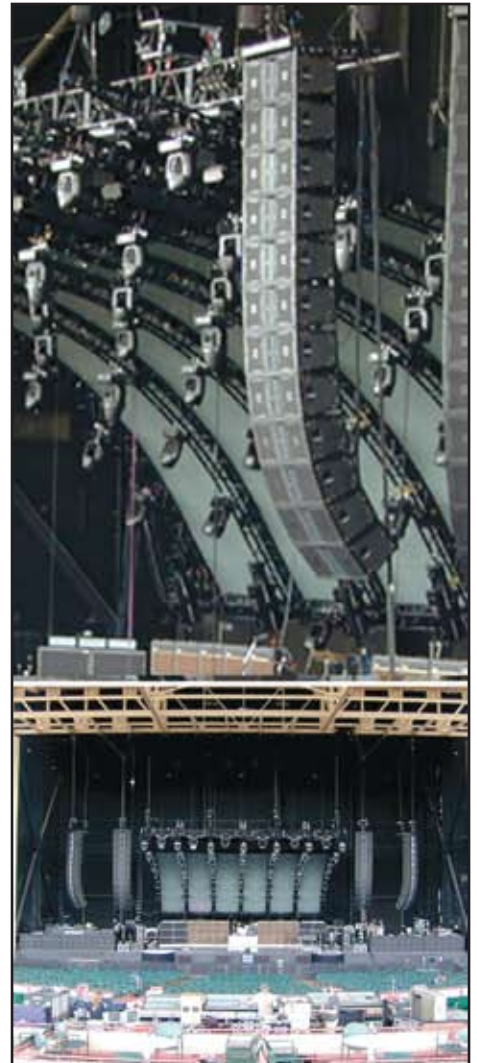
All lighting was controlled via a grandMA full size console programmed and operated by

Michael Schmidt, with a grandMA light running the video operated by Thomas Lecky.

Winners Nela Pocisková and Kamil Mikulčík will represent Slovakia in the final in Moscow on 16th May. 🇸🇰

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**SOUND
IMAGE**

THE SUM OF SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE PARTS!

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

WALKING AROUND THE PRODUCTION SITE OF THE CURRENT NICKELBACK "DARK HORSE" TOUR, THERE WAS AN AIR OF AWAKENING THAT WAS EXCITING TO SEE. WHILE PREVIOUS TOURS HAVE INDEED BEEN SUCCESSFUL FROM ALL PERSPECTIVES, THIS ONE WAS DIFFERENT. IN THE PAST, THE SHOW HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY A COMMITTEE OF ITS DEPARTMENTS EVENTUALLY FINDING A POINT OF COHESIVENESS AS A GROUP OF AUTONOMOUS PARTS. THIS MADE FOR A LESS THAN LEISURELY REHEARSAL PERIOD.

With the ever growing success that the band is enjoying comes a stronger production process. The most obvious benefit of this latest growth spurt is employment of Butch Alan as Production Designer. Tour Director Brad Roosa explained, "We found Butch almost by accident. We'd never used a production designer before. It was our LD and our Pyro guy and Chief. It was kind of an amalgamation of the Nickelback family. I got Butch's name off of a list of names that Brian White at Show Group in Vegas gave me. I talked to about five or six people on the list, but I pretty much knew that Butch was the guy the minute we chatted."

With the addition of Alan as the source point of the creative direction, the production came to be about the sum of its parts as opposed to being the parts of a sum.

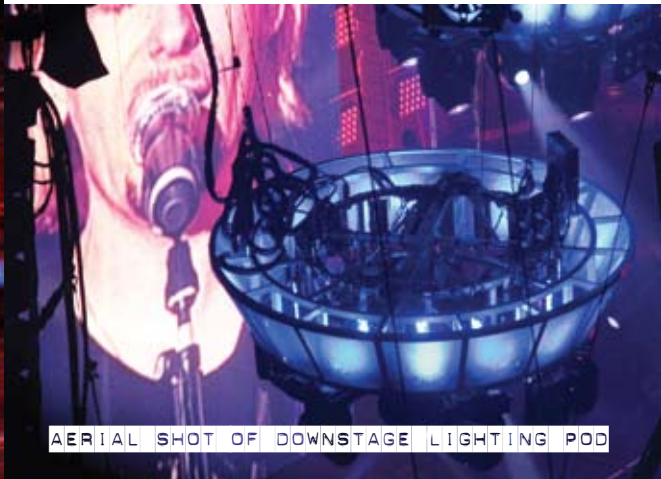
"It was great to do it that way this time. It really came together fast," said Pyro Crew Chief Stephen Joseph, "We made it work in the past, but there were times when the LD might not know that I going to shoot a bunch of gold glitter mines at the end of a song and he's got a white wash planned for the same time. That didn't ever happen this time. This really helped us all work together."

The lighting system was highlighted by four semi-circular pods



on the upstage line and six smaller circular pods flown over the mid to downstage area. These pods (affectionately known as "Stadium Pods") were responsible for the bulk of the lighting. The upstage pods had two levels, the lower being smaller in diameter. Six Mac 2000's were spaced along the leading edge of the upper level with four Vari*Lite 3000 Spots on the lower level. One Synchronite NX-3000 hung off the bottom of the pod.

The downstage pod had six Mac's and three VL's tucked up inside the cluster of Mac's and had only one level. Each of the pods had a series of translucent panels all the way around



AERIAL SHOT OF DOWNSTAGE LIGHTING POD



Front Row: Ryan Morris - Lighting Technician, A. J. Penn - Lighting Technician, Chris Maeder - LD Back Row: Roy Mumbourquette, Mat Burden, Dianne Fleming, James Jones III - Syncrolite Technician

photos by Michael A Beck

(and on the leading edge in the case of the upstage pods) that were back lit with Color Blasts. The pods also flew in and out at different times during the show, an effect that was powerful both because of the move and because the move wasn't over used as can often be the case.

While there were two torm towers upstage that were hung with more Mac 2k's and VL-3k Spots, the upstage line was really all about video. The center piece of the set was a V-Lite video array that was flanked with groups of 18 Chromlech Jarag units (6 high by 3 wide) with Atomic 3000 strobes dispersed among them. For the uninitiated (as this writer was before this

show), a Jarag unit is a square case that houses twenty-five 220V, 75W lamps. Each lamp is individually dimmed and in this application, the Jarags were controlled by a Hippotiser media server.

The video wall, which presents an even split of content and IMAG, was comprised of four sections that were able to spin around and reveal six more Jarags on each panel. There was a lot of light on this show!

But wait, there's more! Indeed, the first concussion hit takes place before the band ever hits a note or even takes the stage.



David "Dave" Carry II – Pyro Operator / Technician, Harold "Freddie" Bufford Jr., Steve Joseph - Pyro Crew Chief, Fred Lee Price Jr., Casey Lake

Many of the pyro shots in the show emanate from a series of metallic fluted funnels that are placed at several locations around the stage. "Pyro has been a big part of this show since the first time I came on with the band in 2002," explained Stephen Joseph, Pyro Crew Chief, "the first thing they asked for was a water fall effect that was made of 30 pieces of product, and now we're up to over 500."

This show had many aspects that seemed almost too numerous to mention. However, the one that was the most subtle as well as the most obvious was the stage on which the show was performed. The main body of the stage was not what one would call huge, although by no means could it be called a postage stamp. This was a design stroke of genius. Nickelback is a four piece band. With a huge stage, the members would start to get disassociated real fast. The size of this stage still allowed them to move freely and engage the audience while also permitting them the cohesive visual when they were at their primary positions.

One feature that has been a part of the Nickelback shows for a long time is a thrust. This show was no different. What was different was the size and shape of the thrust. It was a beautiful tear drop shaped extension that was so gently designed that one had trouble telling where the thrust ended and the "B" stage began. The entire structure was outlined with roughly 140 LED lights set in the floor. At the center of the "B" stage was a hip little gag designed by the long time purveyor of hip little gags, Fidel Garza. The center section of the stage flipped over and revealed a little cocktail drum kit as the band came out and did a three song set.

As the winter/spring tour is winding down, the stage will travel to the UK for a brief set of shows there and then it will be given a rest as the band goes into the shed circuit for a few months. In the shed configuration the thrust is gone, and backline and monitors will be



photos by Michael A Beck



THE MAIN DRUM RISER WAS A MASTERPIECE
IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

pictured: **Drum riser fully elevated and in position for solo**

Rodney Johnson -
Production Manager,
Donnie Floyd - Stage
Manager



placed off stage as one would expect. While the show is just as exciting in a shed, it definitely lacks the elegance of the arena look.

This riser showed, once again, the grey matter that Garza is known for. The riser travels vertically with the legs of the kit permanently attached. It rolls into place where Drum Tech, Tom Willhelm puts the wrack on the legs. Then it's locked into place and ready to go. "This is a plug and play piece of gear," said Garza, "One guy can bring this in and set it up. And if the motor dies on it," he said as he looked around for wood to knock on, "we can actually operate it with a cordless drill."

In lieu of choosing the drill option, the motor functioned within the parameters of two limiters. Once the flip had begun, the first limiter slowed the movement down and the other stopped it. Because of the size that the unit took up in the truck, the drum kit could be no taller than 47 inches. This took some getting used to by drummer, Daniel Adair. Of course, that was remedied by the time the show hit the road. The interesting thing about this gag was that Garza was the one to build the first ever flipping drum riser for Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee back in the 80s. The irony of this was pretty thick as Crüe played in Nashville's Sommet Center just as Nickelback was winding up production rehearsals, and Lee was a little curious about the design until he found out that Fidel did it.

The Drum riser fun didn't stop with the "B" Stage. The main drum riser was a masterpiece in its own right. At first blush it looked like your basic round drum riser with an engine block and headers wrapping around to the back. But during the drum solo, the riser drove downstage and lifted about eight or nine feet in the air and rotated. The piece was made up of a motorized platform that could only roll in a straight line. A generic scissor lift sat on the platform and a turn table sat on that.

However, by the time the unit was built complete with motors, cabling and a full complement of the fore mentioned fluted



pyro guns; the riser tipped the scale at 4,500 pounds. Garza couldn't help laughing when he told of the trucks idling at the loading dock while he was doing the last of the welding to get the headers on the base of the riser.

"Sometimes it happens that way," he said with a shrug and an gentle smile.

The riser was lit internally with several Color Blasts and externally lit with the main lighting rig.



photos by Michael A Beck

There really is nothing bad that can be said about this show. There is an attitude around the tour that was echoed by everyone we talked to. People keep coming back to work with this band. One crew member said, “These guys could probably make more money if they didn’t put as much into the show, and the crowd would still come away thrilled. But that that’s just not who they are. They love to give back.”

In a 15 minute conversation with stage manager, Donnie Floyd, Floyd rarely talked about the technical aspects of getting this show down the road and in and out of venues as

one would have expected. Instead he spoke of the rule of this tour that, if broken, will be the end of anyone, “Attitude is everything.”

“I’d trade the world class seasoned pro with a bad attitude for the guy who doesn’t have as much experience but has a great attitude every time,” Floyd told us, “it’s all about the two words we all should have learned when we were kids...

‘Be nice.’
Indeed. 🙄

"I'D TRADE THE WORLD CLASS SEASONED PRO WITH A BAD ATTITUDE FOR THE GUY WHO DOESN'T HAVE AS MUCH EXPERIENCE BUT HAS A GREAT ATTITUDE EVERY TIME," FLOYD TOLD US, "IT'S ALL ABOUT THE TWO WORDS WE ALL SHOULD HAVE LEARNED WHEN WE WERE KIDS... 'BE NICE.'"



Front: Mike Williams, Rudy Rodriguez - Grid Tech Back: Colin Nevins -Automation Operator, Niall "Nellii" Gibbons - Automation. Crew Chief / Rigger 2

Seated: Steve Ossler - Video Director Standing: Jason Lipton -Roslyn "Roz" Fulton Engineer, Hippo Tech, Mark Woody - Led#3, Ben Rader - Led#2 / Pj#1, Leon "SEXY" Roll - Crew Chief / Led#1

Alex Kingry, Fidel Garza - Set Carpenters, Ronald "Opie" Simpson - Head Carpenter, Jerry Prater - Carp / Assist. Stage Mgr

Front: David "Shuu" Guidish - Bass Technician, Tom Wilhelm - Drum Technician, Middle, Kris "Daws" Dawson - Guitar Technician (Ryan), Tim Dawson - Guitar Technician (Chad) Back: Gordini Sran - Pro Tools Operator



Joya Cleveland - Catering Advance/Prod Assistant

Judd White - Tour Accountant

Ralph James - Canadian Booking Agent

Chris "Hawk" Louden - Band Security, Richie Surrency - Venue Security

Orris Henry - FOH Engineer, Randy Rhodus - System Engineer, Dustin Ponscheck, Paul Cevernansky - Audio Technician, Tyson Clark - Audio Technician

NICKELBACK

TOUR PERSONNEL

photos by Michael A Beck

BAND

Lead Vocals / Guitar: Chad Kroeger
Bass: Mike Kroeger
Guitar / Vocals: Ryan Peake
Drums: Daniel Adair

CREW

Tour Director: Brad Roosa
Road Manager: Martin "Barty" Bartlett
Production Manager: Rodney Johnson
Production Coordinator: Claire Van Herck
Wardrobe/Band Assistant: Wendy Smith
Stage Manager: Donnie Floyd
Tour Accountant: Judd White
Catering Advance/Prod Assistant: Joya Cleveland
Band Security: Chris "Hawk" Louden
Venue Security: Richie Surrency

BACKLINE

Bass Technician: David "Shuu" Guidish
Guitar Technician (Ryan): Kris "Daws" Dawson
Guitar Technician (Chad): Timmy Dawson
Drum Technician: Tom Willhelm

SOUND

Foh Engineer, Orris Henry
Pro Tools Operators: Alex Aligizakis, Gordini Sran
Monitor Engineer, Michael Mule
System Engineer, Randy Rhodus
Assist Monitor Eng: Matthew Wobst
Audio Technicians: Paul Cevernansky, Tyson Clark

LIGHTING

Ld: Chris Maeder
Lighting Crew Chief: Roy Webb
Second Lead: Corey Proulx
Lighting Technicians: Ryan Morris, Andrew Mcelary
Syncrolite Technician: James Jones Iii

VIDEO

Video Director: Steve Ossler
Engineer: Jason Lipton
Hippo Tech: Roslyn Fulton
Crew Chief / Led#1: Leon Roll
Led#2 / Pj#1: Ben Rader
Led#3: Mark Woody

PYRO

Pyro Crew Chief: Steve Joseph
Pyro: Casey Lake, Harold "Freddie" Bufford Jr., Fred Lee Price Jr.
Operator / Technician: David "Dave" Carry li

RIGGING

Head Rigger / Cam Op#3: Ken Mitchell

MOTION CONTROL

Automation. Crew Chief / Rigger 2: Niall "Nellii" Gibbons
Automation Operator: Colin Nevins
Grid Tech: Rudy Rodriguez

CARPENTERS

Head Carpenter: Ronald "Opie" Simpson
Carp / Assist. Stage Mgr: Jerry Prater
Set Carpenters: Fidel Garza, Eric Bolenbaugh

CATERING

Chef: Jason Perry

LIVE NATION

Ln Director: Keith Keller
Assistant Ln Director: Tom Alexander

MERCHANDISE

Lead Merch Road Rep: Rich Koffer
Assistant: Ron Ramfjord

BUS DRIVERS

Band Bus 1 (Chad's), Will Rankin
Band Bus 2 (Mike's), Steve Dodge
Band Bus 3 (Ryan's), Steve Headley
Crew Buses: Mike Hall, Greg Celsor, Joe Devlin, Chris Doucet, Brian Pittman

TRUCK DRIVERS

Lead Driver: Steve Collard
2nd Lead: Yvon Lauzon
Drivers: Luc Lebeau, Marie-Josée Aspirot, Roland Coté, Simon Losier, Josée Millett, Guillaume Charrette, Stéphane Ross

TOUR RELATED OFFICES

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Business Management

Gudvi, Sussman & Oppenheim, Inc.

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The Agency Group The Agency Group

Tour Promoter - Usa/Canada

Live Nation Live Nation

North American Touring

Record Company - Usa/Canada

Roadrunner Records Emi Music Canada

Tour Director / Road Manager

Brad Roosa / Martin Bartlett

Production Mgr. / Production Coordinator

Rodney Johnson / Claire Van Herck

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The Westpac Group

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Living a **Pyro**





Guy's Dream

by BILL ABNER
photos by Freddie Bufford

how up at rehearsals and do what you do. When Stephen Josephs, co-owner of Stage and Effects Engineering (SEE) and pyro crew chief for Nickelback gets the call to join the tour every year, that's how simple the band makes it for him. Josephs told *mPm*, "The band pretty much gives us free reign over what we do. From the start, they've really only ever asked for one gag in particular and that was to have a waterfall drop. We're starting our eighth year with them now, and they just let us grow and grow and build on the show every year." When Josephs shows the band members anything new, he enthuses, "They are like kids at Christmas. They always tell me, 'We wouldn't change a thing, and even if we did, we wouldn't know what to change anyway.'"

That makes it pretty easy for the Albuquerque-based company to do what it does. With over 500 pieces of product discharged every night, Josephs and his crew of four hard working technicians are virtually unlimited in their ability to bring a sense of the dramatic to the five time Grammy nominees' *Dark Horse* Tour.

This year, for the first time, SEE worked with Production Designer Butch Allen on the show's design. Josephs, Allen and Lighting Designer Chris Maeder of Christie Lights have put together a show that is, simply stated, bigger, from pyro and lighting to video.

photos by Freddie Bufford



photos by Freddie Bufford

The pyro element has consequently doubled in size, from around 250 pieces last year, to over 500 pieces this year. Last year there were 8 flame heads but the count is up to 20 this year, which includes SEE's new color-changing system designed by Freddie Bufford. "We use blue and red flames which really add another dimension to the flame aspect of the show," says Josephs. "It's a little different system than what is out there now in the way that it's designed and built, in that it doesn't have any kind of gas or open pilot flames for ignition. The plus for us is that we can use it in more venues and other places that have gas restrictions."

The total number of cues for the show has also increased from 12 pyro cues with 8 or 10 devices at a time last year, up to 6 pyro cues with 40 or 50 devices at one time this year. That's a lot of flash and trash for any show and a whole different approach to this year's show.

Having the pyro company owner on the tour also has its advantages. Josephs makes sure the budget remains affordable while ensuring that the size of the show isn't affected. With the tour now being managed by Live Nation, one of the concerns was that perhaps the show would have to sacrifice quantity and quality to stay within

budget. Joseph's response was "Nah, we're not gonna let that happen. I'll make sure the budget comes in where the corporate suits are happy, and the rock n' roll outlaws are happy as well." So far, so good. The show is selling out every venue, and nothing keeps the bean counters happy like a full house.

Another indicator of the tour's success is its upcoming jaunts to Europe, Asia and Australia. While the group has toured overseas before, it has been with a smaller show. This time however, the tour will be traveling with its complete pyro package.

With every success come challenges. This year's show sees the addition of "horse pits" on either side of the stage in line with the band. That's roadie speak for an area reserved for ticket winners, VIPs and premium ticket holders. The effect of that addition was that those guests were now clearly within the safe range of some of the upstage effects. "I looked at this new design and thought, 'Where am I going to put all these charges so that they are within safe limits,'" said Josephs. The answer was in the design of the stage itself. Butch Allen had designed a portion of the stage that rose above the rest of the deck for the band to walk around and up onto the stage. Josephs

explains, "Knowing the band, I knew that they were only going to enter at the corners and not use all of the area around the back, so I decided to place all of the charges there which gave me plenty of distance between the product and the guests."

SEE is out with some of the biggest names in the business: Rolling Stones, AC/DC, Nickelback and Ozzy Osbourne to name a few. Josephs attributes the success of SEE and the tours of which it is a part, to two things: "First and foremost, we are fans. We love music of all kinds, and I personally am a huge fan of this band. That enables us to infuse emotion into the work we do out here. We're not the biggest company in the world, but we try to think of ourselves as a company that say's 'this is what we do and if you want us to we'll come work for you and give you our best effort every time.'"

Joseph ends with two important points, "We have a bunch of great crews that works for some of the best groups of guys in the business, and we are all friends and family to one another. Secondly, it's all about fun. We just like to have fun, and what better way to enjoy yourself than doing the thing you love doing with a bunch of folks that you really care about. I'd say it's a pyro guy's dream gig." 🤖



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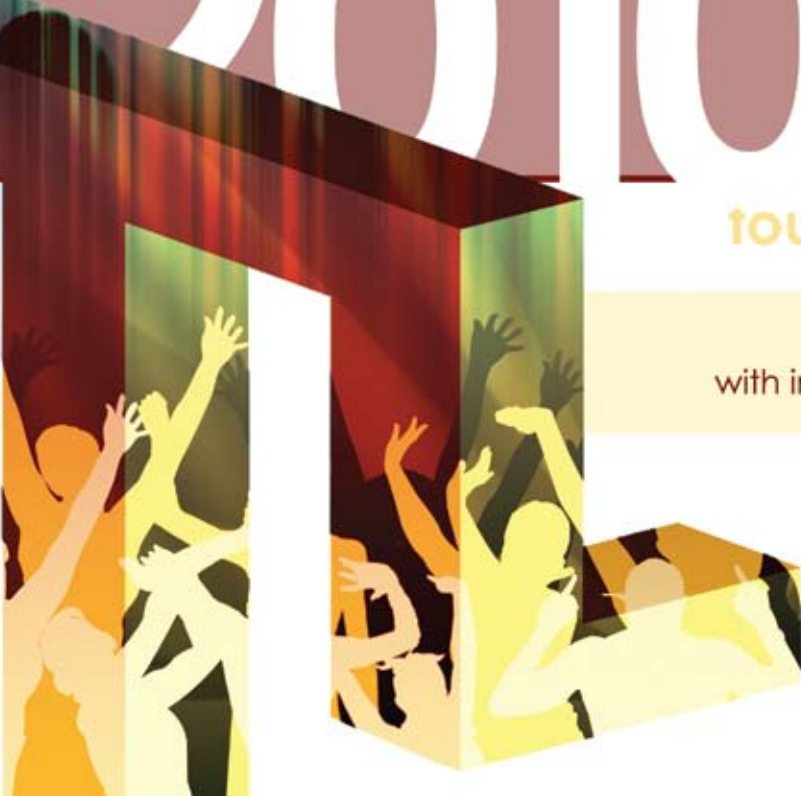
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ADVERTISER'S Index

Access Pass & Design.....	17
Accurate Staging.....	9
Alan Poulin Photography.....	32
Arie Crown Theater.....	14
Beaver Guitars.....	9
ClayPaky.....	1
EAMC - Event & Arena Marketing Conference.....	2
EPS - Engine Power Source.....	33
Illusion Sound and Light.....	9
MacSpecialist.....	15
Mega-Stage.....	17
Midway Car Rental.....	32
Motor Coach Industries (MCI).....	IBC
Music City Coach.....	4
Nitetrain.....	32
On Tour Software.....	34
Potenza Enterprises.....	9
Precise Corporate Staging.....	17
Prevost.....	BC
Professional Wireless Systems.....	7
RIC Corporation.....	9
Roadhouse Coach.....	19
ShoMoves Transportation.....	5
Sound Image.....	19
Soundcheck Nashville.....	35
Stage & Effects.....	31
Star Gift Alliance.....	33
Strictly FX.....	IFC
Taylor Tours.....	5
Tour Tech Support.....	7
Truck 'N Roll.....	36
Tyler Truss Systems.....	36
Upstaging.....	5

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