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volume 2 issue 5 2009

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This is one of the most difficult times we have experienced since I starting doing this work in 1980. We have all seen good times and bad times, but this is a time of extreme uncertainty for many individuals and companies, ours included. However, I always remember a phrase when things get tough; *Times of trouble means chaos and fear for some and opportunity for others.* I believe it is worth noting that we have the capability of working our way through this period.

The big shows are going well, and the companies supporting the big shows are in good shape. The problem is in the middle market, where we thought things would be strong this year. The message to our readers for this summer is to be smart, find alternate clients and have faith, because things will most likely get back to normal next season. For this year, however, it is time to seek opportunities and clients in non-traditional markets and to be creative. The companies that try to survive without some real smart marketing will in trouble.

Rather than giving you a jump start on the contents of the magazine this month, I want to use this space to encourage everyone to think in terms of collaboration, experimentation and thinking "outside the box." This may be a good time to start talking to the person or company who may be a competitor or someone with whom you have a good relationship in your field and seek out ways to collaborate. We may be able to find strength in partnerships and shared projects. It is also a time to think about the effects of putting your heads in the sand or drawing down too hard and too fast. Marketing must not go away with these tough times. If anything, a recession is the time to be more aggressive in marketing your business. Unfortunately, the "Bean Counters" seem to think only of ways to pull back on these types of expenses.

This may be a time to seize opportunities and forge new and stronger relationships in the market. No one ever promised us an easy way to go in this industry, but this industry, for better or worse, is what binds us all together.

Larry Smith

Correction: In our last issue, we mistakenly printed an incorrect email address for Frank The Plumber. Please accept our apologies.

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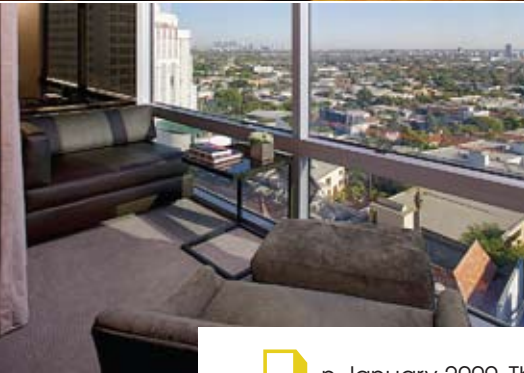
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THE ANdAZ

WEST HOLLYWOOD



In January 2009, The Hyatt West Hollywood reopened with a new name and a new face. The previous "Riot Hyatt" became the very sophisticated Andaz West Hollywood with abundant added value and a home-sweet-home vibe. With a new ambiance in place and a strong understanding of how the entertainment industry works, the Andaz is geared up and ready for old and new clients to come check out the new facilities.

By JESSI WALLACE

Time to Relax

Michelle Freedman, Senior Sales Manager, shares with *mobile Production monthly*, "It's a new experience. When you walk through the front doors, it's like you're going to a friend's house. Instead of traditional philosophies of other hotels, we threw out the book and created a new one with Andaz. From every angle, the style of service and attention to detail is different. For example, there is no nickel and diming here. At Andaz, our rates hold a lot of value. Guests receive several complimentary amenities including wireless internet, local calls, non-alcoholic in-room mini bars complete with snacks and refreshments (spirits and beers are extra), and complimentary beverages and snacks are available throughout the day in the lounge." Freedman shared that the rates of the hotel are equivalent to its upscale competitors, but the added value is what conquers. There are fewer incidentals with the all-inclusive approach. She explains,

"We have the ability to be flexible. We truly understand what it takes to make it happen and make it work. We're not the Hyatt West Hollywood of the past... instead, we're a new hotel that's keeping in line with the times. So come in and relax...grab a private daybed poolside, sip a signature cocktail and just enjoy the view."

Michelle Freedman: From Metallica Roadie to Hotel Rock Star

Freedman takes care of the entertainment market for the hotel and has 10 years experience in the field. Freedman started her career as a graduate from the University of San Diego in 1998. From there, she worked on the *Metallica Reload* tour as a Production Coordinator Assistant and First Hand User. There's no doubt that Freedman understands



the hotel needs of a crew, as she has first-hand experience on the road and living out of a tour bus and suitcase. After the tour ended, she moved on to working with Hilton corporate in the communications department. It was while working for Kerry Hotels, a sales and marketing representation firm for boutique hotels around the world, that she learned how to start and manage an Entertainment Division in a hotel. She took her own experience on the road and applied it towards the division. She worked with 60 hotels worldwide and trained them on how to handle and care for tours coming through. After six and a half years with Kerry Hotels, she became Sales Manager of The Island at Newport Beach, then later of Le Montrose Suites in West Hollywood. Finally, she landed at the Hyatt West Hollywood and continued on with the redesign of the hotel as it became the new Andaz West Hollywood.



giving Control Back to the Guests

The Andaz has done something very unique, starting with the hotel check-in process. There is no longer a front desk. Some may wonder how this is feasible, but the Andaz has figured out a way to make the check-in process smoother than ever before. Freedman explains, "The front desk is a thing of the past; it went away with the Hyatt West Hollywood. Now, we have Hosts that greet you on the front drive as you're stepping out of your car. From that moment, your check-in experience has begun. The Hosts escort you into our Lounge (traditionally a lobby) and offer you a complimentary beverage of your choice. From there, the check-in is essentially up to the guest. Because the Hosts have handheld tablets, which serve as a mobile front desk, you can be checked in while sitting in the lounge, as you're in the elevator going to the room, or even sitting in the restaurant having a snack. It's all up to you! Because of this new technology, the possibilities and capabilities are endless."

the Andaz Brand

One may notice that the Andaz hotels are not cookie-cutter. They are designed according to the market environment. They offer all the benefits of a Hyatt, but it's a new brand of sophistication and class. The Andaz West Hollywood has a very timeless décor and strives to offer guests a refreshed feeling when walking off the very busy Hollywood strip. The Andaz hotel brand is operationally green, using eco-friendly cleaning products and recycling. They feature a "market fresh" concept, where all the produce and proteins are delivered to the hotel daily from the local farmer's market. All wines are local as well. This allows hotel guests to feel more connected to the community they are visiting. The Andaz West Hollywood is one hotel that definitely understands the entertainment market and what it takes to please the road warriors. 🍷



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the Room Breakdown

The Andaz provides the heaviest amount of rooms with two beds. Plus, the beds are queen-size instead of doubles. There are 88 queen-with-queen rooms total, which is very convenient for a large crew. There is also a huge amount of connecting rooms, which is convenient for those needing two rooms for creating a production office.

The breakdown is as follows:

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- 120 Sunset View rooms (features a sunroom with ceiling to floor glass)

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BUCKCHERRY ROCKS OUT With Lectrosonics

IS400 Musical Instrument System provides Stevie D. wireless freedom

Buckcherry, the Los Angeles, California-based hard rock band that achieved critical acclaim with the 2006 RIAA platinum, Grammy-nominated album *15*, is back with a vengeance and touring once again in support of its latest album *Black Butterfly*. Consisting of Josh Todd (vocals), Xavier Muriel (drums), Jimmy Ashhurst (bass), Keith Nelson (guitar), and Stevie D. (guitar), Buckcherry is in the midst of an extensive tour that has them traveling both domestically as well in Europe. No matter where the tour takes them, guitarist Stevie D. and his guitar technician Dean Mitchell rely on a wireless setup to deliver Stevie's signature guitar sound while providing the mobility to roam freely about the stage.

Dean Mitchell, who over the years has served as guitar tech for a wide range of artists, including Cheap Trick, FireHouse, Night Ranger, The Doobie Brothers and Ted Nugent to name just a few, is currently tasked with ensuring that Buckcherry guitarist Stevie D's sound never drops a note. This involves everything from maintaining all of his guitars to wiring his guitar rack and making certain that his Lectrosonics wireless systems are spot on the money. So for mission critical performances, Stevie D. goes onstage with not one, but two Lectrosonics IS400 Wireless Belpack Instrument Systems featuring Lectrosonics' Digital Hybrid Wireless® technology.

Stevie D's wireless setup consists of the two Lectrosonics IS400 receivers mounted into a single 19-inch rackspace, two Lectrosonics LMa belpack transmitters, and multiple Lectrosonics MI39ARA cables specially equipped with Neutrik right angle NP2RX-AU-Silent plugs. "Stevie switches guitars numerous times throughout the course of a performance," notes Mitchell, "so by having him setup with two systems, I can alternate between them seamlessly. It makes for an absolutely trouble-free approach to wireless guitar."

Mitchell reports that Stevie D. is no



newcomer to Lectrosonics wireless gear. "Stevie's been using Lectrosonics for over two years and the system really complements his style of playing. He's got it—he's a pure rock and blues player and he'll be around for a long time," notes Mitchell. "When I joined the tour, I was really impressed with Lectrosonics' sound quality, the rock solid coverage and reliability, as well as the rugged build quality of the products and because of this; I wanted to get a second system so I could run them both at the same time. In the world of wireless equipment, a tech like myself lives and dies by the performance of the wireless setup."

Buckcherry guitarist Stevie D. (left) and guitar technician Dean Mitchell (right).

When asked about those characteristics of the system that he finds most useful in his particular line of work, Mitchell was quick to point to the IS400's sound quality and its ability to easily and quickly identify open frequencies. "The IS400's sound quality is really musical," says Mitchell. "The frequency response is great and the gear doesn't color Stevie's sound the way other wireless systems with companders do. I've also been very impressed with the ease of identifying

and locking down open frequencies. The system gives you a warning when you're in range of other interfering radio frequencies, so at the touch of a single button, the system scans for available frequencies and when it finds it, another press locks it in and you're done."

For any touring act, reliability is yet another key consideration when selecting products, and in that regard, Mitchell finds Lectrosonics on top of its game. "To be honest," says Mitchell, "I really haven't had any issues with our equipment, so I rarely have reason to call the company. I called recently when we were in nearby Santa Fe because I wanted to tell them how much we like the IS400 and invite them to come to the show. Karl Winkler got back to me right away and visited with us."

As the band prepares to depart for Europe, where it will spend the month of June performing in Nurnberg, Germany, Copenhagen, Denmark, Rotterdam, Netherlands, London, England, and Clisson, France as well as other cities, both Stevie D. and Dean Mitchell know they can depend on their Lectrosonics gear to get the job done. Stevie D. said it best, "I love this wireless setup and my tech. Just try to pry them from my hands! They both make my life on the road great."



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BRITNEY SPEARS

the Pop Spectacle known as CIRCUS!

BY MICHAEL A BECK
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEREMY COWART



ONE OF THE MORE COMMON REFERENCES TO SOMETHING THAT IS THOUGHT OF AS BEING CHAOTIC OR DISORGANIZED IS TO CALL IT A CIRCUS. TO THE UNINITIATED, RATIONAL THINKING MIND ONE WOULD LOOK AT THE PROSPECT OF SENDING A SHOW OUT ON THE ROAD AND IN 29 TRUCKS AS SOMETHING THAT SHOULDN'T BE ATTEMPTED BY ANYONE OTHER THAN THE MILITARY, LEST IT BE CLASSIFIED AS A "CIRCUS."

But on this year's *Britney Spears Circus* tour you have to remember who you're talking about and that, like professional sports, the military and a very few other select areas of professional endeavor, there are only a few thousand people on earth capable of moving a project like this down the road with any degree of efficiency.

It's not that likely a tour of this size and magnitude is going to be anything but highly organized. As was said before, the show traveled in 29 trucks. One of those trucks is all about pre-rig. The show hung roughly 130,000 pounds on 125 points. Just reading those numbers, one would think that it's a little excessive to be going in a day early. Advance rigging team leader Bobby Allen explained, "This show is really involved. With something this expansive, you have to go in early just in case you run into any snags. We're not just hanging stuff. We're looking at power and all kinds of other logistical concerns as well."

That being the case, the show went in the day before show day whenever possible in order to be able to do an easy five-hour day at straight time. However, when necessary the pre-rig would happen at 2 a.m. the day of show day.

The notion of having a smooth show-day load-in in this particular case was highly critical, when you consider the enormous traffic flow of gear and personnel involved. Twenty-eight trucks were tipped at 8 a.m. and the room was show-ready by 3 or 4 p.m.

Head Carpenter Neil Porter said, "This is a big show, and there is a lot to do in getting it in. We have a big crew of really good people on this one and we get it done. The biggest challenge out here is finding places to put dead cases. We've got cases and set carts in every square foot of available space and finding that space is something that we have to wrestle with every gig." It must be said that the issue of storage was the only challenge that the confident Porter was able to identify.

This tour had a traveling contingent of 200 people, close to 50 of whom are performers of one stripe or another. On-site coordination of talent is a massive job in and of itself. Tour manager DJ Walton explained, "There are a lot of different entities that come together to make the whole thing happen. We have weekly meetings with dance captains, aerialist captains, circus chiefs and music directors to map out what our movements and scheduling is going to be like. All of the performers get a day sheet for the next day. Before the day is over, the information in the day sheet is emailed to them in a PDF format, and it's texted to them. As one final measure, my assistant Lydia [Bourgeau]

and I go out to each of their buses and actually go over the data just to make sure that everyone knows what is going to be happening. Before you see anything on the stage at night, the Big Apple Circus has already performed in the Virgin Mobile VIP Experience."

The VIP Experience that Walton is talking about encompassed parties, autographs and a walking tour of the production. This all had to be managed on the road. But there

lighting rig, which flew above the center ring, that part of the stage had to be built off to one side. Because of limited space in any arena, it created a bit of a traffic situation because both B stages had to be built out there as well.

The center ring was a fairly complicated system. The center of the stage was an automated riser that worked on two scissor lifts that were simultaneously controlled by one controller. The bottom of the riser

WE'VE GOT QUITE THE POP EXTRAVAGANZA OUT HERE. IT'S A BIT OF A HYBRID OF HIGH ART AND POP SPECTACLE... -Mo Morrison



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEREMY COWART

is another aspect of the VIP bit that figured into the load-in. The people partaking in this experience were allowed to sit ringside (as it were) in special seating that was brought in by the tour. Each one of these seats fit two people and was reminiscent of the high back booth seating one might have found in the lounges of the old Flamingo Casino. Indeed, they are referred to on the tour as the *Love Seats*. These seats and the risers for this system took up two trucks, and the build required a large amount of effort and attention during the day.

When the show was built, the stage and VIP seating system took up the entire floor of the arena. This made for a fairly interesting day. Like a circus, this show had a center ring, which was the center of attention. There were two smaller stages on either side as running lengthwise on the floor. All three of the stages were connected by catwalks. Due to the density of the main part of the

was faced out with Stealth video. This had a great look, but it came at a price. When the stage dropped to its home position, the hydraulic lines for the scissor lifts created interference for the video elements. Stage Manager/Show Caller, Bob "Hydro" Mullin explained, "During rehearsals we found that Stealth is really fragile. We also found that it's really expensive."

The result - the Stealth had to be removed from the riser every time it landed and replaced when it flew back out again. Because of the hanging system designed by the engineering wizards at Tait Towers, this move could be made in about two minutes each way. Again, Hydro explained, "Once we got to what we thought was the fastest time we could reasonably achieve, we cued the show around the move."

BRITNEY SPEARS



In addition to the center riser, the stage also had four Flaggevaters. In case you didn't see our feature on Spice Girls last year, the Flaggevator is a one person lift that allows 10 feet of lift out of a 6-foot envelope by using a gimbal design. The platform is attached via a gimbal arm to a carriage that is propelled by a single motor and travels horizontally along a track at its base as the arm lifts the platform into position. As this happens the carriage travels toward the platform to a position under the lift. The result of this movement is the arm becomes part of the vertical lift and gives the platform four more feet of elevation. This approach not only gives the lift incredible

once its construction commenced, anything that had to be done inside its footprint was trapped there until the screen was built. Conversely, anything outside the circle had to wait for it to get out of the way.

The system also housed two Austrian drapes. The outer drape masked the entire center portion of the show including the video structure. The red colored drape wasn't quite opaque, therefore, it didn't completely block out the video wall. It presented a fairly impressive opening segment with both the drape and the screen flown into stage level. There was also a drape that hung over the

DURING REHEARSALS WE FOUND THAT STEALTH IS REALLY FRAGILE. WE ALSO FOUND THAT IT'S REALLY EXPENSIVE. -Bob "Hydro" Mullin



power, it ensures a silky smooth ride.

Due to the highly cramped quarters under the center stage on this show, the Flaggevaters were the perfect choice. While all four of them were controlled from one station, each lift was manned in order to ensure that there were no mechanical or human mishaps. In all, there were nine crew people working under the three stages assisting performers and running the various lifts, including a centrally located elevator in each of the B stages.

Back to the main flown structure - there was a lot going on in this thing. It was a circular configuration that served a wide variety of functions. One of the most prominent features was the Stealth video screen that completely enclosed the stage when it was deployed all the way to the stage. This was one of the most time consuming parts of the load-in, because

area of the riser of the center stage. This drape was black and completely opaque and was used to mask the initial reveal when Britney first entered the show.

The reveal was achieved by way of a very impressive fly gag. Ms. Spears flew directly down from the rig inside a fly device made up of two cross-connected glitter festooned hoops. While it may not sound like much in this description, the combination of the shimmering fly gag and Spears' blond hair made for a dazzling intro when hit with every follow spot in the house.

Five riggers worked above the stage during the show to assist with the opening as well as four aerialists that made rather dramatic entrances and exits by means of the fly system.

The lighting of the show was nothing short





VENDORS/ SUPPLIERS

Lighting, Audio, Video - **Solotech**
Video Servers/Live FX - **VVY Corporation**
Pyro - **Pyrotek Special Effect, Inc.**
Power Services - **CAT Entertainment Power**
Trucking - **Stage Call**
Bussing - **Roberts Bros Coach Leasing, Co.**
Freight - **Advanced Logistical Support**
Merchandise - **Brothers Ent. Merchandising**
Radios - **AAA Communications**
Catering - **All Access Hospitality**
Rigging - **Branam Enterprises**
Tour Phones & Info Tech - **WANetics**
Itineraries - **Access Pass & Design**
Travel Agencies - **Tzell Travel / Upward Bound
Travel / Road Rebel Travel**
Air Charter - **Apollo Jets/Upward Bound**

of sensational. The design was penned by Nick Whitehouse and Bryan Leitch of British based Visual Light, Ltd. Whitehouse also operated the console. Every visual aspect of the show was sternly controlled. Indeed the production even brought in its own house lights. Once the room was show-ready, the venue lighting was turned off and never came back on until the evening was finished.

The soft spoken Whitehouse explained, "We didn't want to have to depend on the idiosyncrasies of each individual venue for the initial look that the audience saw upon entering the room for the first time. There is also the matter of being able to fade the house out for the beginning of the show." The effect was a nice warm glow when the house was up and a great looking dramatic visual segue into the first look of the show.

The design team didn't come into this project new to the task of lighting a big show in the round. Its "in the round" experience was Justin Timberlake's last tour. "We had to deal with a very steep learning curve indeed on that one," said Leitch. "I'd never done it before, and there was much that I hadn't considered. However, it was a great learning experience, and we were able to bring the full weight of those lessons to this project."

Where the Timberlake project might have fallen short, this design hit spot on. The show was lit primarily with PRG Bad Boys for hard edged lighting, and it was washed with Vari*Lite 3500 Washes. There was a truss that ran the distance of the arena on either side of the stage that held several Bad Boys. In addition to these trusses, there were four pods positioned evenly along the length of the arena on either side of the stage as well. Each one of these pods contained both Bad Boys and VL-3500s as well as a follow spot, and they were draped in black to hide the spot operator. The top and bottom of the pods were ringed with the instruments used for house lighting.

The design was as efficient as it was elegant. One of the lessons the designers learned on the Timberlake tour was to be ever mindful of sight lines regarding house spots. That education in hand, they opted to bring out their own house spots and position them lower in the venue rather than the highest possible level where arenas normally place their spots. This allowed Leitch and Whitehouse to shoot under the main rig above the stage and it also afforded a much more dramatic beam angle.

While pyro wasn't the biggest part of this show, there was a fantastic looking rain shower effect arrayed in a full circle above the center stage. This is highlighted in one of the incredible photographs that were

provided by tour photographer Jeremy Cowart.

As one could imagine with a show called The Circus this show had gags for days. The stage played with nothing on it in the way of permanent set. That meant that set pieces needed for the show had to be rolled into position from off stage via a ramp at the outside edge of one of the B stages. The list of set pieces included: elephant stools, bicycles, a tiger cage in which Spears did a short bit and even a piece needed for a fairly impressive magic act that Spears took part in.

With all of the set, fly gags, elevator moves, pyro shots and endless wardrobe changes that took place during this show, it had to be cued out to the second. "There are 92 show cues, and each one of them has about four or five moves in it. There's quite a bit of activity in the show." Hydro told us, "This is a busy show."

While it is tempting to discuss this show like a concert tour in terms of how much it weighs or how many trucks it travels with, how big the various technological aspects of the show are, one has to remember that there is a lot more to it than one might see in a standard big rock act. Production Executive, Mo Morrison explained, "We've got quite the pop extravaganza out here. It's a bit of a hybrid of high art and pop spectacle with all of the aerialist, the magic and the circus performers. It's much more of a big theatrical production than a straight up rock show."

As such, the show had to have elements built into it that might not exist in a more conventional concert production. Blocking and choreography were critical to the success of the show. There was no question that Spears was the highlight. However, because of the sheer size of the stage and the amount of space it took up on the arena floor, there was no way that she could have the physical command of the stage as she most assuredly would in an end-on configuration. Morrison addressed that issue, "The show director [Jamie King] and choreographers were very sensitive to that. Audience members are never really aware that Spears might have her back to them no matter where she or they are. There is so much going on at



all times that there's no time to get bored before she comes back around to them."

This was one of the smoothest running productions this writer has ever seen. During the day there were printed schedules available (as is the case with any show), but the odd thing about these schedules was the amount of allotted time between the Pussycat Dolls (first opening act), the Big Apple Circus performers and Spears.

It called for a 12 minute changeover from Pussycat Dolls to Big Apple and a five minute lapse between the Big Apple Circus to the opening video roll of the main event. This seemed a bit optimistic to someone who knows how these things typically work, but this was just one more example of



TOUR MGMT

Tour Director - Steve Dixon
Production Executive - Mo Morrison
Tour Manager - DJ Walton
Production Manager - Jason Danter
Road Manager - Craig Bolling
Personal Assistants to Ms. Spears: Felicia Cuiotta, Brett Miller
Production Coordinator - Florence Tse
Tour Management Assistant - Lydia Bourgeau
Production Assistants: Matthew McHale, Eric Andrulaitis
Executive Assistant to Steve Dixon - Jennifer Callahan

how this was not a typical production. They nailed to the tick.

Tour Manager DJ Walton spoke about the timing, “That speaks to the professionalism that we have backstage as well as what the production team does to make this thing roll smoothly. I could say a million great things about this crew out here, but one compliment that is at the top of the list is this crew is absolutely *on it* at all times. Once the performers take the stage, this “A” team of professionals has everything so well covered that the technical aspects of the show are just not anything we have to concern ourselves about.”

However, this is not something that is taken for granted. Every night before the show, Morrison pulls the members of his crew

together who are involved in the production and goes over notes from the last show, and while the mood is up and lively during this session, nothing is allowed to fall between the cracks.

Because of the incredible size of this production and its crew, we were not able to talk to all of the people we would have liked to. However, from Morrison and Walton to the department heads, there was one common statement among them. The secret to making something this big happen is proper staffing. And none of them could say enough about the team that had been assembled for this show.

Among the crew members there was another sentiment - they were not shy about telling of the hard work and grueling

schedule that included nine overnights during the American leg including the third and fourth shows. On the other hand, they were deeply proud of the fact that they were out there pulling it off.

When *mPm* asked Walton what the biggest challenge was with this show, he gave the same answer Morrison did, “The daily task of making something this big happen every day.”

When asked what they were most proud of, again they both agreed...

“We do it every day.” 🤖

NORTH AMERICAN TOUR - SPRING 2009

britney spears circus tour crew

SHOW CONCEIVED & PRODUCED BY

Britney Spears - Artist/Ringleader
Manager Larry Rudolph
Tour Producer Steve Dixon
Show Director - Jamie King

BAND

MD / Keyboards - Simon Ellis
Digital Audio/Keys - Marc Delcore
Bass - Steven "Styles" Rodriguez
Guitar - Juan "Natural" Najera
Drums - Chris Bailey
Backing Vocalist - Sofia Toufa
Backing Vocalist - Shelly Sharman

Dancers: Clayton "Chase" Benz (Captain), Tiana C. Brown (Captain), Marc "Marvelous" Inniss, Luke Broadlick, Justin M. De Vera, Laura M. Edwards, Wilfredo "Willie" Gomez, Jose O. Hernandez, Jia W. Huang, George Jones, Jr., Jonathan Rabon, Valerie "Raistalla" Moise, Tamecha "Tye" Myers (Swing), John-Paul "JP" San Pedro (Swing), Ava Bernstine (Swing), Devin Jamieson (Swing), Jamie Overla (Rehearsal Stand In)

BIG APPLE CIRCUS

AERIALISTS

Shannon Beach (Captain), Nathan "Nate" Crawford, Victor Gathing, Michael Lanphear, Salvatore Vassallo (Swing)

PERFORMERS

Magician - Ed Alonzo
Karate Klowns: Donald Mills, Seth Austin, Brendon Huor
Acrobat - Terry Kvasnik
Sandou Trio: Sergei Sandou, Cassie Sandou, Konstantin Sandou
Big Apple Circus / Toxic VIP: Brad Aldous, Michael Garner, Harry Moeller, Michal Murga, Stephanie Sine, Matt Wilson, Alexandra Fidosseyeva, Viktoria Shvartsman

GLAM

Hair Stylist - George Papanikolas
Performer Hair and Makeup - Nereida Soto, Ashley Taylor Ryan
Hair and Makeup Assistant - Jennifer Barnet

SECURITY

Head of Security - Edan Yemini
Personal Security: James "Sugar" Kane, Lonny Biegel
Advance Security - Tomer Benito
Venue Security: Michael Faello (Director), Michael "Tiny" Henry, Donald Volkerding

CREATIVE TEAM

Assistant Show Director - Tiffany Perez
Production Executive - Mo Morrison
ostume Designer/Style Director - William Baker

Stylist - Frank Strachan
Music Director - Simon Ellis
Lighting Designers: Nick Whitehouse, Bryan Leitch
Video/FX Programming: Emeric Epstein, Martin Granger-Piche
Video Content Designer - Dirk Decloedt
Video Content Production - Dragone/Dragons Films
Video Elements - Veneno
Pyro Designer - Lorenzo Cornacchia
Staging Coordinator - Michael Morobitto
Supervising Choreographer - Carla Kama
Aerial Choreographer - Dreya Weber
Contributing Choreographers: Tiana Brown, Oththan Burnside, Jaquel Knight, Matt Mullins, Phlex, Jamal Sims, Rujuta Vaidya, Salvatore Vassallo
SET/PRODUCTION DESIGN - Steve Dixon, William Baker, Nick Whitehouse
Bryan Leitch, Illustrations by VYV Corporation
SET FABRICATION Tait Towers
Props/VIP Lounge ShowFX
TOUR PROMOTER AEG Live

CREW

Production Stage Manager - Bobby Allen
Stage Managers: Robert "Hydro" Mullin (Show Caller), Christopher "Todd" Carter, Bob Hood
Wardrobe Manager/ Additional Wardrobe Prop Design - Dana Carr
Wardrobe - Latisha Yates, Mary Jane Hetrick, Hadassah Boyd, Pamala Lewis, Melissa Agee
Stylist Coordinator - John Sweeney
Media Liaison/VIP Experience - Karoline Sellards
Backstage Coordinator - Molly Brickson
Head Carpenter - Neil Porter
Carpenters: Richie Bray, Gary Doerr, Brad Judd, William "Sox" Shewmake, James "Rod" VanEgmond, Kenneth "Scotty" Waller, Dwayne "Monkey" Diaz, Mark Knoedler,
Prop Master - Christine Mullin
Second Prop Master - Jeffrey Moran
Third Prop Master - Wayne Piña
Electrician - Lauren Ackert
Backline Techs: John Chidley, Timothy Ward
FOH Audio Engineer - Blake Suib
Moitor Engineer - Lawrence "Filet" Mignogna
Audio Crew Chief - Marc Depratto
Audio Systems Engineer - Sylvain Lemay
Audio - Wireless & Communications - Charles Deziel
Audio Techs: Guillaume Cossette, Mylene Jomphe, Jesse Leveille, Marc Olivier Magnan,
Lighting Director - Nick Whitehouse
Lighting Crew Chief - Mathieu Lavallee
Lighting Techs: Denis Ayotte, Yanick Blais, Alex Bolduc, Vincent Cadieux, Alexandre Charland, Eric Gauthier, Alex Lefrancois, Marc Aurele Menard, Brian Monahan, Benoit Paille, Remy Parent, Michel Pomerleau, Pierre St.Mars,
Advance Lighting Techs: Jean Francois Mallette, Simon St-Louis

Video Director - Louis Lefebvre
Video Crew Chief - Francis Corbiel
Video Engineer - Sebastien Lamoureux
Video Stealth Engineer - Pascal Rhainds
Video Server Operator - Alex Barrette
Video Techs: Philippe Chiasson, Sebastien Cousineau, Redo Jackson, Philippe Valade
Video Content Team: Stéphane Lhoest (Head), Alexia Benevento, Aimad Doughan, Colas Fiszman, Jean-Luc Gason, Anthony Lépine, Gilles Leempoels, Michael Maslowski, Patrick Neys, Guillaume Noel, Nicolas Pfeiffer, Julie Seni
Pyro Crew Chief - Robert Liscio
Pyro Techs: Hans Lundberg, Raymond Seymour
Head Rigger - Gerald McDougald
Riggers: William Stonecypher, Sven Ringwald, Michaelle Brummett, Eddie Rodriguez
Fly Techs: Jeff Adkisson, Brandon Beckman, Steve Davidson, Vicente "Greenbay" Donastorg, Randy Haynie, Bjorn Melchert
Automation - Lance Dennis
Cyberhoist Tech - Chris Sabelleck
Massage Therapist - Ann Myers
Catering Managing Partner - Robert Schneeberger
Catering, Executive Chef - Jeff Schmel
Catering, Sous Chef - Kevin Hoffman
Catering: Carmen Arellano, Jennifer Hunter, David Hornby, Dedra Leinbach, Jeremy Hendrix, Denise Wickham
Merchandise Manager - Morgen Bensten
Brothers Entertainment Merchandising: Joseph Bongiovi, Steve Miles, Martin Häusler (photographer)
A Party Bus Drivers: Jeff McCordle, Art Ross
B Party Bus Drivers: Larry Cyrus, Rich Moore, David van Meter, Larry Garten, Kenny Humphries
C Party Bus Driver: Tracy Morgan, Mike Wilson, Bryan Stevenson, Charlie McPherson, Todd Harrison, Matt Selah, Dana Heideman, Ray Rascon, Eddie Winfree
Lead Truck Driver - Mike Stamps
Co-Lead Truck Driver - Chris Tyler
Truck Drivers: Danny Leach Gaylord Wethered, Linda Locklear, Jimmy Locklear, Tom Decker, Tom Deinema, Bill Sellers, Chuck Patty, Mike Clever, Robert Goodwin, Bob Herder, Rick Laney, Ronnie Parker, Bruce Kenyon, Ira Pelletier, Paul Cloutier, Elliot Cuvin, Scott Rawson, Chuck Perrin
Artist Management ReignDeer Entertainment
Business Management Tri Star Sports and Entertainment Group
Legal Services Goldring, Hertz & Lichtenstein / Hansen, Jacobson, Teller, Hoberman, Newman, Warren & Richman
Booking Agency William Morris Agency
Record Label Jive Records, Publicist, BWR

crew
crew

Writer's note:

The *mpm* staff takes great pride in our ability to accurately present an informative account of the productions we cover. However, there is one aspect of these events that trumps all others and that is the crew. From the highest ranking person on the show to the lowest, we are aware that the individuals of any tour are critical to the success of the show. It is for that reason that *mpm* places a high premium on recognizing these hard working people. While we can't get to everyone for a quote in a story, we can at least take photos of them and include those images in the spread of the story.

Only twice in the history of *Tour Guide* and *mpm* have we been unable to present crew photos in a feature. So, it is with heavy hearts that *mpm* offers our profound apologies that despite our best efforts, we were unable to run crew photos with our feature story on the very impressive *Britney Spears Circus* tour.

Added to the overall frustration of this is the personal disappointment that Richie Bray, my old steel pounding mate from long ago in a galaxy far, far away, was on both shows that have now run without crew shots. *mpm* will see you down the road and make this right.

Video Servers/Live FX: VYV Corporation

VYV is a Montreal-based stage-dressing company. The company uses software (Photon) and unique equipment that it has developed to deliver unique scenic environments to both fixed and touring shows. Its list of credits include not only the *Britney Spears Circus* tour, but also OSM/Canadians, the *Cirque du Soleil Delirium* tour, an *Evening with Il Divo*, *Light of the Angels*, *Fashion Rocks 2008*, Shakira's *Rock in Rio 2008* tour and many, many more.

The emphasis of this company is delivery of video projection environments that will augment any tour desiring to create a stimulating and unique visual experience to augment the performance or event. Whether it is architectural or live, the software developed by VYV is an ever-evolving technology that lends itself to the imagination of any scenic designed with a flair for the unusual.

Led by Emeric Epstein, this team of professionals are making a significant impact in our industry and seem destined for continued growth and interesting developments. One trip to their website, vyv.ca, is worth a thousand words and well worth investigating.

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Solotech

Turns the Key on Britney Spears

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

photo courtesy of Jeremy Cowart



In the high-end concert touring world there are very few production companies that are set up to offer one-stop turnkey production services to a major headlining tour. Among those that can go “soup to nuts,” fewer still actually get the call. However, such is not the case with Canada based Solotech. The first time Solotech provided production on a major tour was the 30 month long *Cirque du Soleil Delirium* tour that ended in 2007.

Lights, sound and video came out of the Solotech shop for the recently completed *Celine Dion* tour, and now the production goliath is providing lights, sound, video and rigging for Britney Spears’ *Circus* tour that just left for Europe. This seems to be a trend for the Montreal based company.

“There were a few challenges on this one,” said Solotech’s Vice President of International development Richard Lachance, “This is a very important tour for Britney for many reasons, and they needed a company that was going to be flexible in many ways from design changes to how the financing was going to run. They also wanted to have a unified production team that was going to work together as one unit.”

In the beginning, the tour called for Solotech to provide lighting, sound, LED video and camera pack. However, that got pulled back to everything but the camera packs. Then as the tour moves over to Europe the video will grow to include a full camera package and greater I-MAG capability for the outdoor shows. As if supplying lights, sound and video weren’t enough during the American leg; the original rigging vendor pulled away from the tour. Not missing a beat, Solotech stepped up and grabbed the ball on that as well, to the tune of some 250 hoists and all the associated rigging gear needed to fly that complicated system.

This is comprehensive gear and crew management. Everything is handled in-house all the way down to direct deposited

per diem. Having the capability to handle something this large with such complete coverage offers powerful insulation from a lot of headaches that might otherwise saddle a production.

Such single point control contributes a lot to the tour just getting the gear up and down efficiently. Lachance explained, “We handle insurance, per diem, logistics and communication with production from one point. That’s all stuff they don’t have to worry about. Because of the sheer volume of gear that we bring out onto the tour, we are able to provide our services at a lower price than if it were put together piece meal.”

All of the [lighting, sound, video and rigging] departments are handled from within Solotech. That isn’t just a reference to corporate construct or financial efficiency. It’s about the internal ethos of interdepartmental logistical cooperation such that is rarely, if ever, shared so completely by a crew made up of several companies that come together to make up a tour.

In the event there is an issue to be dealt with concerning any of the departments represented by Solotech, it can be handled through one source point of responsibility. On a tour this big, that person might not even be on the tour as was the case with Britney Spears. In this matter the liaison for the company was Las Vegas based VP of Development Dean Roney who spent most of his waking minutes dealing with the tour. He explained laughing, “I quit touring to get off the road, but I spent a lot of time out on the road on this one.”

“Of course we have other things on our plate besides the Britney account, but this definitely became my full time job,” said Roney. “We started out the tour with close to 30 miles of cable. If someone on the lighting crew needs a specific piece of cable, it’s likely that sound or video is going to have it because we try to make all of our cabling cross compatible. The good news is that there’s no concern about where that cable is going to end up or when because it’s all coming back to the same location when the tour is over. My lighting crew chief [Mathieu Lavallee] was the guy I put in charge out there if something was going on. He may or may not have made the final call, but he was involved.”

The notion of one-stop production shopping is picking up steam according to Lachance, “It seems to be catching on for us. There are a lot of people coming to us asking about the possibility of supplying full production service for their tours, and we are happy to do it.” Lachance told *mPm* this from his car on the way to the airport to catch a flight to London for discussions on upcoming full-service projects, though he is wisely making us wait to hear what’s going on.

There is the argument that dedicated companies whose only focus is one aspect of production are going to pay stronger attention to their job. There must be room for consideration on the matter. On the other hand, it’s hard to give credence to that point of view in light of the almost endless internal tech and customer support that is offered to each department and the client when it all comes from the same shop.

Yes, there’s going to be those engineers, directors, designers and production managers out there who stick closely to the companies they have grown to know and trust. “We can’t fight that, and we wouldn’t want to try,” said Roney. “That really comes down to gear, and it has nothing to do with being a one-stop shop. If someone came to us and said they were interested in using our company but they were looking for Adamson speakers, we would look at the tour and weigh the benefits of buying the inventory to service the tour.” The enormous buying power Solotech possesses would make it possible to provide for just about anything that would come its way.

As in so many other aspects of the production business, there are widely differing schools of thought on this matter. Liking the idea of the turn-key production or not is a theoretical conversation to have in the back lounge of the bus, at catering or in a hotel bar. However, in the real world of *bottom lines*, load in times and overall efficiency, a lot of people are paying close attention to what is happening on this third comprehensive outing for Solotech and the phone is starting to ring for more. As they say, you can’t argue with success.

To be continued... 

Britney Spears:

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KEEPS THEM COMING BACK FOR MORE

By MICHAEL A. BECK

When thinking of private air charters, it seems almost natural to let that nasty judgmental part of our psyche step in and cast it as the height (as it were) of opulence. You've heard it, "Oh look at that big shot flaunting his money zipping round on his jet." But what if you are a high performance player in the stratospheric world of business who is based in New York and have meetings in Atlanta, Tampa and Dallas all in the space of one day and have got to end up back in your office *in the city* at day's end?

Suppose you are a person who is so wildly recognizable that it is impossible to fly commercially without getting hounded constantly by a well meaning but painfully inconsiderate public. Suppose you are a performer with a heavy appearance schedule, and you can't get to the show on time due to the gods of commercial scheduling.

All of a sudden the affluent luxury of boarding a private jet places a distant second to the absolute need to be able to precisely customize your travel schedule. So, now that you have reconciled with the idea that private charter is the most reliable way to service your travel requirements, how do you find the right plane? Enter Apollo Jets, Inc.

For a beginner in the air charter game, the process of negotiating this maze can be daunting at best. There are literally hundreds of companies out there from which to choose. Apollo is an air charter broker. It doesn't own planes. Managing Director Al Palagonia explains, "We have great relationships with a few dozen operators out there. So we find out what the perfect aircraft is for our client's mission, and we put it out to the operators that we do business with to find that equipment."

Palagonia went on to discuss one example of how this process works, "Let's say I have an operator in California flying a client to New York who is going to be there for a month. That plane is going to have to get back to California. If it goes back with no passengers it's what's known as an empty leg, or a natural one way. But rather than flying an empty plane back, the operator will be willing to sell that trip at a discounted price. We have been very successful at finding exact point-to-point flights that don't have any repositioning time, which allows us to be able to buy the flight for 5, 10 or 15 thousand dollars that would otherwise cost up to three times as much."

This empty leg service is well illustrated on the splash page of Apollo's website (apollojets.com). At the bottom of the page there is a text crawl that lists "Current Empty Leg Availability."

But getting clients into a plane isn't the end of the mission. There is no questioning that private flying is a full contact sport, financially speaking. When people are spending this kind of money, they fully expect service that extends beyond what those of us who aren't able to utilize such service may be able to imagine.

Among these extra considerations is limo and town car services, five star hotel and resort reservations, restaurant reservations, onboard security detail and gourmet catering. There are specialized services including but not limited to nannies, legal, tech support, beauty, accounting, secretarial, massage therapy, event planning and much, much more. Indeed, the sky is the limit.

Once the amenities have been procured, there are other far more critical concerns to deal with. It's easy to imagine someone saying, "Hey a few of us are flying to a business meeting in the Bahamas and one seat opened up, grab your computer, your clubs and meet us at the airport." Unfortunately, that's not how it works. No matter who is flying on the plane or how important they are, all passengers have to be cleared through the FAA to ensure that they aren't on a no-fly list. In the case of Apollo Jets, this clearance is handled through the actual operator that owns the aircraft. That being said, the process is still overseen by Apollo Jets.

This level of supervision allows the folks at Apollo Jets the ability to go out and see potential problems that may arise and head them off or at least give the client a "heads up." Dean Giasi is the sales director for the company. Giasi discussed the ways this type of service is offered, "We are, first and foremost, a service provider. A big part of the service that we supply is the ability to forecast what kind of problems might arise. There is a whole list of things that could come up, especially with international flights. If you're traveling with an animal it's important to know that there are some countries that don't allow certain animals in. Others require all kinds of documentation. Hawaii is very strict about animals. We are acutely aware of all of that stuff, and we see it coming and can deal with it long before the client

continued on 38

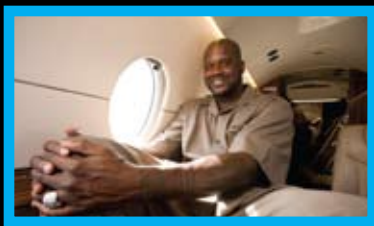


Since being introduced to AI by a teammate I haven't used anyone else to handle my travel needs. AI's an All-Star in my book, he puts me in the safest planes at the best prices everytime! With AI, I get to travel without any worries.

Carlos Boozer, Utah Jazz
2008 Olympic Gold Medal Winner
7 Year NBA Player

I fly privately often. Apollo Jets always provides me with great pricing and the level of service I get from the staff is unparalleled. They are the most reliable in the industry. I'd recommend Apollo Jets to anyone who flies privately.

Eric Fessler
Entrepreneur



Apollo Jets has contributed to my success both on and off the court. I can travel on my own time in complete comfort and safety, knowing that I will arrive relaxed, focused and ready to work or play.

Shaquille O'Neal, Phoenix Suns
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A Life Long Passion

Janet Rogers & How WANetics Came To Be

By Mike Wharton

Back in 1995, I was on a tour showcasing the new Martin PAL (mirror based automated light similar to the Cyberlight). Other than a few hardware glitches with them during rehearsal, things went fairly well. Bob Looney, the lighting designer, was happy with the show our programmer Brian Beck had in the HOG 2. We loaded out and headed to our first show. During focus the next day, "software" issues arose and after a few calls it was determined that we needed to download some information to update the HOG.

"No problem," said our Production Manager Ed Hobson as he unplugged the phone line and jacked it into his laptop, "but this is gonna take a while... why don't you guys go to lunch."

The internet was in it's infancy at the time (as was the HOG 2), and I was amazed that we could fix a problem on the road through a telephone line, no matter how long that download took.

Janet Rogers, CEO of WANetics, has been instrumental in the development and deployment of methods to "fix a problem over a phone line" since 1994.

As one of the founders of InfoRamp, its Chief Technology Officer and a significant stockholder, she worked with a group of internet marketing professionals in the Chicago area. Around 2000, InfoRamp merged with ANET, where Rogers became the Chief Operating Officer. By 2003 the decision was made to sell ANET. Once that deal closed and all the shareholders were paid off, there was a bit of money left over. She and a couple core members from ANET realized they still had to make a living.

"So," Rogers said, "We decided to put the band back together. We took our past experience and applied it to what we saw as the hottest segment of the market, voice over IP (Internet Provider) which was in transition over traditional phone service, and that's how the current incarnation of WANetics came about."

The WAN in WANetics stands for Wide Area Network. It is a network that connects together multiple networks of two or more geographically distinct sites. It is very similar to the internet; an interconnection of multiple networks. A hosted phone system is virtually a phone system in the sky as opposed to your typical phone system in the closet of an office space. All the features are moderated off premise then delivered via an internet connection.

During its internet years from the mid 90s to 2004, Roger's team had established its services in practically all Chicago's major venues including Soldier Field, Allstate Arena, and Alpine Valley. Through this association as the venue provider, the company was often called upon for special projects to service various touring needs.

above: Peter Kornas – Field Services, Chris Nibeck - Engineering, Louisa Keefe – Customer Service, David Bauman – CTO & co-founder, Randy Rogers – Sales Engineer, Janet Rogers – CEO & co-founder, Paul Dault – Sales

The Dave Mathews Band was one of its first major clients. On its 2000 tour it was at Soldier Field and had contracted with a local telephone company to install a dedicated line for its productions offices. The company had failed to provide the line as contracted and at the 11th hour Janet and her team were asked to come in and fix the problem, which they did gaining DMB's loyalty .

"At that first DMB show, I definitely caught a buzz when I saw what they were doing," Rogers recalls, "I remember how impressed I was with the size of it all, talking to their IT guy, telling him, 'Wow, I really like what you're doing here, it's so cool.' This was back when bands didn't have IT guys; he was one of the first people doing it. He looked at me and he says, 'NO, NO, I don't think you'd think that at all if you were out here doing it. 46 year old guys should not be sleeping on boxes.'"

"When we sold the internet company we had this sort of 'box within a box' of special entertainment business within the internet business."

This "box within a box" had its beginnings during Rogers' years at North Point University.

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he monstrous *Britney Spears Circus* tour, oddly enough, rehearsed in the same complex at the same time as Fleetwood

Mac. *Britney Spears Circus* tour was a study of logistics rivaling Patton's march to the "Battle of the Bulge" and of the massive task of executing a show that takes up the whole of an arena floor while this is the tale of how less can be so much more than more, more, more!

Fleetwood Mac's *Unleashed* tour was the essence of simplicity. Designed by Paul Guthrie of Toss Film & Design Inc., the look was meant to have a retro feel to it. "They did start in the 70s where there was a lot of cyc work in the designs. I wanted to go back to that time, but I didn't want to go all the way down nostalgia lane. I'm also a big fan of modern architecture. The answer was to blend the two aspects together," Guthrie told *mpm*.

The result was a group of four large pods that flew over the stage like a fluid ceiling, and two that stood along the upstage line. Each of the pods was 24" long x 4" wide x 2" deep. They were internally lit by Martin LC Panels, which are a semi-transparent modular system of LED arrays. Once the LC Panels were installed, the pods were faced out with custom fit RP (rear projection) screens.

"Originally there were three uninterrupted units that spanned the whole stage," Guthrie recalled, "but it became apparent that it would be difficult to build and transport them. In the end, we cut them in half which gave us more mobility during the show because we could move them in opposite directions."

Each of the flown pods were picked at their corners offering the ability to pitch and bank independently. The outside of the boxes were faced in a metallic finish that provided both the modern architectural contrast that Guthrie was looking for, as well as surface that could be lit. The final touch on the pods was provided by High End Systems DL3's mounted on the floor.

The DL3s were aimed up at the pods where they project video content that hit anything up there, including the lighting rig. This was where the design fell slightly short of the mark. There is no other projection unit available to throw at this design idea. While, in the end, the look was very good, it would have been spectacular had the DL3s possessed a bit more punch.

The lighting system was minimal to what some might call the extreme. There were roughly 60 fixtures (all Vari*Lite of one stripe or another) hitting the stage from above, behind and on the stage. Because of band requirements, there was no haze in the air, making it impossible to achieve the beam play that so often marks a concert. However, it did allow for a completely clean look, which leads one to wonder why it isn't done more often.

The rig had two truss spots with an interesting twist that wasn't new, but is certainly uncommon. The spots were VL-3500s with their pan and tilt functions disabled with a handle mounted on the back. "It's like a poor man's automated follow spot, said Lighting Director Axis De Bruyn. "It's great for me because I

FLEET



Cory Buckingham – Teleprompter / Dressing Rooms, Brendan Cooper – Wardrobe



Bobby Herr - Stage Manager



WOODMAC

Unleashed and Uncomplicated

BY MICHAEL A. BECK



Chris Adamson - Production Manager



Pokinoi - Audio Bird



Dave Kob - FOH Engineer



Roland Castillo & Jack Dietering - Set Carpenters

just tell the operators to follow Lindsey [Buckingham] or Stevie [Nicks], and I do the rest from the console.”

One very curious aspect to the lighting system has been met with widely mixed opinions. There were two truss lines that flew in and out between the pods at various times during the show. They looked to be loaded with pars. However, they weren't pars at all. They were specially loaded with LED units that were only there for display. They had absolutely no effect on the stage whatsoever. Their only purpose was to aid in achieving the nostalgic retro feel that Guthrie was going for. “I felt right from the beginning that I wanted to incorporate something into the show that would be iconic and classically retro. Sticks of preloaded pars were the answer. You don't see that much anymore,” said Guthrie.

Apparently they really weren't meant to be a lighting element as much as set pieces. The problem was that the real effect of the idea was lost on all but about the first few rows of audience on the floor.

Apart from the visual aspects of the production which came together to create a truly elegant show, it was very straight forward. Video supplied by newly formed Chaos Visual Productions was strictly about I-MAG, which doesn't sound like there would be anything all that interesting to write home about. However, in a conversation with Video Director Bob Higgins, it came out that Lindsey Buckingham is heavily involved in the technology of the show.

“He gets involved down to some pretty fine detail, even to the point of choosing the lenses,” Higgins told us. “He took a look at the system we initially brought out here and said he wanted other lenses. He wanted them to hit from a different angle than we had originally designed. When it all showed up, we found that he was right.”

Higgins went on to explain that having a boss who is an expert rather than a deeply interested dilettante can be a big help. “There are always budget concerns. So a guy in my position can't just pop off and say, ‘Here's what I'd like to see out here...’ But when he [Lindsey] does that I say, ‘Yes sir and thanks for the extra gear to work with.’”

There really wasn't much to say about the sound of this production save to note that it had the same warm sound this show has always had. FOH Engineer Dave Kob is a self-proclaimed analog-a-saurus. “I use a Yamaha PM-5K for the meat and potatoes of the mix, and I use a Digidesign Profile for the few Pro Tools tracks that I run as well as a couple of other things that I only use once in the night.”

There is no question that a lot goes into making this show look and sound good for the audience. However, if you want to find out where the priority lies in the overall production effort, you need look no farther than the crew list. There are 24 technicians on the tour. That doesn't include directors and engineers. Of that number, a third are backline personnel.

The backline team is the largest department on the crew. There were two drum techs because Mick Fleetwood's kit is huge, and primary tech Steve Rinkov plays nine songs with the band. Someone had to man the fort while Rinkov was playing. Lindsey Buckingham required two techs because of the massive number of guitars that he carries. Of the 10 trucks needed to transport this show, one entire truck is used for backline gear.

All of that said, the mandate really is: less is more. “I'm a great believer that you make it as difficult as you want to

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FLEETWOOD MAC CREW PHOTOS

opposite page

Dave Evens - Lighting Tech, Patrick Thomsen - Lighting Tech, Ryan Textor - Lighting Tech, Axis De Bruyn - Lighting Director, Ronald Beal - Lighting Tech, Anthony Ciampa - Lighting Tech

Bob Higgins - Video Director, Seth Sharpless - Video Engineer, Adam Finer - video crew, Sixx Williams - Camera Operator, William "Tell" Agerter - Rigger/Camera Operator, Nathaniel "Nate" Fountain - Camera Operator

Charlie Hernandez - Audio Tech, Rachel Adkins - Monitor Engineer, Jim Ragus - Audio Tech, Matt Patterson - Audio Tech, Donovan Friedman - Audio Tech, Ben Rothstein - Audio Tech

Michael Kianka - Key Technician / Pro Tools Programmer, Mark Scaggs - Bass Technician, Will Alexander - Key Technician, Kurt Kasinoff, Lindsey Buckingham's Guitar Technician - Stan Lamendola, Roy Kelley - Guitar Technician, Joe Dorosz - Drum Technician, Steve Rinkov - Drum Technicians

Principle Members

Lindsey Buckingham, Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Stevie Nicks

Band

Vocals - Jana Anderson, Sharon Celani, Lori Nicks
Guitar - Neale Heywood
Keys / Guitar - Brett Tuggle

PERSONNEL

Tour Manager - Marty Hom

Road Manager - Allan Tate

Band Road Manager - Jimmy Johnson

Assistant Tour Managers - Ralph Viera & John Bunker

Tour Accountant - Jim Collins

Assistant To Ms. Nicks - Karen Johnston

Assistant Mr. Fleetwood - Karol Krauser

Personal Security - Dennis Sharp

Vocal Coach - Steve Real

Makeup - Elynn Chapman

Hotel Advance & Luggage - Rome Reddick

CREW

Production Manager - Chris Adamson

Stage Manager - Bobby Herr

Venue Security - Dean Correa

Production Coordinator - Mindi Pelletier

Foh Engineer - Dave Kob

Video Director - Bob Higgins

Lighting Director - Axis De Bruyn

Monitor Engineers - Rachel Adkins, Ed Dracoules

Teleprompter / Dressing Rooms - Cory Buckingham

Guitar Technicians - Kurt Kasinoff, Roy Kelley

Lb Guitar Technician - Stan Lamendola

Key Technician / Programmer - Michael Kianka

Key Technician - Will Alexander

Drum Technicians - Steve Rinkov, Joe Dorosz

Bass Technician - Mark Scaggs

Wardrobe - Brendan Cooper

Catering Coordinator - Dave Rahn

Rigger - William "Tell" Agerter

Rigger / Carpenters - Roland Castillo & Jack Dietering

Audio Crew: **Ben Rothstein, James Ragus, Donovan Friedman, Matthew Patterson**

Lighting Crew: Ronald Beal, Anthony Ciampa, Charles Evans, Patrick Thomsen, Ryan Textor

Video Crew: Nathaniel Fountain, Seth Sharpless, Sixx Williams, Adam Finer

I Love All Access - Cory O'donnell

Merchandise: Terry Ruchotzke, Dieter Szczypinski

Live Nation - Chris Covin, Beth Gold

Band Drivers: Geoff O'Connell, Raymond Jacobs

Crew Drivers: Mike Mallat, Joe Folk, Donnie Leach, Dave Walters

Truck Drivers: Scott Mckeel, Steve Rohlfis, Dale Vaughn, Ron Saboley, Tom Lehew, Ron Hall, Dennis Deforest, Nick James, Jon McClain

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Air Charter - Airworks Chaos

Video - Visual Productions

Lighting / Set Designer - Toss Film & Design Inc.

Set Construction - All Access

Merchandise - Signatures Network

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ever has to.”

Apollo Jets was the air charter provider for the Britney Spears Circus tour. This project was a little different than the normal air charter that the company might handle in that the client had the same plane for the length of the entire American leg of the tour. “They really did their due diligence,” Al Palagonia told us. “They wanted to see the aircraft before they signed off on it. They wanted to know the specs on the plane and what kind of shape it

was in. They met with the pilot, they met with the operator. They really did their homework.”

The plane that the Spears camp wound up using for the tour was a Gulfstream G-4. Giasi handled the account from start to finish and told us this was a full-time job all the way through. “We looked at a dozen planes before we settled on the plane we wanted to show them. We had to make sure that all of their criteria were met. As a result, they accepted the first plane we showed

Giasi explained, “We had to have a plane that could have Spears in the air within an hour if the primary plane had a mechanical issue. We had one plane on each coast that was always ready to go.”

Giasi was in constant communication with Pilot Al Amirali and flight attendant Kathleen King regarding every aspect of the job both from the ground and during the flights. Because of security measures, the decision was made to fly into smaller

less traveled air ports or FBOs (Fix Base Operator). The problem was some of these places don’t stay open past midnight. In other cases, there weren’t facilities available to keep the plane overnight. Sometimes special provisions could be made on the fly to keep these FBO open. In other cases, it meant that they would have to fly out directly after the show. All of this was constantly monitored between Giasi, the flight crew and the tour’s road manager Craig Bolling.

When all is said and done, the list of elements that have to be attended to with a project like this is truly endless, whomever the client is. But no matter what service we are discussing, the best service provider is the one that delivers the most thorough service with the least visibility.

“I know it’s their job to deliver for the client,” said Bolling, “but those guys went well above and beyond. I always knew when Britney was wheels up and wheels down. I knew that if I had to talk to Dean at one in the morning, he was going to take the call. If they hadn’t done as much as they did, the job would have gotten done, but it would have meant a lot more work on my end. And that’s what makes the difference when you have to decide if you are going to want to use a company again.”

By all accounts the non-stop attention to detail paid to the Britney Spears’ tour by Giasi and the rest of the Apollo team was complete, seamless and invisible. All that was left was the well met needs of a satisfied client.

The success of any company in any industry is not based on how many clients come through the door to do business. It’s the number of clients that

come back through the door to continue doing business. Apollo Jets is a new company full of well experienced talent whose business model seems to be centered upon maximizing the traffic flow coming back “in through the out door.”

Fleetwood Mac cont. from 36

do with any act,” said Production Manager Chris Adamson. “There are challenges with any show. Things come up. That’s the nature of the business. You try to surround yourself with the best people and you get what you pay for.”

Stage Manager Bobby Herr, echoed that sentiment, “We have great people out here, and it runs like clockwork. Everyone, including vendors, have worked together a hundred times. The result is that we have a show that hangs on about 50 points. We are up and running by 1 p.m., and we’re out of here in two hours on the hardest nights.”

There really wasn’t a lot of production standing between the musicians and the audience which is just the way both this particular audience and this particular band like it.

After seeing both shows, one cannot avoid comparing this show with the titanic Britney Spears show that rehearsed right next door. On the other hand, there really isn’t much of a comparison to draw because each are completely different in every conceivable way except one...

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Originally entering school to earn an engineering degree she quickly discovered that path was not for her. While Rogers conceded that her mother had a point when she told her that “everyone has vocations and avocations and music may be a great avocation but it is not a good way to make a living,” she made the decision to pursue a degree in Jazz Piano.

Along the way she discovered she was good at doing IT work and could make money at it. However, she hung in there with her music studies graduating with her jazz degree in hand in 1984. During her 20’s and 30’s when asked how she got into the IT business, she would reply she always loved music but was just too greedy to be a musician.

Rogers has a daughter Meghan and son Matt McHale who both worked for Live Nation. Matt is currently out as a production assistant with the Britney Spears Circus Tour.

In 2004 Live Nation contacted Rogers to ask if she could solve a problem it had. The promotional leviathan was building Chicago’s Charter One Pavilion. Ground had been broken and construction was well under way when it was realized there had been no provision made for low voltage cable of any kind; no phones, no internet, nothing.

Rogers’s company’s previous experience had involved some fairly advanced wireless internet projects as well as voiceover wireless. WANetics built a completely wireless service through which to carry voice, data, and video.

After the venue was up and running, The Celtic Women Tour came

through. Steve Dixon was the tour manager at the time.

“He calls us and says, ‘Hey, this is pretty cool what you’ve done here. You know, you could stick all of this in a road case and put it on a boat if you had to.’” Rogers recalled, “I told him, yes we could do that and agreed to meet him for breakfast. Steve is a very colorful character, really engaging, but really unusual. He started talking about his future projects. He brings up the Justin Timberlake tour he has taken on and that he wants us to work on it. The system we laid out for Steve on the tour was successful and we started to branch out to other music tours. We’ve done another couple dozen since then and have gotten involved in sports related stuff as well.”

WANetics most recent project with Britney Spears has Dixon at the helm as Tour Director. It has taken the original system pioneered on Justin Timberlake to a whole new level in terms of ease of use and scale ability.

“Steve says to me, ‘I’m running a \$100 million business on the road with half a dozen offices, two dozen phones, and the office staff needed to support a business like that. So I need it to run like an office of that size. I need secure WiFi segmented so different parts of production have access to the band width differently. I need to know that at 4 pm when the show is hung and all the crew starts surfing, getting on email, etc that production is going to get priority over everybody else. I need a system that can scale as big as the biggest shows out there.’”

“I told him we can do that, and we delivered it,” says Rogers.

Looking back, Rogers feels that, “For most of us, the things that you love are lifelong passions. So the fact that you are initially unable to find a good business model for it doesn’t necessarily change it.”

“As a company we may have put a disproportionate amount of energy into the entertainment side of the business,” she continues. “When my business venture started, it provided few windows into the music industry. But I just had to follow that path. And it hasn’t always been the best business decision for me personally. I’ve always tried to do right by the company but I’ve often thought I would have made more money if I had ignored the stuff that I liked so much. It’s something I’ve enjoyed and

all of us in the company have come to value this part of the business and we wouldn’t trade it.”

Rogers would also like to thank Chris Weathers of Live Nation who “probably taught me more about this business than anyone else.”

Over the course of attending rehearsals and years of participating in those one off special projects, Rogers has seen the need for further development of her company’s services to the touring industry. This encompasses temporary expansion of the tour package provided to include all the production designers that won’t necessarily continue on with the tour past the rehearsal build. It would also include providing a “virtual office” for the

other vendors on the tour so they can better access their home offices and co-workers on tours their companies have out simultaneously. Rogers wants her company to provide “something that makes that strange hole that they stick you in everyday feel more like home.”

Other projects for WANetics include Road Rage - a consortium of artists and vendors that are, in essence, trying to create a virtual warehouse of equipment previously used on tours to market to other tours.

“Much like what Larry [Smith] is creating in his virtual market place at MobileProductionPro.com,” says Rogers, “we are trying to connect people in a telecom way.” ☺

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