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**THE  
ECONOMY  
IN TOURING**  
Part THREE: Hotels

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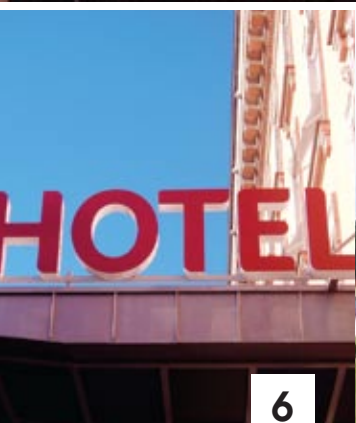
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The transition between summer and fall is a special time in our industry. Most tours are in full swing and many are looking toward the holiday wind-down.

Companies that have worked hard to land shows and display their products and services are basking in the satisfied glow of achievement. This issue has presented us an opportunity to profile some of these companies. Our cover feature, the *Metallica World Magnetic Tour* was especially fun for us because we were able to put the spotlight on a couple of companies

that certainly have deserved the focus. In addition, we have tried to assemble a group of items that we think will both entertain and enlighten you.

Many of our readers have been commenting on the new website we recently launched, [mobileproductionpro.com](http://mobileproductionpro.com). We decided a long time ago to put substantial resources into this site in order to present a multi-media approach to our coverage of news, issues and data. This site has enabled us to move time-sensitive news, press releases and expanded data onto the web. We have been informed that there are some errors in the data and that is to be expected. Whenever a database as extensive as the one we have presented hits the industry, it is inevitable that there will be some errors.

However, the criticism fails to recognize the purpose of the site. This site is interactive and not static. That means that the burden of accuracy is a shared thing between the presenters (us) and the users (you). We need everyone to establish a user name and password, take a look at their personal or company listings and make any corrections or additions necessary for accuracy. No single staff could possibly have everything totally correct in a global industry without the support of the industry itself. That is precisely what we are asking of you. Please take a minute, login and help us generate a more comprehensive database for our industry. We are nearly there, and you can help us achieve this lofty goal. It is a worthy effort, and we encourage you to participate. We think you will be surprised at results.

*Larry Smith*



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# The State of the Economy in Touring

## Part Three: Hotels



by JESSI WALLACE

*Due to the sensitive nature of this part to the Economy series, all hotels who participated will remain anonymous. Competition is fierce and mobile Production monthly wishes to thank those who took time to openly and honestly contribute to this piece. Those who wish to dive in further can expect the topics mentioned here to be discussed at the Tour Link Conference February 4-7, 2010 in Mesa, AZ.*

**m**obile Production monthly got the opportunity to talk one-on-one with hotels in select major markets in the United States and Canada regarding the current economic situation and how entertainment-friendly properties are being affected. It seems that not much is different today between the U.S. and Canada in terms of how hard the hotels are being hit. Major markets in Canada heard of the situation in the U.S. and knew it was coming but did not know when. The economic crisis hit the U.S. in 2008 and got worse in January 2009. Canada did not get hit until spring 2009.

Right now it is a buyer's market, and the demand has changed from what it once was. One hotel shared, in a nutshell, what is happening: "What we have noticed the most is the demand is not the same. Everyone is chopping each other off at the knees. We're seeing deals come out of the door from hotels that would generally range in the \$200s for group rates in the mid \$100s. The rebates and the commissions have increased so we're paying higher commissions to agencies. Hotels are reducing room rates.

The amount to demand has reduced as well. Even though there are a lot of tours out there, a lot of them are not paying to stay. Many only want to pay for bus drivers and let the band sleep on the bus."

One trend hotels have noticed is how and when rooms are being booked. In the past, tours would book rooms months in advance. Now the hotels are getting calls 7-14 days out and having to do last-minute negotiations on rates and commissions. Tour managers are being very choosy and selective as to how they do business. Where it was standard before for a tour manager to buy a room out the night before check-in for a guarantee, now they are waiting until the last minute to buy, and only if the hotel mentions it is selling out.

One hotel shared the difficulty they face: "It's really hard to know what the tour really wants... you ask what the budget is of the band and you get 'best rate available.' That means nothing these days when you have to compete against other hotels for the business, and there is no rhyme or reason as to how they are bidding on groups."

When it comes to commissions with travel agents, hotels have a whole new dilemma. One hotel explained, "We're seeing that most of the old industry experts are still at 10 percent. Newer travel agents are trying to get higher rates and commissions... as in 20 percent. Travel agents are going to tour managers and saying 'this hotel is offering \$149

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instead of the \$129 I initially quoted' and try to push it for the higher commission. If we can do \$119, and they come at us saying 'make it \$149 and give me 20 percent,' we don't want to do that. We want to give them our best rate."

In some markets, four and five star hotels have to compete with Holiday Inns and Best Westerns because of demands. When this competition happens, it's because the travel planner is comparing apples to oranges. Hotels that typically go for \$129/night are selling them for \$99/night, then other hotels that typically go for \$260/night are selling for \$179/night. Which one is really the better deal? In the end it comes down to what quality and service the tour is really looking for. If it's all about the money, they may choose the cheaper hotel, but they should not compare it to the deal offered at the higher-end hotel.

In order to keep up, many hotels are forced to shut down several floors of the building just to keep the doors open. Instead of operating at full capacity, which may be 300 rooms, they are closing floors so they can afford to operate the average number of rooms they are actually filling. When this happens they are able to say they are "selling out," even when technically at half capacity. Reducing the staff and the cost of operations helps the hotels stay open and have the ability to offer lower rates than usual. In the end, hotels are very concerned with having to sacrifice service in order to offer rock bottom rates. Added value also doesn't hold the same ring that is once did. Hotels are noticing that no matter how much added value they put on the table, buyers don't consider it when looking at the bottom line, or at least they won't use those words. The bottom line: what is the dollar value?

So where does this leave the future of the hotel industry? One hotel thinks the demand and volume is going to come back, but probably not the rates. It will take time for tour planners to accept the fact that they got a good deal for a while, but once the demand and occupancy is back, the rates will increase and be back to where they should appropriately be placed. Another hotel thinks that it'll still be a couple years before any changes are seen.

*mobile Production monthly* intends to look further into the state of the economy in touring as the 2010 season begins. In order to participate in this editorial series, please contact Jessi Wallace in the Tour Guide office for an interview. ☺

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# Steve McKay & euphoria EVENT SOLUTIONS

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**S**teve McKay is the owner of Euphoria Events Solutions, a Connecticut-based production support company specializing in saddle span tension structures and luxury tents for the entertainment and special event industry. McKay came to the music business through an unusual route. He took a turn as a Connecticut State Trooper and also served his country in the Connecticut Air National Guard as an A-10 “Warthog” weapons systems specialist.



McKay got his start in the music business at his folks Hartford, Connecticut establishment, the Municipal Cafe. McKay began to book bands at the cafe and succeeded in transforming the joint into one of the Northeast’s best-known “underground” music venues. Music at the “Muni” ran the gamut from reggae and blues to alt-rock and raves and featured both up-and-coming local bands as well as many national acts. Having booked over 2,000+ acts, McKay branched out into promoting concerts with his own company, Mad Murphy Productions. It focused on producing large outdoor festivals in the northeast, including the popular annual Camp Creek Music Festival featuring the legendary jam band Max Creek, which McKay was managing at the time.

McKay was then approached to serve as Executive Director of Cheney Hall Performing Arts Center in Manchester, CT. Several years later, he accepted a position as the Executive Director of SummerWind Performing Arts Center in Windsor, CT. While at Summerwind, McKay booked performers such as Dave Brubeck, Winton Marsalis and a host of national acts until the roof of the PAC was severely damaged during a snowstorm, rendering the venue unusable for several seasons.

“When the roof collapsed, a series of things happened that gave me a chance to take stock in where my career path had taken me,” begins McKay. “I knew I was at my best when I was working under my own terms. The roof collapsing opened up opportunities, including meeting the right kinds of people, and one day I recognized a nugget of an opportunity. With my wife’s encouragement and support, I decided to start Euphoria Event Solutions, LLC. In the several years that followed, the company has grown into one of the leading providers of Saddle Span Tension Structures in the U.S. The nice thing about working for yourself is that you can work just as hard as you want and the rewards are much more personal. There are still a few late nights, but not quite as many as in the past,” McKay said.



**You started off as a police officer with experience as a member of the armed services, how did you find your way into the entertainment business?**

“Actually, if you look at my career trajectory it all sort of makes sense. After I got out of the State Police I needed something to keep the adrenaline flowing, so, I decided to sink my teeth into a bar/music club. I was not interested in becoming a bar tender (I am inherently shy) but enjoyed the rush of building a cool music club from scratch. To me, the thrill was booking the bands and working with the artists to create our own unique vibe. Our club truly was a place where the music mattered. We tried to present the best possible talent and turned our audience onto some fantastic original music.”

**You turned the Municipal Cafe (The Muni) into an iconic live music destination in New England...**

“Yes, to be fair our entire family was responsible for that success. My folks ran the restaurants part of the business. My uncle and sister ran the catering end of the operation, which left me free to manage the nightclub. Being that I burn water, it was probably a good idea for everyone concerned to keep me out of the kitchen.”

**What was the biggest show you promoted there?**

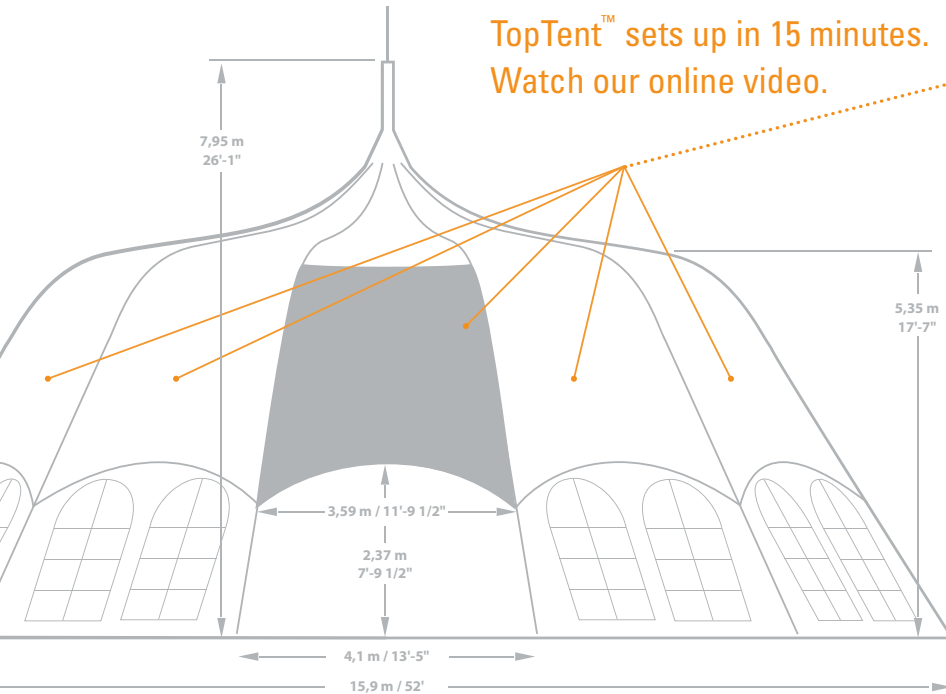
“Heck, we put on over 2,000+ original

shows, everything from raves to rock and Zydeco. I hate to pick just one. However, I can say that one of my personal favorites was Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown. That man could walk on musical water. The thing I enjoyed about the club was hanging out with the artists and musicians after the show and trying to find out what makes ‘em tick, what caused a man like Mr. Brown to stay on the road for 50+ years!”

**You worked as the executive director at SummerWind Performing Arts Center, how did that come about?**

“After years in the club I had moved on and become the Executive Director over at Cheney Hall Performing Arts Center/The Little Theater of Manchester. While at work, I received a call from a person doing a feasibility study on a proposed new venue in the town of Windsor, CT. They had heard that I was a good resource in the live music industry, and I helped them draft an operating outline. Shortly thereafter, I received a call from the Windsor Town Manager who surprised me by offering me the Executive Director position of the then un-named non-profit venue. I was excited by the challenge of raising a million dollars to build, book and market the 6,000 person capacity venue in less than 9 months time. Looking back on it now, it does not seem possible, but we pulled it off and SummerWind was born. Unfortunately a severe winter storm put an end to the venue via a major structural collapse of the custom fabric roof system.”





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### What are some of the concerts/tours that Euphoria's provided production services for?

"Lollapalooza, The NCAA Basketball Finals, NCAA Baseball World Series, AT&T and the Bloomberg Company are some recent clients. We do a lot of festivals, corporate and symphony work."

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### You've got a lot of experience as a promoter, have you ever thought about promoting an event through Euphoria?

"Absolutely. I think I still have a few big shows in me. I am actually looking at a 15,000+ person capacity site in upstate NY and another festival site out on the west coast. I am still working on the monotonous financing end of the deal, but I will make it happen."

### What are some of the changes you've seen in the touring industry in recent years?

"Massive industrialization of the live concert music industry. I am all for making money, but

continued on 33

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## TAIT TOWERS Mills Mulls Move into Modularity

In a robust decision that flies in the face of current economic inertia, Tait Towers has just invested in a new build 74,000 sq. ft. facility in its hometown of Lititz, PA. “We’ve experienced an increasing demand for the Tait Towers’ product over the past decade,” said Company VP Adam Davis. “Part of that has been driven by our decision to make the Tait approach to set building entirely modular, a decision that has allowed us to offer Tait level engineering, ingenuity and quality as a reusable commodity.”

Tait has gently pushed the boat out with its stock rental offerings; the new facility is vindication that demand for such a service exists. “We have just recruited Andrew ‘Hamish’ Mills to be General Manager for the Tait Rental division,” continued Davis. “We’ve known Hamish for many years through his work with Ed & Teds and more recently for Epic Productions. The integration between our scenic elements, especially those involving automation and motion control, and large sophisticated lighting and video systems requires absolute, finite attention to detail; something Hamish has demonstrated consistently over the years.”

Mills, an Australian by birth, comes with 24 years of international concert industry experience, having worked for service providers in Australia and the UK & Europe, before settling in the US some 12 years ago. “Having worked with several major companies and not restricted to just lighting, I know just how good the Tait product is. Preparing

*pictured above:* Andrew ‘Hamish’ Mills

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**On October 12, Mills officially took up the reins, “Obviously my first job is shop layout, procedures and workflow. What excites me most is making the**

**connection between Tait and its customers, especially those who have never considered using the world’s leading set builder before. Communicating how the client brings Tait’s expertise into their concepts and designs as a practical reality will be a lot of fun.”**

Davis is as enthused by the man as Mills is by the job, “We’ve seen that Hamish has a drive for excellence and a proven ability to run large and complex rental inventories. He was always the guy who wanted to make sure the show fit; that’s a concept embedded in the Tait Towers’ ethos.”

**Grand opening of the facility was Oct. 31st.** 🗨️





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# JOURNEY

## SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW

by MICHAEL A. BECK

There is one phrase that is welcomed with as much repetition as is needed – “less is more.” This is not to say that the only good shows are the small austere ones. It is likely that Jake Berry would have something to say about that.

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  - F.E.A. Merchandising
- MERCHANDISING - STORE
  - Music Today
- MERCHANDISING - SPECIALTY LINE
  - 309 Designs
- INTERNET OPERATIONS
  - Superstar Media
- ITINERARIES
  - Kriegmark



**BAND**

- Lead Guitar, Vocalist - Neal Schon
- Bass Guitar, Vocalist - Ross Valory
- Keyboards, Vocalist - Jonathan Cain
- Drummer, Vocalist - Deen Castronovo
- Lead Vocalist - Arnel Pineda





## BROCKCOM EVENT COMMUNICATION RENTALS GOES ON A JOURNEY

**Brockcom Event Communication Rentals** was founded in 2005 after **Bryan Meckelborg** spent 17 years in the Motorola radio business helping to build a national dealership. Meckelborg left to focus solely on the touring and entertainment companies that he had worked so closely with since his early days as a production manager for Goldenvoice.

Being able to focus on national and international tours and many of the venues in Southern California allowed Meckelborg and Brockcom to provide specialized service to their customers. As Brockcom has grown, they have added a Nashville office and a partnership with Comm Direct in Chicago that has allowed them to handle the biggest festivals and events such as The Academy Awards, Coachella, Rothbury and The Grammy Awards.

With **Journey**, as with all of its tours, Brockcom likes to build a strong relationship with everyone on the tour and make sure they respond quickly to any special requests whether its from production, security or any of the other departments on the show. Of course, it really helps when there is someone like Sarah Shoup in the touring office to help keep track of all the gear coming and going!

**FOR MORE INFO  
contact**  
**Bryan Meckelborg**  
ph: 562-498-9000  
brockcom@sbcglobal.net  
**Mitch Cramer**  
mitch253@earthlink.net

Nevertheless, when such shows as Paul McCartney, AC/DC and the leviathan U2 (which will be featured in an upcoming issue) are out there filling audiences with wide-eyed awe, it is easy to miss some of the smaller shows that are thrilling audiences. One such show is the amazingly elegant production of Journey. The production is headed up by long time production manager and all around great guy, Rob Kern. It travels in only five trucks and is as easy a day as one could imagine.

Kern explained, "The guys wanted to get back to the old way of doing things. They wanted it to just be about the music and the audience. We also knew that we were going to be playing in a wide variety of different venues, and we wanted to have a show that we could pull back to make it fit into any place we might be without compromising the overall production."

Part and parcel of taking the Journey experience back to the olden days was the conspicuous absence of the otherwise ubiquitous massive video element.

That is to say there was no video play back in the show. However, Nocturne Productions did have a two-man team out providing I-MAG. In the case of shed dates, it was a matter of setting up the fly pack with the in-house system. However, for the gigs that when Journey didn't have their own gear, the day got a bit longer for Video Director/Engineer Eric Arnett and Camera Operator Kevin Carswell as they now had to run up screens and Christie Projectors.

It is not the intention to imply that the concert experience is in any way enhanced by the absence of video. Indeed, when one considers the huge presence that video carries in today's entertainment world; it's easy to arrive at the prejudgment that one-third of the show is missing if video isn't there. Nevertheless, there was a time when there was no such thing as video in a show, and that era is what they wanted to present in this tour.

This made for an interesting test of the band's power. Visually speaking, this landed on the shoulders of Lighting Designer/

Director Kevin "K2" Christopher. The lighting rig was Vari\*Lite showcase, primarily comprised of the VL-3000 Spot, VL-3500Q spot and VL-3500 Wash. "When the band decided that they wanted to go back to the old school look, they didn't pull back on the budget," said Christopher. "That gave me a little bit more room in the lighting budget."

The look was simple. The backdrop for the show was made up of six vertical panels of wire mesh like an extremely heavy duty version of that used in a window screen. Each panel was up and down lit with six Martin Stage Bar units with three on top and on bottom. Having six units allowed them to play with an endless variety of color blending. The stiff grade of the mesh ensured that it didn't just fall flat like a theatrical leg. Instead it maintained a deep topography that added to the lighting texture. The overall effect of the look was dramatically static, and when Christopher shifted from one color to another or one Martin unit to another, it gave the backdrop a sense of organic movement.





Each panel was separated by ladders supporting VL spots and washes as well as Atomic Strobes. Through all of this Christopher was able to visualize every stop on the emotional spectrum of the show. He truly showed the audience what this music looks like.

The visual impact of the show is only half of the job, and while it would seem to indicate a supreme grasp of the painfully obvious, the FOH engineer is faced with the task of maintaining the power of what's coming off the stage. It's a little more than one might think.

When fans come to see a band that they listened to 20 years ago, they are coming to do more than hear the songs. They're coming to relive an experience that can't be done though any visual medium. That's an audio thing.

This show sounded as good as anything heard all year. James McCullough is the band's FOH guy, and he talked about how he was able to get such a sensational sound. "A big part of the job is done on stage because the band has some awesome gear. So the source input is fantastic to start with." Having a great

sound coming off the stage allowed McCullough a bit more freedom in the way he processed the sound. "Instead of doing too much EQing I prefer to put things in their places using compression and limiting. It helps to give me great separation."

McCullough runs everything through a McDSP ML4000 multi-band compressor, and he runs that into an Empirical Labs FATS0, which is a modern digitally controlled analog device that offers many of the "musical non-linearities" exhibited by the older tube, class-A discrete and magnetic tape

mediums. The result is it warms up a digital console to give it more of an analog sound. Additionally, he ran the drums through a UBK FATS0 into a drum bus, achieving a superior drum mix..

The big challenge was the vocals of lead singer Arnel Pineda. This guy has pipes like you read about. McCullough described controlling Pineda's vocals as something akin to riding a wild horse, "He's phenomenal. You don't want to do anything to his voice; you can only try to control it. He's that good."

The end result of it all was a mix

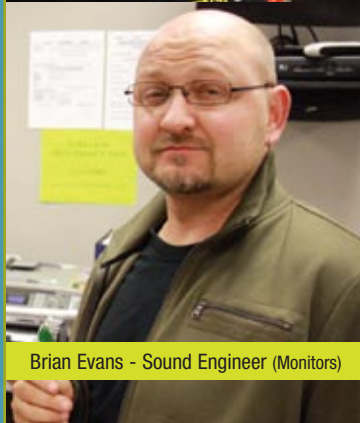


# CREW

**Tour Manager** - John "JT" Toomey  
**Assistant Tour Mgr** - Pasquale Vartolo  
**Personal Asst. (Arnel)** - Ulysses Session  
**Production Mgr** - Rob Kern  
**Production Coordinator** - Sarah Shoup  
**Tour Accountant** - Kenny Silva  
**Personnel Security** - Bob Dymarcik  
**Sound Engineer (FOH)** - James Mccullagh  
**Sound Engineer (Monitors)** - Brian Evans  
**Guitar Tech** - Adam Day  
**Drum Tech** - Steve Toomey  
**Bass Guitar Tech** - Jeff "Jeffro" Hannah  
**Keyboard Tech** - Brent "Elvis" Jeffers  
**Lighting Director** - Kevin "K2" Christopher  
**Dr. Room/Wardrobe** - Jennifer Blanchard  
**Merchandiser** - Steve Lewis  
**Rigger** - Dale Long  
**Stage Manager** - Scott Nordvold  
**Lighting Crew Chief** - Mike Hall  
**Lighting Technicians** - Stan Green, Shawn Welch, Russel Halbach  
**Audio Crew Chief / Systems Engineer** - Wade "Wookie" Crawford  
**Monitor Tech** - James Ward li  
**Audio Tech** - Austin Dudley  
**Video Director/Engineer** - Eric Arnett  
**Camera Operator** - Kevin Carswell  
**I Love All Access Rep** - Jeff Allen  
**Band Bus Drivers** - Rick Griffith, Gary Lumpkin, Danny Crumb, Richard Lundeen, Brian Harlow, Buzz Blauvelt  
**Lead Truck Driver** - Mark Beasley  
**Truck Drivers** - Leonard Lopez Sr., Rick Aguilar, Joe Frank, Jason Demar, Chris



James Mccullagh - Sound Engineer (FOH)



Brian Evans - Sound Engineer (Monitors)



Wade "Wookie" Crawford - Audio Crew Chief / Systems Engineer



Eric Arnett - Video Director/Engineer



Kevin Carswell - Camera Operator



Brent "Elvis" Jeffers - Keyboard Tech, Steve Toomey - Drum Tech, Jeff "Jeffro" Hannah - Bass Guitar Tech



Mike Hall - Lighting Crew Chief, Kevin "K2" Christopher - Lighting Director, Stan Green - Lighting Tech, Shawn Welch - Lighting Tech



back row: John "JT" Toomey - Tour Mgr, Bob Dymarcik - Personnel Security, Pasquale - Asst Tour Mgr, Vartolo, Kenny Silva - Tour Acct, Scott Nordvold - Stage Mgr, Dale Long - Rigger front row: Rob Kern - Production Mgr, Sarah Shoup - Prod Coordinator



Bob Dymarcik - Personnel Security, Pasquale - Assistant Tour Manager Vartolo



Scott Nordvold - Stage Mgr, Rob Kern - Production Manager

that sat even the most discerning critics back on their heels. This show was a perfect blend of the old and incredibly tight and enormously powerful arrangements of Journey born in the 70s before the automated light and the creative freedom offered by 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. The intention was to give the audience nothing to focus on but the band itself.

This was a great show, and the only complaint was of not being able to see it again the next night.



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Industry Dinner Awards Show ONLY (\$150) - QTY: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

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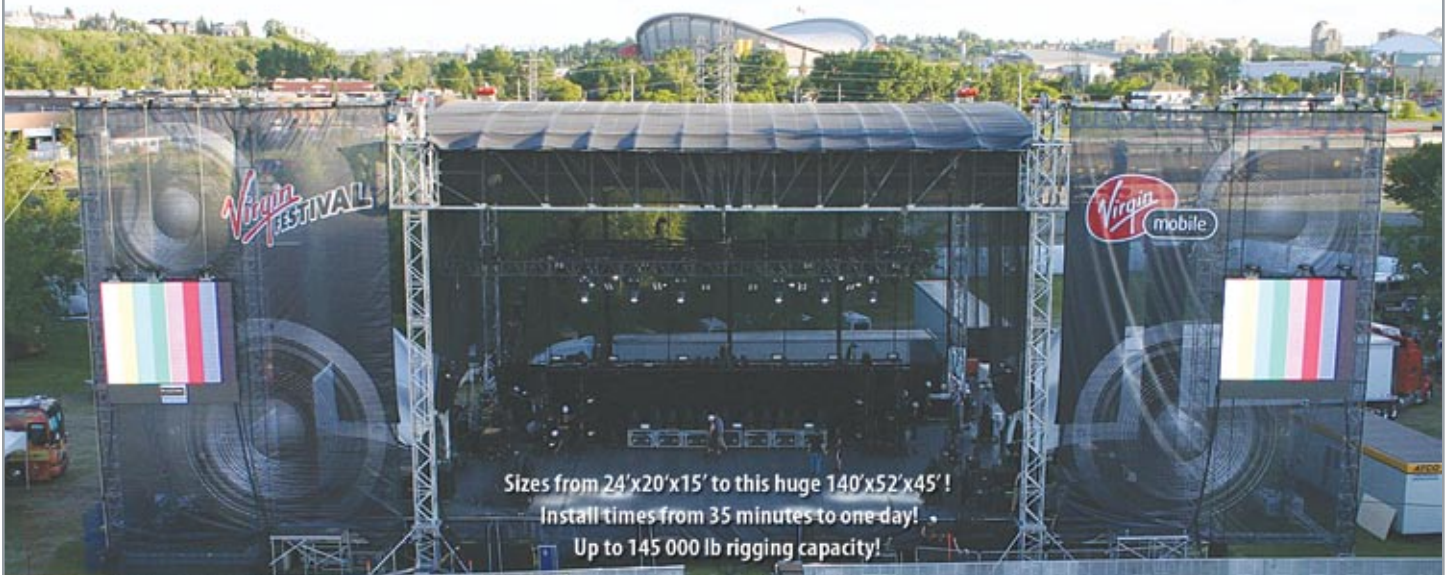
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# METALLICA

*World Magnetic Tour*

photos by Michael A Beck

This year's *Metallica World Magnetic Tour* marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the band's *...And Justice For All* album. Given that fact one would have expected the band to come out with a massive production. Quite the opposite was true. The stage was the most austere look *mPm* has seen in a long time. As was the case many of the larger shows to go out this year, this show played in the round. However, there was some dissimilarity in this case.







## BAND PARTY

Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield  
Kirk Hammett, Rob Trujillo  
Tour Manager - Dick Adams  
PA to James Hetfield - Ray Masterson  
Security to Kirk Hammett - Thomas Robb  
PA to Rob Trujillo / Physiotherapist - Dr. Don Oyao

The stage was rectangular in shape and rose only four feet off the ground offering the audience on the floor greater visual access to the band than in the past. This also integrated the crowd into the show more tightly than had the stage been higher.

Because the stage was so much lower than most other shows everything was out in the open. Monitor world and all four back

line positions were completely visible. Given that it is usually preferred to have such aspects of the production hidden from sight it was surprising how unobtrusive this unavoidable feature of the show was. Especially when one considers that there was nothing on the stage except for band gear.

The stage was completely void of any set whatsoever. That's not to say there was no set in the show. Indeed, there were four

huge coffins flown over the stage as well as four more that hung farther out over the four corners of the floor at a much higher trim. Each coffin over the stage contained five Vary\*Lite 3500 wash fixtures and two Syncrolite 5k B-53s. Additionally two of the coffins over the stage were loaded with 10-watt DPSS white laser units. These same units were also mounted in all four of the coffins that that flew over the house.

The show opened up with a massive laser display that lasted the whole song "That Was Just Your Life." The thing that made this interesting was the fact that there was no other light on the stage with exception of footlights at the base of singer James Hetfield. Laser Design Productions Co-owner Doug Adams described the design process [*in an interview that can be found in this issue*], "John Broderick (Lighting Designer) approached me and explained





that he wanted me to do lasers that would fill the arena for one song, for the whole song with minimal lighting and it was going to open the show.”

Adams went on to explain, “It worked well because I did a number of time-cue changes and different looks. We were able to go very wide with the coffins in the arena as the stage is set up in the round. I had the lasers in the coffins outside the stage area doing

a long throw. I had the lasers in the coffins above the stage really focused on the guys and boarding them. I really followed the whole feel of the music and tried to think where the guys were going to be and what they were going to be doing during certain parts.”

There were a couple of cues during the show when the coffins over the stage flew in to a pretty low trim and became the set that the stage, which had the overall look

of a huge griddle with drums and amps on it, lacked. And while the incredible austerity of the stage might seem somewhat visually wanting to some, it offered the band enormous room to move and be completely unobstructed.

The eye popping opening laser display had the look of a desire to give the crowd nothing but the music they came to hear. That being said there were more special effects in the show than

laser. During the opening to the song “War,” Pyrotek put forth a spectacular opening of several Dragon shots that played to audio of a raging battlefield. In addition to the Dragons, there were also 16 colored fire units mounted between the amp lings down the middle of the stage on either side of [drummer] Lars Ulrich. This wasn’t the biggest show we’ve seen all year. And to some that’s okay. Stage Manager Alan Doyle loves the pace. “I’ve never had a tour





## VENDORS

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this easy,” Doyle told us as he went on to talk about the week on week off touring schedule with his typical big smile. In the end it must be said that a show that treats its crew as gently as possible and treats its audience to exactly what they came for plus more cannot be called anything but a success.

**POSTSCRIPT**  
from the **PUBLISHER:**

*The Metallica tour this year highlighted a point that many tours were searching to address; how to get more out of less. This tour was able to creatively refocus their efforts to reach their core audience with a high impact show without a high impact budget. That is not to say that there was any less emphasis on quality, but rather an intelligent design that proved to all that more is not always better.*

*When the recession set in, there was a lot of soul-searching and angst in our industry. Many tours stopped in mid-planning and had to adjust to the realities we all had to face. Metallica’s design not only successfully addressed these realities, but took us all back to the time when we were at least as impressed with the music and the artist as we were with the production that surrounded the show. This may sound strange coming from a publication that thrives on the presentation of the show, but it is a dose of reality that we can all continue to do our work when good minds take charge of a situation and solve a problem without throwing money at it.*

*So, hats off to this team that found a classy way to present a classy act without breaking the bank. There will always be mega-productions that are fun to cover, but when we have an opportunity to cover a show that has maintained integrity and yet kept profitability in mind, we have to stand up and say “Bravo!”*

## MOJO BARRIERS

Tours with **Metallica**

On the *World Magnetic Tour*, Metallica performs on an “in the round” stage, a challenge for safe crowd control management.

Mojo Barriers has been supplying the Metallica tour from its different offices worldwide, greatly reducing freight costs while supplying the same barrier system wherever the tour takes them, be it Milan or Milwaukee.

Completely encircling the “in the round” stage, the barrier layout features two chutes jutting into the audience, creating partial paths to and from the backstage area. The locations in each venue of these “behind the scenes” entrances are unique. The Mojo system stands apart from other barrier systems by adapting its layout effortlessly to each arena, allowing security to move the band members safely through the crowd to and from the stage.

“Metallica always wants to give their fans the safest environment and most enjoyable experience,” says JB Dolphin, manager of Mojo Barriers US, “and that is why they approached Mojo Barriers for a crowd control system.”

Over 350 feet of crowd control barricade has been supplied from the MOJO US office since October 2008 and will continue to do so through the end of the year.





front: Jonathan "Jay" Day-Audio Tech, Joe Caruso-Audio Tech,  
Back: Jubal Reeves-Audio Tech, Josh "Mr. Perfect" Schmitz-  
Audio Tech, Paul White-Audio Crew Chief, Mick "Big Mick"  
Hughes-Sound Geezer (Foh), Osvaldo "Ozzie" Giron-Audio Tech,  
Robert Cowan-Monitor Engineer, Toshi Sugitani-Audio Tech



Arthur Kemish - Production Manager, Jake Berry - U2 Production Manager



Zach Harmon - Rob Bass Tech



Matt Levine-Light Tech, Neil Davis-Light Tech, David Albert-Light Tech,  
Clifford Sharpling-Light Tech, James Vollhoffer-Lighting Crew Chief,  
Rob Chase-Light Tech, Christopher 'Chrisjen' Schaffer-Light Tech



Tim 'Nacho' Kitchens - Tour Electrician



Mike 'Chubbs' Wozniak - Tour Security



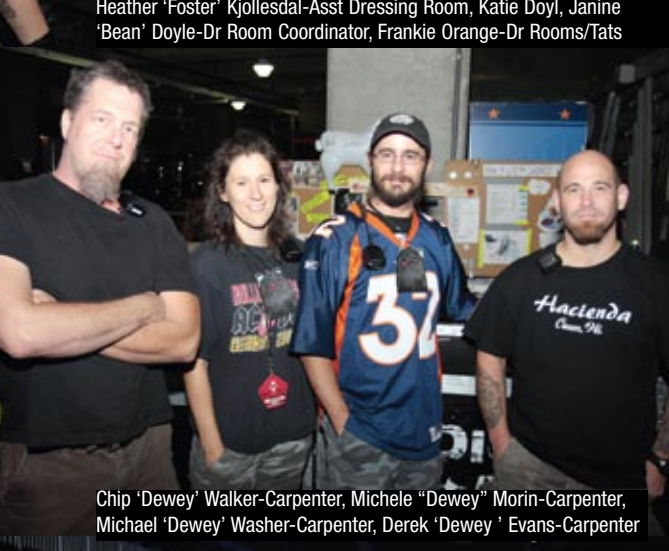
Heather 'Foster' Kjollesdal-Assst Dressing Room, Katie Doyl, Janine  
'Bean' Doyle-Dr Room Coordinator, Frankie Orange-Dr Rooms/Tats



Alerto Pozzetti - Rigger, Chuck Melton - Rigger, Michael  
Berger - Motion Control, Willy Williams - Head Rigger



Flemming Larsen - Drum Tech



Chip 'Dewey' Walker-Carpenter, Michele "Dewey" Morin-Carpenter,  
Michael 'Dewey' Washer-Carpenter, Derek 'Dewey' Evans-Carpenter



Tori Tanner - Production Assistant, Laura "Lu" Stahmann - Tour Coordinator



Chad Zaemisch -  
James Guitar Tech



Reid Schulte-Derne-Pyro, Michael Mcguire-Pyro,  
Renato, Sulmona-Pyro, Chris Blair-Lasers



Justin Crew - Kirk Guitar Tech

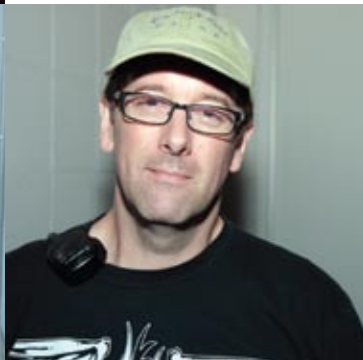


Chris Risner - Tour Accountant



## CREW PARTY

**Production Mgr** - Arthur Kemish  
**Tour Coordinator** - Laura Stahmann  
**Production Assistant** - Tori Tanner  
**Stage Manager** - Alan Doyle  
**Tour Accountant** - Chris Risner  
**Number 6** - Robert Koenig  
**Sound Geezer (FOH)** - Mick Hughes  
**Monitor Engineer** - Robert Cowan  
**Backline Blokes** - Zach Harmon, Flemming Larsen, Chad Zaemisch, Justin Crew  
**Protools Guru** - Mike Gillies  
**5th Wheel** - Aron Michalski  
**Word Wedge Wizard And Ball Handler** - James 'Full' Nelson  
**Dr Room Coordinator** - Janine 'Bean' Doyle  
**Asst Dressing Room** - Heather 'Foster' Kjollesdal  
**Dr Rooms/Tats** - Frankie Orange  
**Head Carpenter** - Dewey Shepherd  
**Riggers** - Willy Williams, Alert Pozzetti, Chuck Melton  
**Motion Control** - Michael Berger  
**Pyro** - Reid Schulte-Derne, Michael Mcguire, Renato Sulmona  
**Lasers** - Chris Blair  
**Electrician** - Tim 'Nacho' Kitchens  
**Audio Crew Chief** - Paul White  
**Audio Techs** - Jonathan Day, Joe Caruso, Osvaldo Giron, Josh Schmitz, Toshiaki Sugitani, Jubal Reeves  
**Lighting Crew Chief** - James Vollhoffer  
**Lighting Techs** - John Bailey, Neil Davis, David Albert, Rob Chase, Matt Levine, Christopher 'Chrisjen' Schaffer, Cliff Sharpling  
**Syncrolites** - Stanley Kimberlin  
**Met Club** - Jeff 'Fixxxer' Yeager  
**Venue Security** - Michael 'Chubbs' Wozniak  
**Swag Master** - Chris Thomas  
**Swag Slave** - Rich Interlande / Jim Carson  
**Bus Drivers** - Merle Williams, Brian Daigel, Mike Mallett, George Aldridge, James Saam  
**Truck Drivers** - Gary Nall, Randy Rhoton, Tyler Rhoton, Calvin Thigpen, Daniel Thigpen, Chad Mcknight, Dorothy Mcknight, Billy Phillips, Cody Phillips, Rob Belcher, Russ Imperiale, Kevin Thompson, Leon Chee, Chad Holste



Aron Michalski - 5th Wheel

photos by Michael A Beck

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE METALLICA TOUR PRODUCTION TEAM FOR YOUR SUCCESSFUL WORLD MAGNETIC 2009 TOUR



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# PYROTEK: DOUG ADAMS

## Discusses the Effects for Metallica's *World Magnetic Tour*

**When you were young what would you tell your parents you wanted to do?**

When I was a kid, I wanted to become a professional soccer player. I was also very heavy into martial arts. That's where I was going and focused in on that. My problem was I had broken a few bones several times and did some damage to my knee and my career in athletics was over around the age of 16. I had taken up music at the age of 12 and began playing in bands and doing small gigs through high school. I progressed and began playing at clubs by the age of 17. I always wrote my own stuff, and it started to get serious at the age of 18. At that point in my career, I started touring and was signed to a record label with a band out of Los Angeles. One of the guys was out of Ottawa so on my downtime I spent many moments there. At that time, Gordon Hyndford who was our Lighting Director asked me to come and hang out with the crew. Gordon who was only 15 at the time introduced me to the guys at PSL (Professional Sound & Lighting), which had a small pyrotechnics division, called Pyrotek. After doing a number of shows during my downtime, Gordon asked me to shoot some pyro cues, as he was honest with his inability to hit the cues in time. I enjoyed the lighting, but with my musical experience and timing I became the guy pushing the button. As time went on, I would go back to touring and during down time worked with PSL on lighting and pyro but really became fond of the pyro aspect.

**How many years has it now been that you have worked with Metallica? You had for many years worked alongside and toured the world with them. After stepping away, do you ever miss the road and the touring life?**

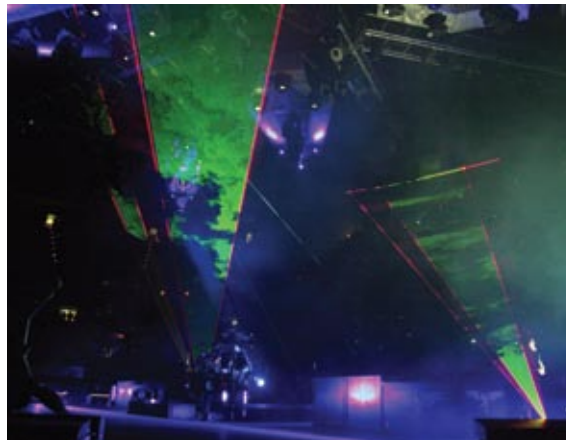
It's been 15 years now that I have worked alongside with Metallica. Do I miss the road? I don't miss the road at all. I don't miss the touring buses, I don't miss the catering, I don't miss the 7:00 a.m. load in and 2:00 a.m. load outs and getting 5 hours of sleep if you're lucky.

**If I asked Doug Adams that same question 15 years ago what would he say?**

Loved It. Absolutely loved it!

**Going into your design for the current Death Magnetic Tour, what inspired the idea of including lasers into the show?**

That was Peter Mensch, Metallica's manager. He wanted something different for the band and wanted to introduce lasers for the tour of their eighth studio album, *St. Anger*.



It was the wrong type of laser technology at that time. What we attempted to accomplish wasn't really achievable based on the laser technology that was available. They were asking for logos and graphics without scrims so we projected on the ceilings, which wouldn't come out clean and also get somewhat lost with lighting. The subs were vibrating so much that our tables could not sustain their alignment. It didn't last very long as we went through so many problems. So when Peter approached me again this time asking for lasers and whether there was a technology change, I responded absolutely! We had just the lasers for it, the air-cooled diode lasers.

**Can you define your design of the lasers for "That Was Just Your Life"? Tell me your game plan as to how you intended to design the laser effects?**

I was working on specific tracks that I thought would work well for the band.

However, John Broderick (Lighting Designer) approached me and explained that he wanted me to do lasers that would fill the arena for one song, for the whole song with minimal lighting, and it was going to open the show. So no pressure...

**Seven plus minutes typically is a long act for a laser display, would you agree? Why did it work so well in this case?**

Absolutely, it worked well because I did a number of time-cue changes and different looks. We were able to go very wide with the coffins in the arena as the stage is set up in the round. I had the lasers in the coffins outside the stage area doing a long throw. I had the lasers in the coffins above the stage focused on the guys and boarding them. I followed the whole feel of the music and tried to think where the guys were going to be and what they were going to be doing during certain parts. I tried to either silhouette them with the lasers or add accents around the mike stands where they were going to be. It's hard to tell where James is going to be at any given time, so I had to have them all sequenced as James had the flexibility to go to any of the eight mike stands on the stage. He wanted to be able to have the flexibility to just do anything at any given time, any night; so we had to make it happen.

**What things did you find difficult to accomplish?**

It's the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary for *And Justice for All*; I was expecting a monstrous war scene for *one*. Going into the demos, I programmed a heavy full-on design for the band. There was a smoke issue with James. He really wanted us to try and produce the effects without emitting smoke. We were very limited with what we could do and had to become very creative. That brought us to the gas effects; we encompassed our Dragons, colored fire and war flame effects on the deck, which creates a low-lying after-burn look. I did a very asymmetrical design with the Dragons and war flames. The color flames are hidden between the amps; the Dragons and war flames are all

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# Thunder Audio

## A Small Company Doing Big Things

In January 2009, Paul Owen stepped from behind the monitor desk for the last time after 23 years on the road with super group Metallica. Since then, he has been able to use his 30 years of road experience to guide Thunder Audio into becoming a Premier player in the touring production world. Owen joined the team from Livonia, Michigan 10 years ago “purely by accident,” he says. **by BILL ABNER**

As Metallica was passing thru Detroit for a State Fair date, Owen had the opportunity to chat with Thunder owner Tony Villareal. After some discussion about how they both would do things with the band and for the business in general, Owen was offered a chance to become a part of Thunder and to have an influence on how they would operate the business and provide audio for Metallica and others.

That “accident” has been fortuitous for both parties. “We’ve come from being a small regional sound company doing one-offs, to a large international company competing with the big boys out there,” says Owen. And as if Metallica weren’t a good enough example of its success, how about Steely Dan or Allison Krauss? Not big enough? How about Diana Ross, Dolly Parton or Marilyn Manson? All of these

acts and a page full of others have signed on with this “small” regional sound company.

“Small,” however, could be a misnomer for one of the largest Meyer distributors in the country. With close to 200 Meyer Milo boxes on the Metallica tour, in addition to all the other shows Thunder has out on the road, “huge” would be a more appropriate adjective.

So how does a company with all of these tools approach a show such as this year’s *Death Magnetic* tour? “Metallica has been doing in-the-round shows for years, but in 1994 we got involved with Meyer Sound,” says Owen. “They came in and shot the rooms for us with their MAP program. We experimented with the system on some Rod Stewart shows and had a lot of success with it, but we knew the SPL levels would be a lot different for Metallica.” One area it experimented with in particular was with the placement of the subwoofers.

The midrange and highs coverage was pretty easy to obtain through line array technology, but with regards to the sub distribution, that’s something that the band’s FOH engineer, legendary ear “Big” Mick Hughes, really wanted to get right. During a few promo shows in Europe, along with Meyer designers from Germany, Thunder flew a sub array in the middle of the arena under the scoreboard that consisted of four columns of Meyer HP700 subs in a circle, 10 boxes deep with no other subs on the floor. According to Owen, the results were “spectacular,” and this is the first time they’ve ever been able to achieve totally even sub coverage in an arena.

“With Meyer’s *Compass* and *Galileo* programs, we’re able to steer the bass columns up and down and focus them where we want them in relation to the arena we’re in,” said Owen. Thunder has since brought the design on back to America, where the team has been able to use it in about 70 percent of the arenas where the show has since played.

Another innovation that this group of pros has taken advantage of is the use of fiber optics to control the PA. Owen went on to

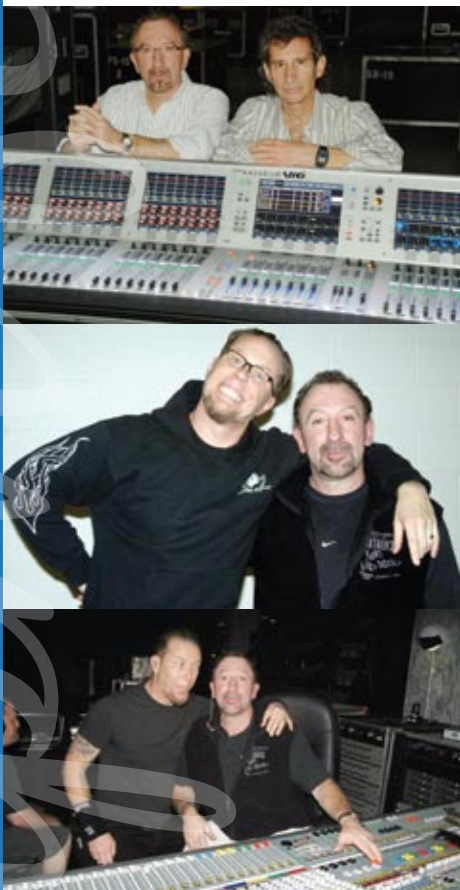
say, “In the past we’ve had to run just miles and miles of copper heading up into the grid. Now we come out of the Midas XL8 into the *Galileo*, and then we go analog out of the *Galileo* into 4 A to D *Apogee* 16 channel converters. Then we go *Lightwiper* fiber optics right the way up to the grid, into 4 more D to A converters in each corner of the grid where they then distribute the signal to the PA.” The only things heading skyward now are cam-locs for power and fiber optics. It’s come a long way, baby!

Those innovations alone have resulted in less weight roaming around the country in trucks, less weight in the sky and quicker load in and load out times. “They can load out this whole system now in just over an hour,” brags Owen.

Probably the biggest sign of the times on this show is the ability to record, mix and distribute the show to the web immediately. Using the Midas XL8 and sending it into an IR box located in the dressing room area, Mike “the ProTools guy” sits back there on an SSL console with 48 channels of show coming at him and mixes the show for immediate upload to the Internet. So the fans can now leave the arena, go home and download the show they’ve just seen and been a part of.

But even with all of these new-fangled gadgets, and fiber optics, and digital consoles and whatnot, there’s still a touch of the old school. The monitor desk of choice still is the Midas XL4. “There’s just nothing like it. We keep trying to decide which new digital desk will take its place but so far we keep coming back to the XL4,” says Owen.

Bottom line, Owen says his company is still just a small company that’s able to do big things because of great tools, great people, and great service. “Nowadays, with the technology out there, any company can be a great sound company. It doesn’t have to be a big hulking organization to do a great job and be successful. We also owe a huge debt to our manufacturers such as Meyer and Midas. The products they’ve been giving us over the last four or five years have been hugely successful and allowed us to be successful as well.” ☺





# Thunder Audio

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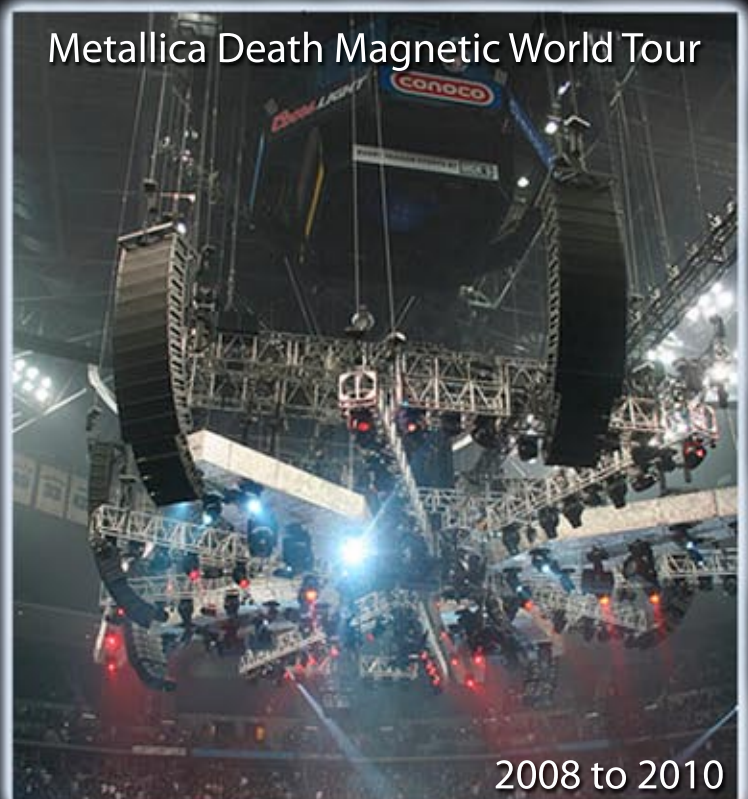
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# Premier Global Productions

## Proves It Can Shorten the Longest Day

by MIKE WHARTON

**F**our spotlights and a truck. It's hard to imagine the company known as Premier Global Productions today once boasted those assets as their full inventory, servicing Canadian arenas in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Then again, it was almost 40 years ago that Troy Vollhoffer, president and owner of PGP, spent his summer vacations helping his dad and uncle in the family business. Along the way, staging and roofing structures were added to support their enterprise in the outdoor concert festival business. By the mid 1990s, Vollhoffer had expanded operations to Nashville, incorporating lighting rigs into the company inventory.

In 2001, after being awarded the Backstreet Boys *Black and Blue Tour*, Vollhoffer was looking for a lighting crew chief for the project. Steven "Creech" Anderson, a concert touring veteran with close to 30 years in the business as production manager and lighting director as well as crew chief told *mobile Production monthly* what happened next.

"I had just finished the Tim McGraw/ Faith Hill *Soul to Soul Tour* for Production Resource Group and was literally unpacking my stuff in the garage in Dallas when I got a call from Brian Leedham who suggested I give a call to a friend of his and check out the offer. After three or four sentences with Troy, I signed on."

During the course of the tour, Creech came to the decision this would be his "last hurrah." Coincidentally Vollhoffer offered him the position of Vice President of Lighting Sales. Terms were agreed upon and Nashville became home. At the time, Backstreet Boys and O-Town were the only clients the newly appointed VP had. Given the long-term experience he had with larger, better known lighting companies in the past it seemed an odd choice to go with a smaller company like Premier.

Creech explains, "That's exactly why I went with them because they were small but big enough to do large tours and still service and take care of the client. To me,

that is the most important part of this whole business. It's not the gear; lights are lights, you know, it's the service that puts you above all the rest." That small company atmosphere is also evident in the close working relationship he has with Vollhoffer. The two of them sit down and discuss all issues pertaining to the lighting division. The lighting inventory has grown during the last 9 years, an ESP Visualization suite has been added as well as a warehouse to hang lighting rigs for tour prep. Creech is clearly aware of the value of a good working relationship with sub-vendors as well, again emphasizing how important they are to the overall picture.

Creech applies this hand-on approach to each lighting project as well, going over the rig with the crew chief and discussing all its aspects. "Every project has its degree of difficulty; it's how you deal with that degree of difficulty that makes you stand out," he says. Just as an experienced crew chief details his rig, crew and daily deployment prior to first show, Creech approached his transition to his new position at Premier in the same way.

"I called every production manager I'd worked with in the past and let them know what I was doing. I must have done something right because they all brought their business to us," Creech says. Since 2002, the Premier roster has grown to include Bette Midler, Tim McGraw, Def Leppard,

Rush, Neil Diamond, Wilco, and Lynyrd Skynyrd to name a few. It is currently out on tour they have Metallica, 311 and Taylor Swift.

For the 2004 Presidential Inaugural, Premier lit the Commander in Chief Ball at the National Building Museum. "That," says Creech, "is the coolest thing I think I've ever done."

Arriving at the spot occupied now, he credits to Brian Leedham. "Brian is one of my main mentors; he brought me to where I am today," says Creech, "and John Reid, one of my earliest mentors, he really showed me the ropes when first started."

Another pivotal influence in Creech's life is long time Tim McGraw Tour Manager Robert Allen. "A long time ago when I was working for Tim McGraw Robert told me things like, 'when you come to Nashville you keep your hat tight and boots pulled up and good things will happen to you.'"

When asked what gets him up every morning, what inspires him, he says, "My work ethic, which my Dad taught me. He told me a long time ago, nothing in life is free, and you'll always work for everything you get. That and the 50 or 60 guys in this company that count on me for work and their families well being. That is something that really drives me."

However, the work ethic that Creech talks about is only half of the equation. The other half is passion. While Creech won't go as far as to say that he would do this work for free if he had the means, he does confess that he wouldn't do anything else. "You have to have a passion for what you do. And we have that burning passion. We're excited about what we're doing. We're excited about the business we're in."

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Euphoria continued from 9

gee whiz, with the big boys owning radio stations, ticketing, venues etc.; it makes it awfully hard to compete for talent. I think fans are starting...no fans *are* sick of being taken advantage of and are simply giving up on overpriced, over-hyped live shows where they are treated like cattle.”

**What’s your best-ever business decision so far?**

“Starting Euphoria Event Solutions, by far! I have truly found my calling, and this line of work fits my lifestyle and personality perfectly.”

**If I had to do it all over again, I would...**

“...study to be a film director. I have always wanted to write and direct a movie.”

**What do you love about the music business?**

“I really enjoy working with so many creative, interesting and motivated people in this industry.”

**What do you hate about the music business?**

“The sick hours. Ouch!”

**Any projects on the horizon that you’d like to talk about?**

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recessed beneath the grills under the stage so you don't see anything at all.

**What safety measures do you have to account for the effect designs, and how do you orchestrate the safety measures to the band.**

With the lasers, I terminate everything. I hit the down stage edges where I have the mirrors. I terminate around Lars and his drum kit and on the amp-line which is in the center. Nothing actually physically beam-wise with intensity hits the band. That said, the laser part was actually easy, the hard part was the pyro end of it as always. I always

have effects all over the place, in the grating and in the round, and it's asymmetrical. I do a layout of the safe zones for the band; every microphone is a safe zone. The closest effect is eight feet back from the microphone so it doesn't matter if they are standing at the microphone at any time; if any pyro goes off they are always safe. I also had some spots that Kirk or Robert can drift and go to on the stage by Lars or the downstage edge. This is all done through rehearsals. I mark the zones with an "X" with their name, the pyro cue and song. James is never a problem, Robert is overly concerned which is good for

me, and I really focus on Kirk the most as he wonders quite a bit. As Reid Schult-Derne, our touring shooter, comes in for me the band can become a little uneasy. As we make this transition, I do this with anybody I work with; I circle the band during the rehearsals in the pit. I get their attention and ensure they see me before the cue, and I point to their locations. We work on this so by the end of rehearsals everyone is comfortable and on the same page. If for any reason there is something out of line, we stick to our rule of thumb "when in doubt, leave it out."

**With the current technology, you use lasers that are a diode state, low power consumption, full color, high wattage output, with endless mounting capabilities. What, if any, expectations do you have for lasers in the entertainment world to take it to the next level?**

I absolutely have expectations for laser technology advancements. I expect there to be holographic effects. It exists out there right now, but you still need a foil screen and bounce reflection. It's not true holography. I want it to become true holography projection that is 360 degrees, something that you can stand right beside and walk around that is life-sized. It will get there, no question.

**As an entrepreneur, what keeps you up at night? When you constantly strive to make all our projects as great as they can be, constantly evolving, constantly refining, etc. can you ever go to sleep satisfied that what you've been working on is done? Is it ever done—or is it just "as far as you can take it today."**

There are times that we get requests for effects that we have and are told by clients how they want them to be utilized. When you know the effect can be so much more, it is difficult to see the creativity aspect of the design come short of its potential. I have what I want in my mind and what it should look like. I do stay up many nights thinking about what's next, what I can do that's going to blow everybody's mind, and when it doesn't do it, that can cause frustration. So I'm always thinking how we can step it up, change things up and be the innovator and not the imitator. ☺



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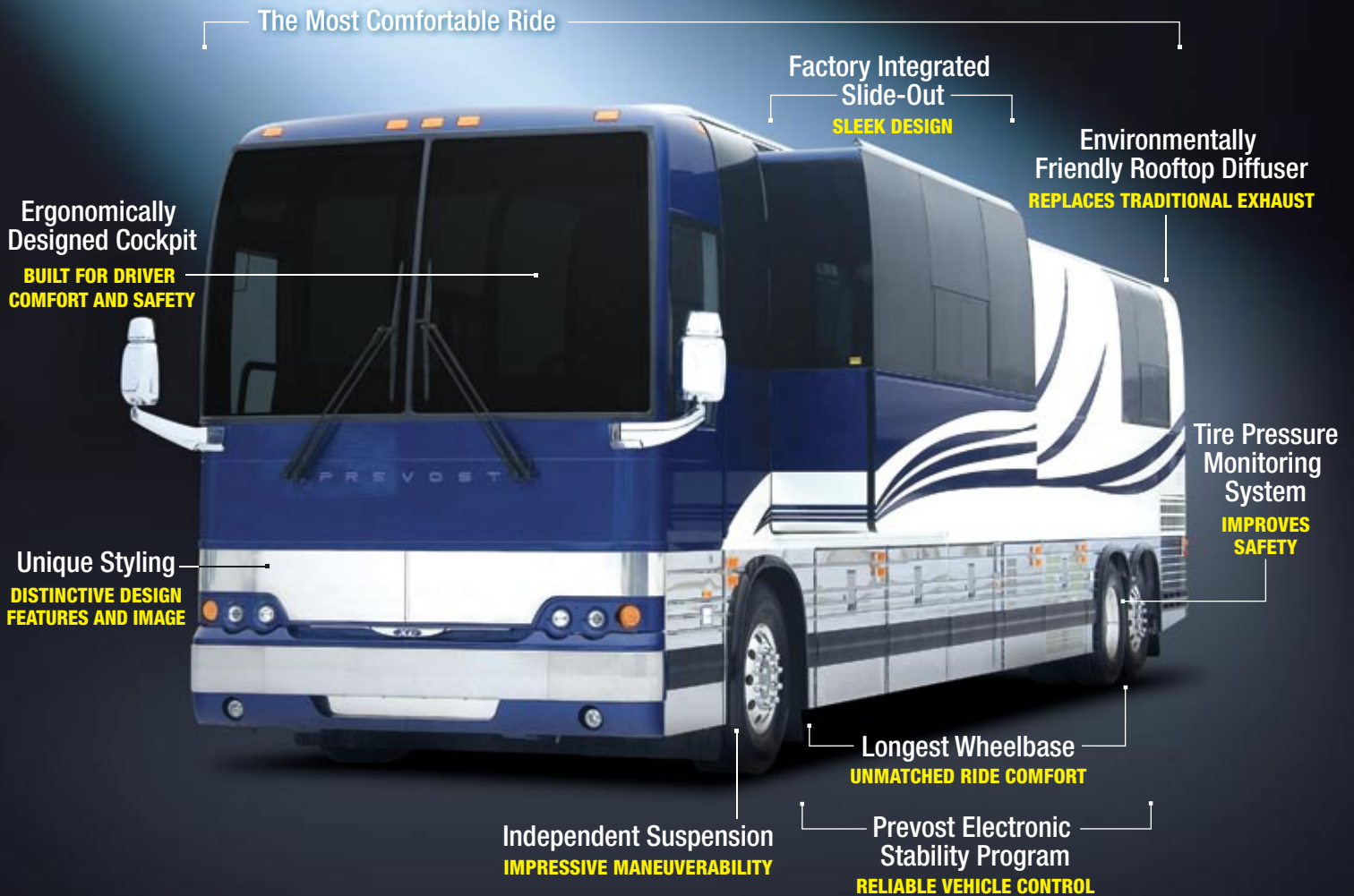
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