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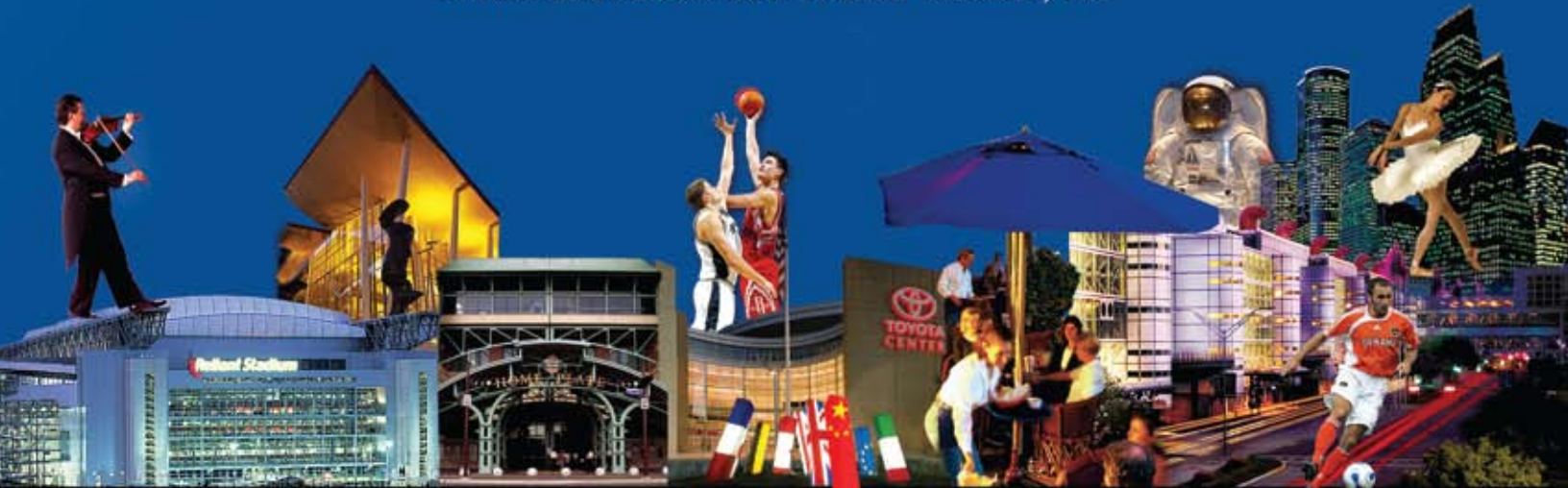
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FROM THE *Publisher*



In this issue, our cover story is the Bon Jovi tour. Many of the regular production and service companies are involved, but as we have tried to do for some time, we are looking a little deeper and have decided to focus on three companies that have not previously had a lot of industry coverage; Brothers Merchandising, TourTechSupport and RGB Lights. We think you will enjoy reading about these fine companies and their contributions to the tour.

Now that summer is on us and tours are out, we should be mindful that the effects of the recession are still creating problems. Money is still tight and although the negative impact of these economic factors can weigh heavily on all of us, these conditions are forcing companies and individuals to examine the way we have been conducting business. Clearly, some things must change, and change never comes easily. Pricing, budgeting, marketing, expansion or consolidation are issues that seem to be in a state of flux.

This may be a time for tour and production managers to examine the way bids are processed and deals cut. Saving pennies for a tour may have a trickle-down effect that can cause long-term damage to some parts of our business. It may be time for us to consider the over-all health of the industry and the need to support healthy competition. The last thing our part of the industry needs is another round of consolidations that limit choice. There is also a clear need for segments of our industry to band together and form professional associations to assist in securing a better future for companies and individuals.

It may be boring to think of insurance, retirement, savings, credit unions and educational needs for a person or company on tour, but it is dangerous to ignore these needs. The establishment of professional standards and a group pool for benefits is not a call to unionize. This is a call to professionalize, as most other professions have for many years. It is time for us to stop thinking as a band of gypsies and behave as the professionals we are and see to the long-term needs of the individuals who make our business possible.

Larry Smith

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BY TOUR GUIDES

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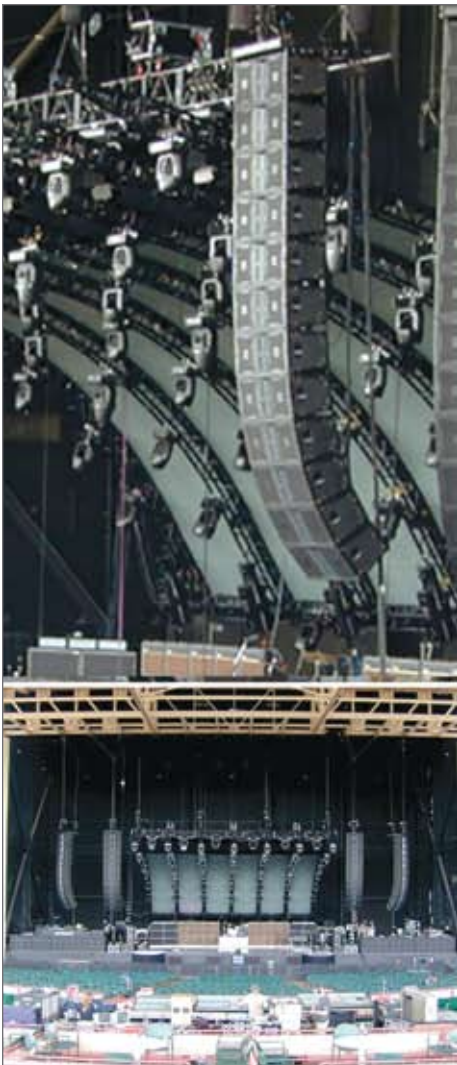
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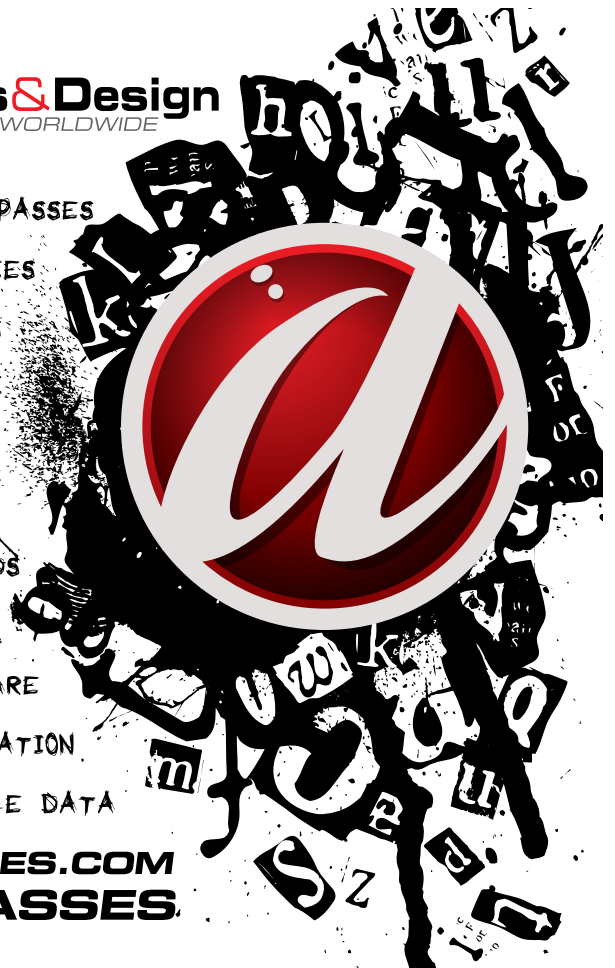
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↓ New OTTO Embossed Stick-on Passes

↑ LOTO Custom Die-Cut Satin Stick-on for Springsteen '80 Tour Madison Square Garden

↑ LOTO Custom Die-Cut Satin Stick-on for Springsteen '80 Tour Indianapolis

↑ New OTTO Embossed Stick-on Passes

↑ The first Hot-Stamp Foil used by OTTO for Bill Graham Presents Rolling Stones in red metallic tongue logo

OTTO PRINTING Kicking Counterfeit Butt, One Pass at a Time

by JESSI WALLACE

It isn't unknown that one of the biggest battles in the concert touring industry is the counterfeiting of concert passes and tickets. With little success, pass companies have been trying to come up with a strategy to bring this battle to an end. However, OTTO Printing has managed to take the problem by the reins and come up with products that are hands-down the most unique and problem-solving inventions in the world of passes. "We believe that printing is both art and science. Truly great creative work is priceless in today's market. Security is of the utmost importance," OTTO says. The industry's counterfeit concerns got OTTO thinking and prompted changes in the way it prints credentials.

It's no surprise that the owner, Dave Otto, is respectfully known as "The Grandfather" of the pass industry. He's been in the printing biz since the 60s and has set the standard for today's passes. When the concert industry started booming and printing became much more sophisticated, OTTO invented the backstage pass system. The first OTTO pass systems consisted of laminates, lanyards, satin stick-on passes, luggage tags, case labels, door signs and pass I.D. boards for security personnel. The concept of credentials began to catch on. The pass not only indicated you were allowed inside, but also allowed in certain areas that other people might not be authorized to enter.

Back in the day, as copy machines became more popular and counterfeit attempts escalated, hot-stamp foil was introduced by OTTO. Hot-stamped foil was added to tickets, satin stick-on passes and laminates to deter copying and the metallic special effect allowed logos, images and lettering to really stand out in the design. OTTO's first hot-stamp foil ticket was printed for Bill Graham's 1981 Rolling Stones Tour featuring the famous Stone's tongue in red foil.

There is quite a list of "firsts" for OTTO... first to print full color on satin

stick-on passes, first to custom-specify a satin cloth stock, first to die-cut shapes... the list goes on. One of the most impressive "firsts" for OTTO, and the pass industry in general, is the brand new patent-pending liquid laminate process: The Ultimate Laminate. The Ultimate Laminate is a pass with a holographic flake coating that is virtually impossible for counterfeiters to imitate. Copy machines cannot reproduce the three-dimensional holographic effect. The Ultimate Laminate is available in three patterns: radiant clear, speckle and crackle. The big kicker: adding the liquid laminate process to the passes only adds 17 cents per badge.

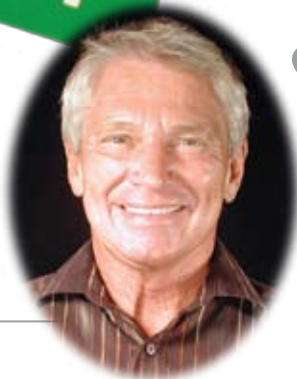
The Ultimate Laminate is budget friendly and saves tours from the headache of counterfeit passes. It has been said that on a sunny day, the holographic images can be seen from a block away. They are unlike anything this industry has ever seen. When Hank Williams, Jr. was working with OTTO on the passes for his tour, he took one look at the holographic and fell in love. He canned the entire first design of passes and decided to start over, using this incredible new process instead.

The liquid laminate isn't the only new trick up OTTO's sleeves. There is also a hot



↑ New OTTO Embossed Stick-on Passes

pictured right: Dave Otto, Owner



new embossed stick-on pass that looks like, feels like and wears like the traditional satin stick-on the industry is used to, but they are far less expensive. OTTO had already set the industry standard back in 1974 with the world's first satin cloth backstage pass. Now OTTO has taken it to the next level using the same adhesive on the back, an embossed gradient pattern and a full color printing system.

Dave Otto has worked hard over the last 30 years to provide the best badges in the industry, but it isn't only about the tour's security... it's also about those who keep the tour employed: the fan. "I have always preached that we want to give not only the *best* badge for security, but the *best looking* badge for that fan! It's a keepsake... a memento... a collectable. We work closely with the customers to make sure the badge looks amazing," Otto shared. OTTO printing is a company of integrity that strives to establish and maintain relationships that foster loyalty and trust. It continues to offer new products, provide custom services, utilize new marketing techniques and provide value to customers.

For additional information on how to provide the safest and more unique passes for an upcoming tour, visit ottoprint.com. From the STAFF at *mobile Production monthly*, HAPPY 60th BIRTHDAY Dave Otto! 🎉

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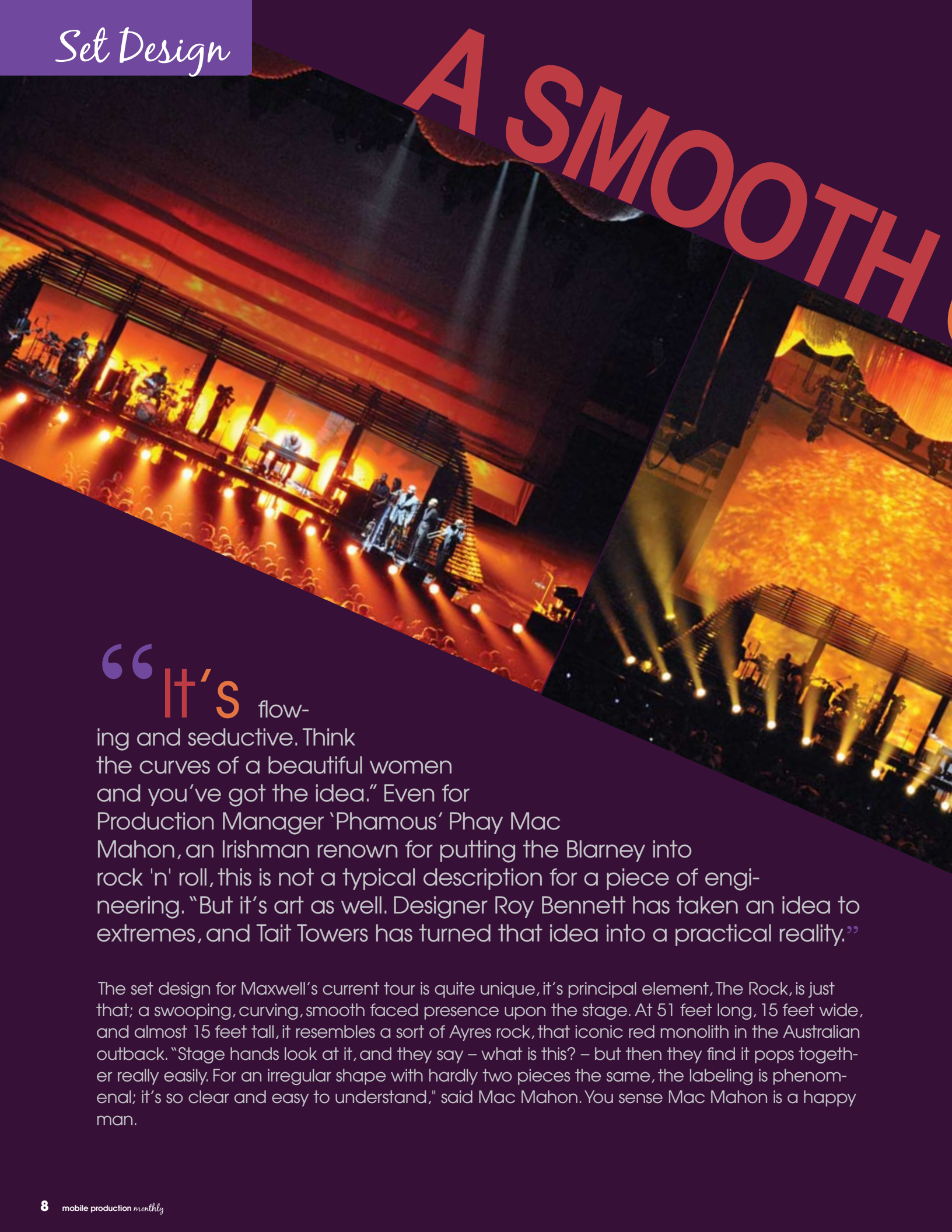
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Production Manager ‘Phamous’ Phay Mac
Mahon, an Irishman renown for putting the Blarney into
rock ‘n’ roll, this is not a typical description for a piece of engi-
neering. “But it’s art as well. Designer Roy Bennett has taken an idea to
extremes, and Tait Towers has turned that idea into a practical reality.”

The set design for Maxwell’s current tour is quite unique, it’s principal element, The Rock, is just that; a swooping, curving, smooth faced presence upon the stage. At 51 feet long, 15 feet wide, and almost 15 feet tall, it resembles a sort of Ayres rock, that iconic red monolith in the Australian outback. “Stage hands look at it, and they say – what is this? – but then they find it pops together really easily. For an irregular shape with hardly two pieces the same, the labeling is phenomenal; it’s so clear and easy to understand,” said Mac Mahon. You sense Mac Mahon is a happy man.



MAXWELL OPERATOR

“Here I am today in Wisconsin, it’s our fifth show and it’s 11:00 a.m. Nine trucks all tipped, lighting rig’s floating, half the PA is up, main stage from Tait Rental is built; and the Rock as we call it, is finished. I have just three carpenters, one for stage, one for the Rock and its rear projection screens, and one for the Austrian,” said Mac Mahon.

The Rear Projection screens, five of them mounted seamlessly within the Rock by Tait, provide the visual dynamic and drama so essential for Maxwell’s sophisticated take on soul. Upstage the Rock an Austrian drape follows similar contours, curving sixty foot across stage. Hung as a three dimensional sheath of viole, it envelops truss and floor lighting, providing a soft, sensuous backdrop to the stage. But perhaps most sensual of all is what Bennett refers to as ‘the Wave’. Again a 3D drape structure, this time arcing 80 feet out over the audience, visually it flows like billowing clouds, framing and caressing the scene below. “The Austrian is built around a custom Tait truss,” explained Mac Mahon. “Because of that the gear mechanisms are all built into it so it’s fast and easy. The hanging space for all the lighting elements from Upstaging are right there, so it’s perfect. One motor drives the whole thing and I have to say it’s a wonderful piece of engineering. The Wave is equally fast; Tait built the truss mounted 3D hanging contours out of carbon fiber rods so it’s really light and strong. The whole set just flows; you could say it purrs like a woman.” But then wasn’t that always Maxwell’s intention? ☺

☐ **Tait Towers provides the following elements:**

- 63' x 48' main stage with gloss black deck surface
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- Five integrated RP screens
- 60' curved truss Austrian 'envelope' drape truss 6'6" deep, 27'0" tall
- Custom 3D drapes 80' long with integrated framing and support structure

The Giants & Jets Have a Shiny New House

Named New Meadowlands Stadium



by MICHAEL A. BECK

Earlier this year East Rutherford, New Jersey opened the doors to its new stadium aptly named New Meadowlands Stadium. This new home of the New York Giant and Jets dwarfs the “Old” Meadowlands Stadium. This fact was made painfully obvious to those who miss the previous home of New Jersey’s New York football teams, which was half way through the demolition process as the doors opened for the first events in the new house.

The old building covered a total foot print of 900,000 square feet where the new facility takes up 2,030,000 square feet. That is a bit puzzling when one considers that there are only 2,258 more seats than the old house. With well over twice the total area as the old venue and only a couple thousand more seats, what’s going into all that extra space? The new venue has 374 more restrooms, the average concourse width twenty-feet wider, there are four locker rooms (Giants, Jets and two visitors) and two equally sized visitor rooms. There is also a 10,000-square-foot team store, which is only slightly larger than the 1,664 square feet store in the old place.



newmeadowlandstadium.com

The building also has 222 suites on four different levels. The amenities suite owners are offered include a private access road to VIP parking, private entrance and lobby, private suite level, multiple flat screen TV’s, wet bar and refrigerator. For those who want to have the experience of seeing the game in the cold as it’s being played, the suites also have from 16 to 22 open air seats.

The stadium also features 130,000 square feet of club / lounge area. The East and West Clubs are located along the sideline mezzanines on the east and west side of the stadium and span over a total of 42,000 square feet. These clubs feature executive chefs, wood fire pizza ovens, sushi stations, martini bars as well as private VIP entrances.

The Coaches Club is a unique space that features an on-field



deck only five yards from the home team's bench. The deck isn't the only attribute that makes this 14,600 square foot space distinctive. After the games the people in the lounge will be able to view post-game interviews with players and coaches in a glassed in press area.

For an esthetically warmer, more intimate environment there is the Commissioner's Club, which offers hardwood floors, two luxurious fireplaces and built-in buffet stations. This space has elevator access directly into the club.

All in all, the club and VIP areas account for over 10,000 of the venue's seats.

One major part of the stadium experience no matter the event is video presentation whether it's being used for real time I-MAG or replay. New Meadowlands Stadium is not lacking in video surface. The bowl features four 30 x 113 foot HD video displays. Additionally there are over 2,100 HD monitors located around the building each capable of receiving 70 channels of cable and broadcast programming as well as custom stadium programming.

There are also 20 pylons positioned around the outside the building that are 20 feet wide and range in height from 40 to 60 feet tall.

The field surface of the stadium is FieldTurf, which, for the uninitiated, is a synthetic turf system that supports the monofilament blades of grass in a thick bed of smooth-sided rounded cryogenic rubber and

silica sand. The misconception that is taken from a first glance is that the playing surface is the blades of grass.

Actually the synthetic grass serves more as a containment system for the "infill," which is the fore mentioned rubber and silica sand. However, the construct of the actual blades is such that when the players do come in contact with it the risk of abrasion is well reduced. The combination of the grass and infill creates a playing surface that is more forgiving than anything that has come before it including actual terra firma. The result is a sports field that is more durable than and less maintenance intensive than anything on the market today. The most important benefit is that FieldTurf has been shown to dramatically lessen abrasions as well as neural and joint injuries. That being said, the playing surface for international soccer events in the stadium will be natural grass, which will be temporarily applied over the FieldTurf.

The "backstage" aspects are fairly basic as removal of the previous building had to be carried out slowly and carefully in order to avoid damaging the new one.

However, when the job is done, the final parking layout will accommodate 28,000 cars and the largest tours on Earth will be able to store their vehicles with ease. One thing that lightens the load of parking is the fact that the construction project included a stop on the New Jersey Transit rail line. While this station is only open for event traffic, it is able to handle 10,000 people per hour. The ride from the stadium to Penn Station in either New York, NY or Newark, NJ is a scant 20 minutes.

Other measures to make parking at the stadium easier include a total redesign of the old parking system that will have parking lines radiating out from the stadium and an increase in the number of access lanes from 17 to 38.

With the old stadium only holding 2,258 fewer seats than the new house, it was not the intent to dramatically increase the number of people who can fit into the building but to dramatically enhance the experience of those who have been coming to the Meadowlands since 1976. There can be no questioning the success of that goal. The only problem seen in the immediate future of the New Meadowlands Stadium is getting the people to take their eyes off the stadium itself and focus on what they paid to come see in the first place. 🤖



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PYROTEK SPECIAL EFFECTS Creates an Explosive Opening

BON JOVI
at the New Meadowlands Stadium

Pyrotek Special Effects added 1,400 effects to each of Bon Jovi's three consecutive performances as he kicked off the inaugural concert series to sold-out audiences at the New Meadowlands Stadium May 26, 27 and 29.

Special Effects Designers Doug Adams and Lorenzo Cornacchia were approached by Production Director John Hougdaahl and Production Designer Doug "Spike" Brant to implement a large-scale showcase of Pyro for the three consecutive shows. Adams and Cornacchia collaborated to create a stadium pyrotechnics display that would resemble that of a Super Bowl halftime show. Pyrotek's Production Manager, Fiona Thain, directed the logistical and permitting operations to ensure that

the massive pyro display was approved and in line with all jurisdictional requirements. Dealing with the New Jersey Department of Public Affairs, the New Jersey Division of Fire and Safety and the Federal Aviation Authority, she coordinated all permitting, testing, demos and onsite inspections for the event.

The pyro was laid out across 52 individual positions throughout the stadium. Twelve positions were placed backstage along the 200-level, which started detonating to Bon Jovi's last song before the encore, *Keep The Faith*. Forty additional rack positions containing 300 comets, mines and multi-shot boards were situated around the rooftop covering a distance of one linear mile. Pyro Crew Chief Bob Ross worked with Mike Devlin (Stage Manager), Mike Farese (Operations Manager & Head Rigger) and Gordon Hyndford (Onsite Coordinator) along with a team of 10 pyrotechnicians to complete the setup and assembly of this massive pyrotechnics display.

The initial setup took two and a half days to load in, setup, demo and rehearse with all the product. Additionally after each show, it would take 12 hours to set up which included an 8-hour time frame for the pyro



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team to strictly reload all the product. “The last chorus of *Keep The Faith* started the barrage of pyro cues from the backstage area. The cool and dynamic elements to this display were the series of chases and scenes fired around the circumference of the entire stadium,” commented Cornacchia. Adams shot the show from a series of Pyrodigital controllers with a right and left handed control pickle. He had a direct in-ear mix to Bon Jovi when he cued the effects so there would be no delay.

Neil Ryan, Director of Production with AEG Live Northeast, commented, “Working with the entire Pyrotek team to open the New Meadowlands Stadium was an absolute pleasure. There were plans to present the Pyro on the Grand Opening only...after such a spectacular and impressive display it seemed impossible to not have the display for the remaining two shows. Opening a new venue can be difficult but the attention to detail that Pyrotek provided us made what could have been a very difficult task seem effortless. The Fire Marshall and Venue were thrilled with the professionalism that Pyrotek offered.”

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KOSHER PIXEL

Video Content with A “360” Approach

by MICHAEL A. BECK

By 2000, Marcia Kapustin had amassed an eclectic resume in television that had her doing political programming at the Chamber of Commerce in Washington DC and working for the Baltimore Ravens football franchise among other projects. During her time with the Ravens, Kapustin helped build and design the first digital in-stadium video system boasting the world’s largest permanent installation of LED screens.

In 2000, Kapustin became involved in touring concert video production, and since then she has worked with such acts as Paul McCartney, U2, Bon Jovi, The Rolling Stones, Elton John and Aerosmith as a director, technical director and programmer. While out on the Rolling Stones 2003-2004 “Licks” Tour, Kapustin became acquainted with Marcus Lyall who was programming the show for Willie Williams. Lyall had been making his bones doing everything from creating slide and film shows in London’s underground music scene to large scale stadium rock shows.

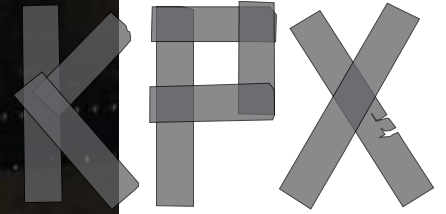
The two hit it off instantly and the idea was born to create a company that would generate video content for touring shows. Between Kapustin’s production experience and strong business background and



Marcus Lyall & Marcia Kapustin at the Bon Jovi Show.
kpxvideo.com

Lyall’s hands on creative style with a formal design education, the two seemed to fit together like a lock and key. “It’s a really nice partnership,” Kapustin told us. “We both have very distinct roles, but we’re very dependent on each other. We worked so long together and so closely that we’re in pretty good step with each other. I feel very fortunate to be working with Marcus.”

From their working together on the tour came Kosher Pixels or KPX, which is a company that specializes in creating video content for concerts and other kinds of live events wherein Kapustin functions as the producer and business manager and Lyall is the creative director. KPX comes into project as early on as possible and sees it through to rehearsals and beyond. One thing that KPX is very serious about is that the content it provides is all original. Kapustin explained, “We supply our clients with primary content. We’re not big fans of stock footage. Obviously there are times when there is a call for that, but for the most part everything we do is created specifically for our client whether it’s film, video or graphics and animation.”



Possessing the experience of having actually toured and run video systems on the road, something which they both still do, gives Kapustin & Lyall an intrinsic understanding of how to do the company’s work. Because the process of creating content often takes place on

a somewhat tight timeline and last minute changes can often be the norm, KPX placed a high priority on building a strong IT system into the company early on. This allows for the ability to submit rushes to the client as the work is being done so that if alterations to the project need to be done there is a minimal amount of time consuming reworking of the job.

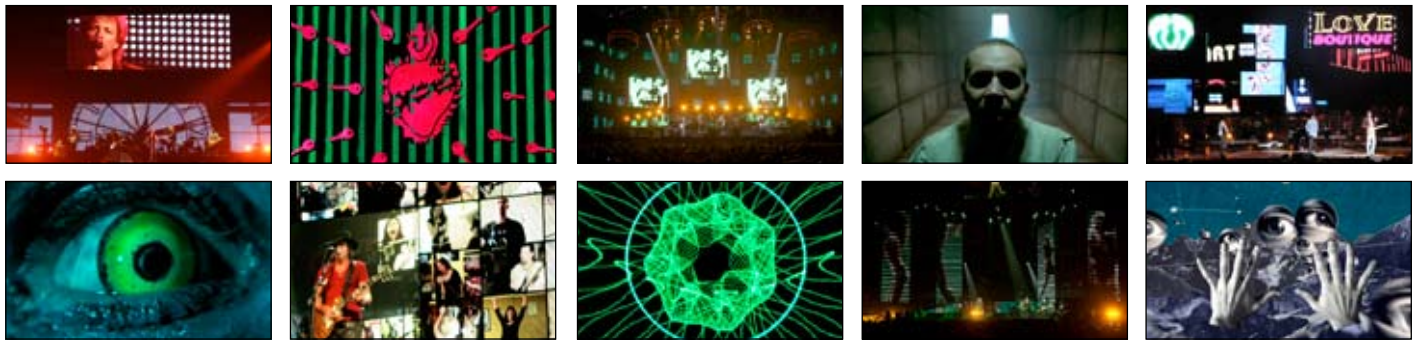
One aspect of the company that Kapustin emphasized in our conversation with her is the company’s on-site presence. “We had four full blown HD editing systems in rehearsals for the [current] Bon Jovi tour,” She recalled. “We were able to link into their screen systems, view playback and make any kinds of changes that were need right there on-site.” Because there was a somewhat abbreviated timeline leading up to delivery on the Bon Jovi *The Circle Tour*, the workload was spread over eight people handling various aspects of the job. But when it moved into rehearsals the team was cut back to four; the fore mentioned Kapustin & Lyall as well as editors Craig Coutryman and Mark Logue who showed up and finished the job.

While the work KPX is doing with video content for shows is impressive and stands on its own, there is more to what the company does. In short, the notion of video content creation can mean a number of various things. For example, Bon Jovi has a project called Livin' On A Prayer wherein fans were encouraged to do their best performance of the hit song and submit it to prayer.bonjovi.com (which is a website built by KPX). Their performances would be considered to be placed in a montage that would be played in the song dur-

ing the show when it came to the town of the winners. All of this was produced and managed by KPX. This points out what Kapustin calls an organic or "360" approach to the idea of "content." It makes a jump from video being a movie up on a screen to a full on interactive experience for the crowd, which she intends to bring to the sports world as well as any other area of entertainment where it will fit.

Since its formation in 2003, Kosher Pixels

has acquired a client base that includes Bon Jovi, Brooks & Dunn, Metallica, The Chemical Brothers, The Rolling Stones and Eagles with little sign of slowing down. However, there is a company ethos that guards against the trap of over growth. "We do this because we love the job," said Kapustin. "But we have no desire to grow just for the sake of being bigger. It's not that we don't want to grow, but we're not going to do it at the expense of our credibility." 🙏



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ARCH MASTERS OF THE STADIUM SHOW



“Even by the standards of Bon Jovi, this was breathtaking,” was just one of the comments from fans that attended the opening spectacular of Bon Jovi’s latest stadium tour. What caused the Hershey, Pa. fans to gasp for breath? The latest grand design concept from Doug ‘Spike’ Brant, and yet another lesson in how to make the magnificent manageable by set builders Tait Towers.

“Spike’s concept for a huge arch of video wall behind the stage really catapults the band and their show into every seat in the house,” said Tait Towers’ VP Adam Davis. “This isn’t simple I-MAG for sixty-thousand people, it’s completely atmospheric; but to make it look so good and keep it in the realms of do’ able and affordable we’ve done something quite unique.”

The screen system, which took

eight weeks to build, is 115’ wide by 50’ high, forming a perfect ellipse. That’s a lot of screen; over four thousand square feet and more than 750,000 pixels. “Yet it virtually folds down into a hamper!” exclaimed Davis. Transported in 15 specialized dollies, the 9,900 lb. screen takes less than three hours to set up for each show.

“But what’s really cool about the screen system is its custom cli-

ent element,” explained Davis. “Fred Opsomer, who heads up our Belgium-based Tait Technologies division, sourced the perfect screen module for this particular project. Fred is arguably the most knowledgeable LED screen expert in the world, certainly for touring applications. He consulted heavily with the Band, Production, and Spike - identified their precise needs, consolidated them - and then sourced the ideal manufactured LED modules direct. That’s four thousand square feet of custom tailoring, and it’s never been done before.”

The Tait screen frame structure imbues the screen with a 40MPH wind loading.

The self-weight of screen modules is 9,872 lbs with a total screen system weight 12,272 lbs.

Tait Towers has supplied Bon Jovi with a complete integrated touring stage system:

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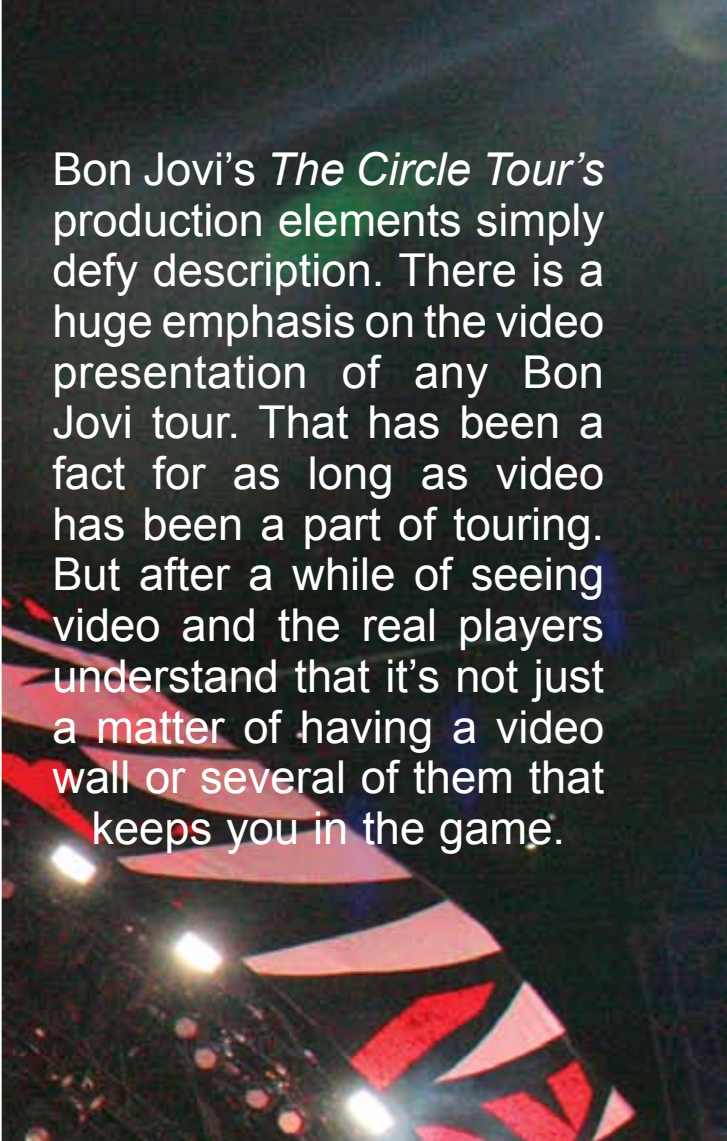
BON JOVI



BON

TECHNOLOGY GONE WILD!

Bon Jovi's *The Circle Tour*'s production elements simply defy description. There is a huge emphasis on the video presentation of any Bon Jovi tour. That has been a fact for as long as video has been a part of touring. But after a while of seeing video and the real players understand that it's not just a matter of having a video wall or several of them that keeps you in the game.



by MICHAEL A. BECK

However, in the case of this tour, the technology isn't keeping its designers and engineers in the game, it's redefining the game. The problem with video is that if it is misapplied or over applied it steals the show and the audience loses any reason to look at the flesh and blood activity on the stage. This happened on the 2005-06 *Have a Nice Day* Tour.

The center piece of the show was a massive Nocturne Productions V9 HD video wall that was incredible in and of itself. But that was the problem; it played *in and of itself* and everything else played an ancillary roll to it. In the end, the balance of technology and the live experience was lost. Production Designer Doug "Spike" Brant admitted that there were issues with that design. "I agree that that was probably our least successful Bon Jovi design," said Brant.

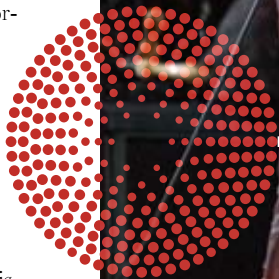
After what became dubbed the "Big Flipper Tour" (because the video wall was able to flip down and become a roof over the stage) the goal was to design a show that would have powerful video elements but would still stand back and let the players on the stage be the first visual priority.

It's no surprise that Brant and his team came up with an answer to the challenge. At the top of the show, the opening video montage played on what looked like a monolithic video wall that's been seen several times before. However as the show went on, it became clear that this was like nothing we'd ever seen.

The primary video display was designed to fly in an array consisting of 12 independent pantograph video screen assemblies of eight video tiles that could expand vertically to a length of 32 feet from top to bottom. The array would fly off of an elliptical track upon which the vertical lines traveled horizontally, which enabled them to completely encircle the stage. That being the case, there had to be something on the back side of the panels. Indeed, the video panels were two sided. The problem was that this made for an unmanageably heavy rig.

The call went out through the bidding process that this matter had to be dealt with in order to win the contract. Ever ahead of the curve, Nocturne Productions put its V9 product in a much lighter package and created "V9 Lite."

Each of the 192 tiles in the system was comprised of two V9 Lite modules. Prior to the arrival of V9 Lite, V9 modules weighed 27 pounds. By dropping the weight down to 15 pounds Nocturne shaved 4,608 pounds off of the array, which is what made it pos-



Bon Jovi Management
Paul Korzilius
Management
Vector Management
Business Management
Sussman & Associates
Worldwide Agent
Creative Artist Agency (CAA)
Legal
Edelstein, Laird & Sobel, LLP

sible for this system to fly. While this was the inaugural tour for the new product, it was an idea whose time was coming sooner or later. It just happened that this was the production that sped up the evolutionary timeline. Nocturne Touring and Logistics Manager Todd LePere explained, "Everything has to be faster, lighter and easier in order to be cost effective out there. This is where we were going. The needs of this tour just made us get there now."

Each one of the video tiles could contain its own content, or they could all present identical images. All of the panels could also be a part of the larger composite image of the overall display. Granted, there are video walls that come apart, but this system didn't stop there.

As the tiles moved they were able to act as view ports or video display units. Let's say that in one application the image on the wall was a map of America but was zoomed in on Missouri. As the wall (or elements thereof) moved to the right, the image would move eastward on the map toward Indiana as if looking at the map through the window of a plane doing a fly by. While it looked like the image was changing, the image was actually remaining static while the array moved one way or another in order to reveal more or less of it.

Mapping of the content and getting it to be pixel perfect was the job of the big brains at Control Freak Systems, and it was no small task. The mapping



photo courtesy of James "Winky" Fairorth@ Tait Towers





photo courtesy of James "Winky" Fairorth@ Tait Towers

VENDORS

software had to be directly linked all the way through the system to the hoists that actually executed the moves because the “view ports” had to move across the image in a manner consistent with the *physical* movement of the video panels rather than the *virtual* movement of the image within the computer systems. If a panel moved an inch, the image had to reflect that movement.

The ability to move the video wall and break it up into as many as 98 different pieces achieved a major goal for the design. It offered the option to have the big video wall when the show called for it but also allowed for the option of diffusing the look in order to bring emphasis back down to the stage.

Although there were no dedicated I-MAG screens in the room, I-MAG camera shots were a part of the design. Brant explained, “The cornerstone of Bon Jovi’s shows has always been big camera shots, and on this one we went a lot deeper into working with Jon on developing content. In fact, we actually had fewer camera shots on this one, but it was important to have the surfaces available to put up those great looking I-MAG shots when we wanted them.”

Brant said, “The show was designed to be transformative and dynamic so that when

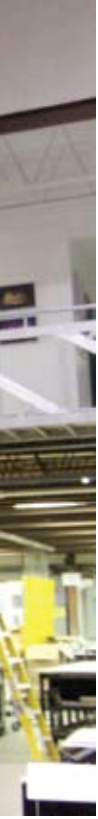
the audience comes in it looks like there’s nothing there, and then the show changes and evolves over the course of the night.”

The depth of the design of this show was incredibly subtle to the point where some of the effects were caught by only the most technologically savvy. Control Freak Systems Owner Michael Stuart designed the video delivery system. Stuart told *mPm*, “We wanted to be able to control each pixel from the lighting console. In the end we were able to send live streaming video to each panel in the system, and we could time it out so that it looked like it was strobing across the array.”

However, the idea that the audience was not always aware of the technological nuance of the show was not exactly a failure. Stuart explained, “The audience saw all this stuff that we were doing and came to see it as just the way it should be despite the really cool stuff going on in the background that they would never be aware of.”

The video array in the air wasn’t the only area of the show where video was a major component. In what is arguably the most creative re-tasking of technology from outside of the touring industry, 6’ x 9’ video panels were mounted on the end of the arms of huge five ABB five axis robots.

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- Lighting (US & UK)
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- (Paris) **Ampeco-Flashlight**



The robots were originally meant to be permanently installed in a pristine assembly-line environment for their entire lifetime. However, Tait Towers adapted them to function under the rigors of the concert touring environment. When being loaded for the show, the individual units were taken off their wheels and hard linked together so they could utilize the weight of the neighboring robots, which acted as a counterweight. Each 6' x 9' screen was stored in a cart that also became an integral part of the overall structure that took 5 mobile units and creates one rigid body.

One critical function of the robots is that they are designed to communicate with each other and know each other's positions. By running multiple programs at once, the robots are aware of each other and avoid contact while in motion. In addition, each robot can transmit its position to the computers that control them, which, in this case, was a media

server. This allowed for the execution of complex masking and projection of the video content.

The robots were positioned on the upstage floor out of sight of the audience. When they were activated during the show, they were able to reach high enough up to then be seen and at one point create a terraced walkway for Jon Bon Jovi to perform upon. The effect of this element of the show was to add another visual layer that brought the audiences eye back down to the stage level. The one down side of the robots location was they were a bit too low and were not necessarily visible by the entire crowd. This was unavoidable given the need to keep the center of gravity as low as possible.

Each robot weighed in at roughly 6,500 pounds in its transportation cart, and the video panel on it weighed 750 pounds. The motion of the unit was rather vigorous at times. Indeed because they were painted black and outfitted with red warning bea-

cons that would warn crew when action was about to start taking place.

The environment where the robots were based was a busy place. In addition to the robots, there were also five ribbon lifts that boosted two Vari*Lite VLX LED wash units and one MAC 700 30 feet into the air. All of this was happening underneath the fore mentioned very dynamic flown video array. Traffic control was a major undertaking. "Everything had to know where it was in relation to everything else," said Tait Towers Vice President Adam Davis. "You have the robots with their 30 axis of motion combined with the 6 axis of motion of the light towers, the static stage downstage of it all and video screen in the air. We had to know that it all wouldn't crash into everything when we hit the *go button*. There was a lot of control technology at work."

In addition to the video output technology,

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photo courtesy of James "Winky" Fairorth@ Tait Towers

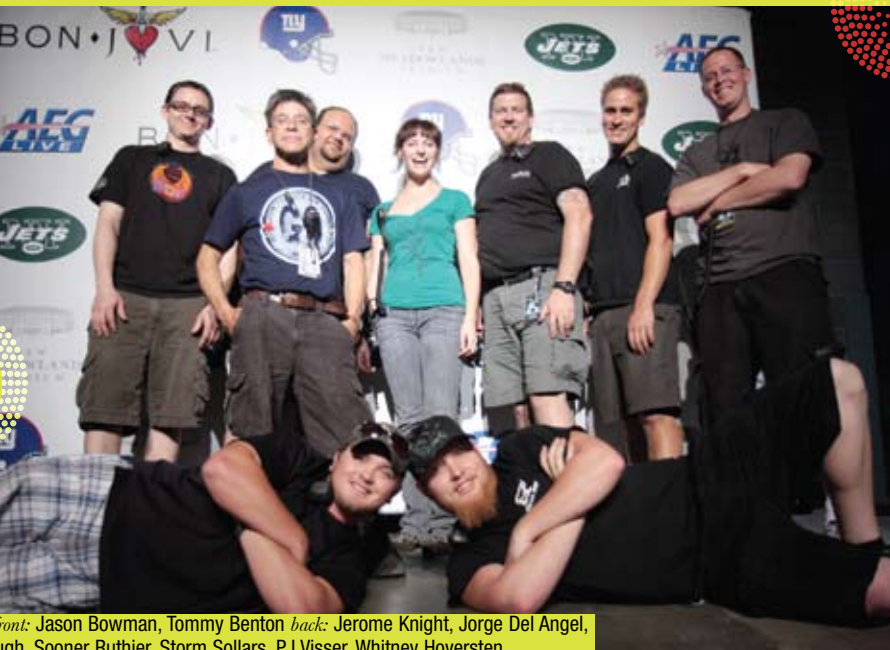


Carpenters: Danny Witmyer, Greg Gish - Head Carpenter, Gordon Hyndford, Dale Bryant



Electricians: Keegan Pendergrass, Kelly Mckenna as Leslie Holm, Danny Rodriguez

CREW



Lighting front: Jason Bowman, Tommy Benton back: Jerome Knight, Jorge Del Angel, Mel Dorough, Sooner Ruthier, Storm Sollars, PJ Visser, Whitney Hoversten



Mike Devlin



Mike Savas



Anthony Piedmonte

PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Mgr - John "Bugzee" Hougdaal
 Production Design - Doug "Spike" Brant
 Tour Production Mgr - Jesse Sandler
 Ops Mgr/Head Rigger - Mike Farese
 Site Coordinator - Albert Lawrence
 Tour Accountant - Jerry Gendron
 Production Coordinator - Meg MacRea
 Stage Mgr - Mike Devlin
 Venue Security - Knute Brye
 Head Carpenter - Greg Gish
 Overnight Site Coordinator - Michael Pinner
 Carpenters - Danny Witmyer, Dale Bryant, Gordon Hyndford
 Management/VIP Coordinator - Mike Savas
 Tour Photographer - Robert Fuzesi
 Riggers - Danny Machado, Rick Wilmot, Kenny Ruhman
 Screen Techs - Robert DeCeglie, Dwayne Diaz, Adam Finer
 Wardrobe/Catering - Dawn Jeronowitz
 Wardrobe/Dressing Rooms - Abby Franklin
 Ticketing Mgr - Cindy Chapman

BACKLINE

Crew Chief - Mike Rew
 Drum Tech - Joe Dorosz
 Richie Sambora Guitar Tech - Takumi Suetsugu
 Keyboard Tech - William St. Amour
 Guitar Tech - Michael Kaye

AEG STAFF

Tour Director - Gord Berg
 Tour Promoter Rep. - (May) Lonnie McKenzie, (June) Keith Wood

AUDIO TEAM

FOH Engineer - David Eisenhauer
 Monitor Engineer - Glen Collett
 Monitor Engineer - Andy Hill
 Crew Chief - Mike Alison
 Monitor Tech - Dustin Ponscheck
 Audio Techs - Chris King, Patrick O'Neil, Shawn Bivens, Zack Rossi

LIGHTING TEAM

Lighting Director - Sooner Ruthier
 Crew Chief - Storm Sollars
 Lighting Techs - Mel Dorough, Jerome Knight, Whitney Hoversten, Jason Bowman
 Syncrolite Techs: Jorge Del Angel, Tommy Benton
 Spot Light Tech - PJ Visser

VIDEO TEAM

Director - Tony Bongiovi
 Engineer - Erik Bjorkquist
 Crew Chief - Mark O'Herlihy
 LED Projectionist - Eric Geiger
 LL Camera Ops: Mark Woody, Dane Mustola
 Robo Camera Ops: Cliff Hannon, Montana Deskins, Carson Austin

MERCHANDISERS

Head Merchandiser - Rich Interlande
 Merchandiser - Nick Sanchez
 Merch Truck Driver - John Conte

ELECTRICIANS

Electricians - John "Greener" Greenwood, Leslie Holm, Danny Rodriguez, Keegan Pendergrass

CONTROL FREAK

FOH Op - Jason Gangi
 Tech - Jeffery Bertuch

TRUCKING

Lead Driver - John Heeren



Audio front: Patrick O'Neil, Chris King, Dustin Ponscheck back: Mike Alison, Shawn Bivens, Glen Collett, David Eisenhaur, Andy Hill, Zack Rossi



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Screen Techs: Dwavne "Monkey" Diaz, "Motion" Robert DeCeglio, Adam Finer



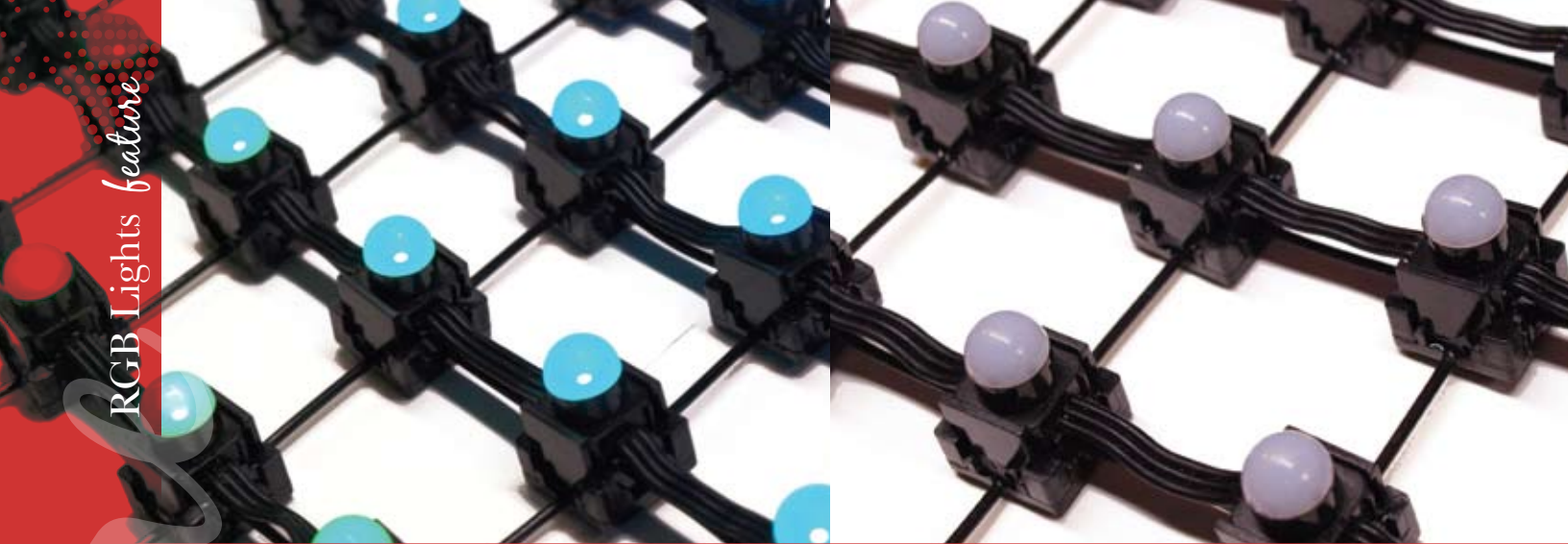
Backline: Michael Kave, Joe Derosz, Mike Rew, William St. Amour



Rick Wilmot, Mike Farese, Kenny Ruhman, Danny Machado



Video Front: Carson Austin, Cliff Hannon, Dane Mustola, Back: Mark O'Herlihy, Erik Bjorkquist, Eric Geiger, Tony Bongiovi, Montana Deskins, Mark Woody



RGB LIGHTS & FLEXIFLEX on Tour with **BON JOVI**

by MIKE WHARTON

When designers Justin Collie and Doug "Spike" Brant went looking for a solution for a low resolution video surface as an upstage backdrop to the current Bon Jovi The Circle Tour, they knew exactly who to call; Brett Gardner at RGB Lights.

"It was a big surface; 100 feet wide and 12 feet high," says Gardner, CEO of RGB. It had to be, there is no real set *per se* on this arena production, other than the robots and zip lifts, (more about these can be found in Michael A. Beck's article in this issue) but nothing else to fill in the enormous space behind the stage. The challenge was to provide something behind the stage that travelled in a small space, could go right up against the seats and be able to form a semi-circle while still delivering a good quality graphic.

"We proposed our high resolution FlexiFlex," says Gardner. "It's a 50 mil product based on the color kinetics LED engine. We built it in 8 feet wide by 12 feet high sheets that fan fold into a tray system which carts easily, compactly and is able to be laid out in really tight spaces." The tray system travels in three set carts approximately 9 feet long. The video surface "west coasts" into the trays.

Tait Towers extruded a 3 inch OD pipe. Three 8 foot sections hinge in two spots forming one 33 foot long section. Three of these complete the 100 feet



necessary to hang the surface. RGB used their standard strut hanging bracket and the "Monstro-Coupler" made by Light Source around the 3 inch pipe. Stage Rigging provides a quarter ton chain hoists for the hang. Six self contained racks provide power and signal distribution through 12 loomed multi-cables. Carts and racks take up about 15 feet of truck space.

One of the many aspects that differentiate the RGB system from others is the way it wires up. It patches like a lighting system... utilizing a 16 circuit break-in/break-out cable system. The multi-cable is contained in nylon housing which eliminates rigid raceways and battens. Everything out of the panel is soft. Thus, field serviceability is a non-issue. Simply peel the break-out off and

replace it should any problems occur.

The FlexiFlex system falls under the lighting department which provides power for the racks. Technologies crew member Adam Finer is the tech who oversees the build of this on the tour. "He is an excellent, well seasoned tech," says Gardner, "who does this in a very challenging area approximately 3 feet wide on the deck."

Control Freak Systems, the media server element, provides all the video via a DVI input. A grandMa drives the lighting system and Control Freak media server. Gardner tells *mPm* that a typical build is six to eight weeks on most projects.

That time frame on this project was "dramatically truncated" he states. In less than half that time RGB engineered an all new hanging system, touring racks, built set carts from scratch and brought on board a brighter LED. "This LED is roughly 2.4 times as bright as the previous model. We also use a translucent dome on the LED that gives more uniform color, incredible off axis viewing and a higher perceived density. More of the negative space is filled in by visible color and light," Gardner adds.

The evolution of the FlexiFlex began with a project for Millennium Park with John Featherstone of Lightswitch, in 2005, roughly the same time Gardner

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DirectConnect Technology™ Rocking with **BON JOVI**

by JESSI WALLACE



TourTechSupport

TourTechSupport provides VoIP and WiFi technology for concert tours and special events around the globe. Everything a tour needs for IT can be attained, in a user-friendly package, from TourTech in ways that are unique to the company. Recently they launched their brand new *DirectConnect Technology™* for VoIP phones on Bon Jovi's *The Circle Tour*. This hot new technology virtually guarantees usability in any venue in the world. It's truly unique to TourTechSupport.

TourTechSupport's own Allen Cook took time to share with *mobile Production monthly* what their new *DirectConnect Technology™* did for *The Circle Tour*: "*The Bon Jovi tour was encountering firewall issues in some venues, at times preventing the phones from receiving calls. We developed the DirectConnect solution in response to their experience.*" The challenge was to develop a system that could operate in any venue anywhere in the world regardless of venue's firewalls or port restrictions. The result was *DirectConnect Technology™*, a combination of hardware and software that is completely invisible to the clients, yet ensures their ability to make and receive calls anywhere they have an internet connection. In the course of rolling out this new technology, TourTech upgraded the phones it sends out on tour. The new models sport a color LCD screen and WiFi connectivity allowing the phones to connect to the SystemRacks™ or other wireless networks. Since the *DirectConnect* solution is housed in TourTech's Data Center, phones can

be connected to any wired or wireless internet connection and still be guaranteed connectivity. All of TourTechSupport's SystemRacks™ have separate built-in wireless access points for phones, eliminating the need to carry additional hardware.

The tour is using two of our SystemRack:Full-Size™ units, one in the production office and one for management and seven VoIP phones.

Cook noted, "Bon Jovi was the first act through the New Meadowlands Stadium and we successfully navigated their new IT infrastructure. We worked with their staff to ensure our wireless systems wouldn't interfere with the venue's own extensive wireless systems. It is important for the venue to be confident that a tour's technology does not jeopardize their internal operations.

TourTechSupport's version of backstage networking is based on mesh-networking

technology. Their wireless units can act as both gateways to the internet or repeaters, which makes it easy for non-technical people to set it up. There is a signal strength indicator so it's easy to see the connection. Cook explains, "We can cover the entire backstage area with just a few very small units. For Bon Jovi we're using the mesh technology, covering the backstage area with two to three units each day and have it up and running by 10 a.m. when the video director gets to work and needs to be online. We use a larger version for stadiums and since they all talk to each other, we can mix and match to meet the needs of any tour."

Earlier this year TourTechSupport provided its services to the Super Bowl concert for Live Nation Special Events in Miami Beach. They were able to cover a five block long by two blocks wide stretch of beach with wireless from end to end, sup-

porting two production compounds and the television production team. They also recently supported over 50 phone lines on the Hip Hop Honors in New York at the Hammerstein covering the entire building with their WiFi mesh. They mix it up between music and television, and this summer they've been doing a lot of work on music festivals.

"From the touring side, we have developed the product with an eye to be budget and space conscious. We have scaled our system down to as compact a form factor as possible, while still giving all the features needed. The SystemRacks™ will carry up to eight phones. Printing, wireless, and music are all in one spot... plug it into power and then internet, you're off and running," Cook shared. With the all the new technology TourTech has put into place, they have been able to reduce the amount of bandwidth phone calls use

by 75%, which means tours can get better quality on smaller connections.

The *DirectConnect Technology™* has been very successful with *The Circle Tour*, but TourTechSupport finds it important that even the smaller-scale tours are taken care of. Cook shared, "We're not out there just for the big tours. We've got systems that are designed for small tours; we'll even send just the phones for tours that have their own printing and WiFi. We're set up for service on any level and we're happy to take any size tour." 📞

For more info.:
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MERCHANDISING Has Come a Long Way

Meet premiere full-service, artist-centric, branded merchandise sales company, **Brothers Entertainment Merchandising**

by LESLEY CUTTLER

Entertainment merchandising has both changed and grown dramatically since the basic T-shirt and baseball cap merch sales of yore. Given the state of the economy in general, and the music industry in particular, being able to generate additional revenue streams via merchandising is a crucial component to an artist's career, and branding is significant to sales income as well as long term success. With the lion's share of artist income often coming from live performances, merchandising goes hand in hand with establishing new artists and furthering the brand of well-known performers.

Formed in 2005 by company principals Joseph Bongiovi (Co-President/CEO), Steve Miles (Co-President/CFO), and Bradford Andersen (COO), Brothers Entertainment Merchandising (BEM) is comprised of highly qualified entertainment industry veterans with extensive expertise in music marketing, licensing, product development, merchandise and tour production, sponsorship and endorsements.

Although this team of professionals was very prescient regarding the sea change in entertainment merchandising, COO Brad Andersen notes that what sets BEM apart from its competitors is that the company prides itself on not resting on its laurels. The model for BEM since its inception is also the direction for its future: to continually think out of the box and bend the rules to come up with new, creative and innovative products and branding that are unique and forward-thinking.

Cases in point: Brothers Entertainment Merchandising has introduced the branded merchandise tent at arena shows, which further brands the artist/album/tour and gives both sellers and purchasers respite from outdoor con-



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touring and online sales, live auctions, licensing, and Ecommerce. BEM also has a worldwide presence via several global strategic partnerships.

Company services are comprehensive in every way, encompassing design, sales, fulfillment, and customer service from BEM's home offices and fulfillment center/warehouse in Burbank, CA. Clients are supported with merchandising from conception of the components to end user delivery and needs, including onsite vendors and accounting. BEM's product lines are diverse and unique, including an impressive variety of quality clothing, novelties, packs, bags, photos, posters, plush,



cert weather. More importantly, these branded merch tents are located *outside* the arena, providing several additional hours for sales before doors open and after lights go up, as well as potential sales to non-ticket holders and tail-gaters at sold-out shows. In addition, for the current Bon Jovi tour BEM is rolling out new, high-end, one-of-a-kind promotional merchandise that is only available as part of Bon Jovi's five-tiered VIP packages.

The company's marketing strategy is strongly artist-directed with broad-based branding of the artist in multi-platform merchandising, such as wholesale, retail,

programs, memorabilia, collector and specialty items.

The Brothers Entertainment Merchandising website is also indicative of the company's originality and imagination. It imparts a wealth of information and conveys a very slick (meant in the most complimentary manner), well-oiled machine. The artist online stores (each client's official website links merch sales and fulfillment directly to BEM) are really impressive, with graphics, design and presentation combining

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there was also an interesting bit of technology used to gather the video signal. The stage featured a walkway that arched out through the crowd and back to the main stage. There were camera tracks mounted vertically on the inside and outside of the ramp. That is nothing new, as Nocturne Productions developed those years ago. What made these different was that they were unmanned. The dolly units cleverly dubbed "Televators" were the creation of New Jersey based Telemetrics Inc. They were operated by someone backstage who controlled track right / left, boom elevation, pan, tilt, zoom and focus with a series of hand and foot controls.

When all of this left the safe confines of the indoor environment and moved into stadiums, it was almost a bit of a letdown given that the robotic camera mounts was the only technology that made the transition. The ethos for an outdoor show is such that something like the robotic video platforms would have been lost in the scale of the show in the Meadowlands.

However, the stadium show was not without

its flare. The stage was an arched structure measuring 120 feet wide x 75 feet high that had a colorful border cowling. The entire back drop of the structure was 37 mil. medium res video product provided by XL Video that read beautifully. The fore mentioned desire to insert more video content and less I-MAG was observed but not to the degree that it was in the indoor show.

This show was more of everything than anything Bon Jovi has ever taken out. It bore out the fact that there truly is no limit to what can be done to make the live entertainment experience bigger and better. Just as there were moving lights out beyond pars, and LED out beyond that there is always the next "thing" that waits to be unveiled after the robotic army of Bon Jovi. That doesn't mean the technology that has gotten us this far is going away.

The blinding power and impact of the Syncrolite units used on this tour is and always will be undeniable. Although, plans are always in the works to make them ever better. This industry is led by two colliding areas of ethos;

one that says ever onward, which gives us the mind numbing Vari*Lite VLX LED wash unit, which is what every LED lighting instrument wants to be when it grows up and the new Martin Mac 700, all of which was on this tour. The other mindset says the fact that it's old doesn't mean it's no longer useful. That attitude was also evident on this tour by virtue of the presence of the High End Systems' Cyberlight® units.

As much as lighting as become a support system for video, is it too farfetched to believe that video my soon become a support system for something like holography? One thing is for sure, as long as there are designers like Spike Brant the future is in sight. As long as there are vendors like Control Freak Systems, Tait Towers, Nocturne and so many others who figure into the technology of Brant's future vision, that vision is both possible and practical. As long as there are performers like Jon Bon Jovi who are willing to lean into that vision and technology, the future will most assuredly be wildly entertaining! 🎤



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founded RGB. Their paths crossed when Gardner had previously worked as a freelance Hog programmer for Lightswitch.

A graduate of Colorado College in 1995 with a Bachelors degree in Economics and a Broadway Theatre League Award for excellence in Theatre Arts, Gardner had the opportunity to work with many people in the business while a stagehand for campus productions. One of these was Alan Jamneck, a rigger, who was touring with WWE. Recalls Gardner, "Alan was the first guy that took a chance on me. He was then and continues to be a great supporter."

Upon graduation Gardner headed directly to Upstaging in Chicago to further his education and experience. "Upstaging has a reputation for doing things right," Gardner says. "Mike Hosp, Jerry Swatek and Sean McGrand were great mentors who provided an incredible base to move onto the next phase."

Utilizing what he had learned there and his economics degree, Gardner and a partner formed OnSite Services, a company which offered lighting packages bundled with installation and dismantles for the exhibit market. He

noticed a growing number of requests for LED products from his clients. He saw also that no one in the Midwest at that time could fill the rentals. Upon dissolving OnSite, he purchased his first dozen Color Blasts, seeking to fill the gap in the market and build a clearing house for Color Kinetics fixtures.

RGB became the go to guys for LED products quickly developing one of the largest Color Kinetics dealerships in the country having, at one time, an inventory of 500 Color Blasts and 200 Color Blaze. This business philosophy continues today with their pursuit and stocking of hard to find LED products. "We never said 'No,' recalls Gardner, "and we were always very conscience of what our customers were doing, so that RGB remained as their vendor and not their competitor."

In the process, RGB has provided LED products for some of the bigger lighting houses and venues that did not want to initially make that investment leap. "We've helped companies bridge that gap," Gardner says. "Now we are more of an aftermarket integrator; we take the Color Kinetics product and product-ize it so to speak. We are taking an architectural product and making it work for the entertainment

field." This includes customization and build. Depending on size and spacing, RGB can create borders for truss, pipe and screen surrounds, table skirts and kinetic scenic elements.

That original solution for Featherstone back in 2005 has now become a structure that LED nodes snap into so a panel can accept clear dome LEDs, different colors or resolution which ships easily and deploys rapidly. RGB manufactures the products in their warehouse, and the system is patent pending.

"On the horizon," says Gardner, "RGB is developing higher resolution modular products within the FlexiFlex line, as well as working on optical accessories that will revolutionize low resolution LED. It is currently also tackling the daylight visibility issue. "Once we hit daylight visible, which we expect to happen in the next year, you are going to see LED in interesting major applications where you have not seen video before," concludes Gardner.

Go to rgbights.com to see the company's solutions and projects in the architectural, themed environment, exhibit and concert applications.



Brothers Merchandising continued from 32


to showcase clients and their merchandise to great effect.

BEM's client list boasts a Who's Who of critically acclaimed and superstar acts (Bon Jovi, Britney Spears) in virtually all genres of music (popular, roots, alternative, rap, hard rock and traditional), spanning major label to indie acts, as well as comedian/television stars (Kathy Griffin, Jeff Dunham), Strongman title-holder Derek Poundstone, corporate entity Alfred Music Publishing, and individual professionals like fitness-trainer-to-the-stars Tracy Anderson. However the company also works with developing artists, using the principals' combined knowledge and experience to come up with a customized formula to fit each artist's needs and finances. Another aspect of BEM's success is product development that includes artist

approval and welcomes artist participation in merchandising. This smart and savvy company knows what works, collaborating and/or advising their clients according to needs and success level.

Andersen says individual branding of an artist identity is key, whether for a musician, comedian or other property. This artist-focused approach resulted in the "Smaggie" (Kathy Griffin's mother Maggie's habitual Snuggie) that is specifically branded to Griffin's *My Life on the D-List* television show. BEM also creates popular designs that can be generic to numerous clients, such as their current top-seller, the Lyric Scarf (a 12" x 60" cotton jersey fashion item emblazoned with musical artists' song titles and lyrics).

In order to adapt and continue to appeal to an artist's fan base, BEM's merchandise branding also reevaluates and changes in diversity, style, sizing, and the like as their clients mature and grow. For example, Britney Spears' merchandise designs have changed radically in the last five years, as her fans have gone from innocent tweens to more sophisticated adults.

With originality in both marketing and clientele, Brothers Entertainment Merchandising has been atypical of corporate entities. Bongiovi, Miles and Andersen beat to their own drum and don't answer to anyone but their clients and themselves. With a finger on the pulse of constant inventiveness and a view toward continual new frontiers, we have only to wait to see where BEM will take entertainment merchandising next. 

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