

# mobile monthly PRODUCTION

# Romeo Santos

*You Want It When?*

## PRG Nocturne

Better Than Imagined

## ShowFX

Making Magic With Sets, Stages and More

## Accurate Staging

Fast and Versatile

## UniverSoul Circus

Power & Elegance on a Shoestring Budget

## Arab Games

A Look At Landscape Video

## Four Seasons Leasing

Still Setting a Path to the Future

## Ron Delsener

Q&A Part 2

"I'm Still Alive Baby!"





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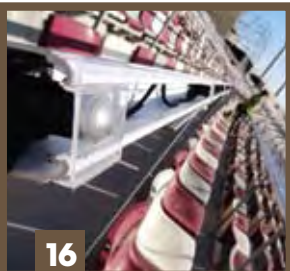
mobile  
PRODUCTION

volume 5 issue 3 2012

# contents



10



16



20

## 6 In the News

**6 Cases** Penn Elcom Continues Support for Jan-AI Cases' Breast Cancer Awareness Fund Raising

**6 Lighting** Robert Juliat FLOs Perform to Perfection at Cirque Arlette Gruss

**6 Sound** HARMAN's Studer Vista Consoles Get Integral Lexicon® FX

**7 Special** FX Sin City Welcomes the 2012 Academy Of Country Music Awards

**8 Venues** Frost Chicago Gives L-ACOUSTICS KARA a Warm Welcome / Jeld-Wen Field Powers Up with Community

**9 New Hires** Loren Robinson Joins Community / Gary Henley to Join ETC as new Rigging Sales Manager / 'KK' Tan Strengthens Renkus-Heinz APAC Support Team

**10 Circus Touring** UniverSoul Circus – Power & Elegance on a Shoe String Budget

**12 Laser & Special FX** South by Southwest Puts A Roof Over Austin

**14 Special FX** Pyrotecnico Keeps the Fires Burning for Warrior Dash

**16 Projection Technologies** Becoming Part of the Picture, A Look At Landscape Video at the Arab Games

**18 Transportation** Four Seasons Leasing Still Setting a Path to the Future

**20 Q&A** Top Dog HALL OF FAME inductee Ron Delsener "I'm Still Alive Baby!" Part 2

**24 Romeo Santos**  
You Want It When?

**30 Crew Members**

**32 PRG Nocturne**  
Better Than Imagined

**34 ShowFX**  
Making Magic with Sets, Stages and More

**36 Accurate Staging**  
Fast and Versatile

**40 Advertiser's Index**



## FROM THE *Publisher*



With this issue, we feature the Romeo Santos Tour. We hope you enjoy the profile of the production and some of the prime vendors. This issue also kicks off the touring and post conference season. For our team, it is a chance to get caught up on our work and catch our breath following the most successful Tour Link in our history.

This year promises to be a year of significant changes in our business. Several new regulations are emerging covering everything from driver regulations to stage safety. New groups are forming to address issues within our industry and we will do our best to track these events and keep our readers informed. Internally, we are working on new technologies to better deliver this information to you and we hope to be able to announce these developments in the very near future.

One way to stay involved is to make certain you are registered in our database @ [mobileproductionpro.com](http://mobileproductionpro.com). It's FREE to register and provide info about yourself or the company you represent. The search engine is the most comprehensive global listing of personnel and services in the world, and the magazines are also available to read online. A majority of our past issues are there, and we post the current magazines as soon as they are sent to the printer, so there is no delay in accessing our publications.

Finally, we encourage our readers to send us comments, news items and press releases. We try to accommodate as many submissions as we can, either in print or on our website news section. The challenge of delivering our work in multi-media formats is significant, but we trust that you will continue to support our efforts and appreciate the service we try to deliver.

*Larry Smith*

# mobile monthly

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## Cases

### Penn Elcom Continues Support for JAN-AL CASES' BREAST CANCER AWARENESS FUND RAISING

Flightcase and loud-speaker solutions specialist Penn-Elcom continued its support of the Breast Cancer Awareness fundraising initiative started by Jan-Al Cases - a Case for the Cure - at NAMM 2012 in Anaheim, CA.

Jan-Al cases - a long term and highly valued Penn Elcom customer - raised over \$1150 with special signed T-shirts.

The Case For The Cure T-Shirts were signed on the Penn Elcom booth at NAMM by a selection of stars who were lined up by Jan-Al Cases, including legendary funk bassist Bootsy Collins, Kelly Hansen of rockers Foreigner, drum addict Ya'el Biz, pop-rock band Hero's Last Mission and Canadian actress and performer Molly Parker. For a two hour slot on the second day of the exhibition, these unique and fashionable T's were available from the stand for a donation to the Case for the Cure campaign of \$10.

A crew of Jan-Al Cases and Penn Elcom female employees gave up their time to attend the show. They walked the floor handing out fliers to visitors, in the process helping to create a buzz and generate interest in the signing event - all dressed proudly in their Case For The Cure tops.

Arlene Alejandro, the event co-ordinator for Jana-A Cases says, "Thanks to everyone at Penn-Elcom, Jan-Al Cases, Music Connection Magazine, Heroes Last Mission, Pen.Pixel.Studio and NAMM for making the fundraiser for 'A Case For The Cure' at NAMM 2012 a big success".



The money has been donated to two breast cancer charities, the City of Hope and the Susan G Komen for the Cure Foundation. As part of an ongoing Jan-Al Cases breast cancer fundraising campaign, Penn Elcom is donating pink grip handles which are being offered - fitted free of charge - on cases ordered by Janal's customers for a donation of any size, starting at \$25.00. [penn-elcom.com](http://penn-elcom.com) [janalcase.com](http://janalcase.com)

## Lighting

### ROBERT JULIAT FLOs Perform to Perfection at CIRQUE ARLETTE GRUSS

L'Autre Monde, the new show from Gilbert Gruss' Cirque Arlette Gruss, is currently touring France with four DMX-controlled Robert Juliat 1800W MSR FLO followspots to highlight its dazzling, fast moving acts.

Arlette Gruss promises its audiences a spectacle like no other with a top of the range show that encompasses trapeze artists, clowns, magicians, motor-bikes and animals. With a six month tour that takes in the towns of Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Rouen, Arras, Lille, Boulogne, Dunkerque, Valenciennes, Thionville, Mulhouse, Strasbourg, Colmar, Reims and Troyes, lighting designer Arthur Oudin needed a followspot that was small and tough enough to tour and versatile enough to be controlled with pinpoint accuracy.

"The ideal unit proved to be the

Robert Juliat FLO with a DMX controlled dimmer, shutter" says Oudin. "The power of this truss followspot is truly brilliant. The electronic ballast reduces the weight and

manages the power of the lamp accurately which was especially useful when lighting the jugglers, for example. It also makes it possible to dim the followspot without losing the beauty of the beam.

"In addition, the logic of retaining central control of the dimmer shutter from the console really redefines the work of the followspots. It ensures we keep all the advantages of 'traditional followspotting', yet lets me control the light intensity directly from the console, leaving the followspot operator to concentrate on focusing the spot and following the performers. And when we need a black out, everyone fades to black at the same time!"

Robert Juliat's FLO followspot is unique in having an 1800W hot restrike lamp which gives an output to match most 2500W sources. Its compact size and 13° - 24° zoom range makes it suitable for

short throw and truss spot usage, and is easily transported on tour. Features include high performance double condenser optics, 100% closing iris with protective backplate, A-size gobo holder and a 6-way push/pull colour changer. A flicker-free electronic ballast and an option of a DMX dimmer shutter make it one of the most versatile multi-usage followspots on the market. [robertjuliat.com](http://robertjuliat.com) [cirque-gruss.com](http://cirque-gruss.com)

## Sound

### HARMAN'S STUDER VISTA Consoles Get Integral Lexicon® FX

Users of HARMAN's Studer Vista consoles can now opt to add up to 24 channels of Lexicon Effects to their console with the release of the VISTA FX engine. The VISTA FX unit contains 8 channels of FX, and three units may be cascaded to allow up to 24 different mono channels per console.

Not only does each 2U lightweight VISTA FX unit provide the equivalent of 2 renowned and revered Lexicon PCM96 devices, but

control and assignment of the effects and their parameters is all accomplished via the Vistronics™ user interface. Both real-time operation and snapshot-based control can be achieved through the touch-screen based system. The unit can be configured to provide 8 mono, 4 stereo or 2 surround signals; with hundreds of different presets available to the operator.

Additionally, BSS 30-band graphic equalizers are avail-





# IN THE NEWS



able for input channels, groups, masters and auxiliaries, with control of the bands either via the Vistonics rotary controls or via the faders on the console. Users can choose the starting band position on the fader bank to provide the most convenient location for the graphic EQ control. On the Vista 9, the FaderGlow™ turns red on the controlling faders to indicate that they are in EQ mode.

The option is available as an upgrade for all Studer Vista consoles which utilise the SCORE Live DSP core. Other new products from Studer at NAB include the new Studer Vista 1 Compact mixing console, Vista Compact Remote bay, RTW TM7 Metering Option for Vista consoles and an Axia Livewire™ AoIP card for the D21m system.

**HARMAN** ([harman.com](http://harman.com)) designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of audio and infotainment solutions for the automotive, consumer and professional markets — supported by 15 leading brands, including AKG, Harman Kardon, Infinity, JBL, Lexicon and Mark Levinson. The Company is admired by audiophiles across multiple generations

and supports leading professional entertainers and the venues where they perform. More than 25 million automobiles on the road today are equipped with HARMAN audio and infotainment systems.

HARMAN has a workforce of about 13,000 people across the Americas, Europe and Asia, and reported net sales of \$4.2 billion for 12 months ending December 31, 2011.

## Special FX

### SIN CITY WELCOMES THE 2012 Academy Of Country Music Awards

Las Vegas turned country as the 47th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards rolled into town April 1 2012. The awards ceremony took place at the MGM Grand Arena, and with too many wild performances for one venue, Mandalay Bay was also used to showcase the years biggest acts in Country Music. Pyrotek Special Effects and its sister company Laser Design Productions had the honor of providing some of the nights breathtaking effects.

The show opened with a performance from country music

sweetheart Carrie Underwood who brought the house to its feet with “Good Girl”. Laser Design Productions, headed up by President Lorenzo Cornacchia and Director of Operations Victor Tomei worked with Raj Kapoor to create the pink and white laser looks for the routine. Laser programmer Eric Taylor operated five laser systems including three 30 watt full color and two 25 watt full color lasers to the performance. One 30 watt was hung in the center truss to create

Luke Bryan had one of the nights most talked about performances with “I Don’t Want This Night To End”. The design of the performance, with the input of Production Manager Pete Healey, was given the Rock n’ Roll kick with the addition of eleven green lasers. Energizing the crowd with his



the white cage cone effect, and the performance’s downstage looks, while two more were hung 15 feet high on an upstage lighting truss shooting pink light straight out over the audience. Two more were also rolled out and placed stage left and right of the center ramp Underwood used throughout the performance.

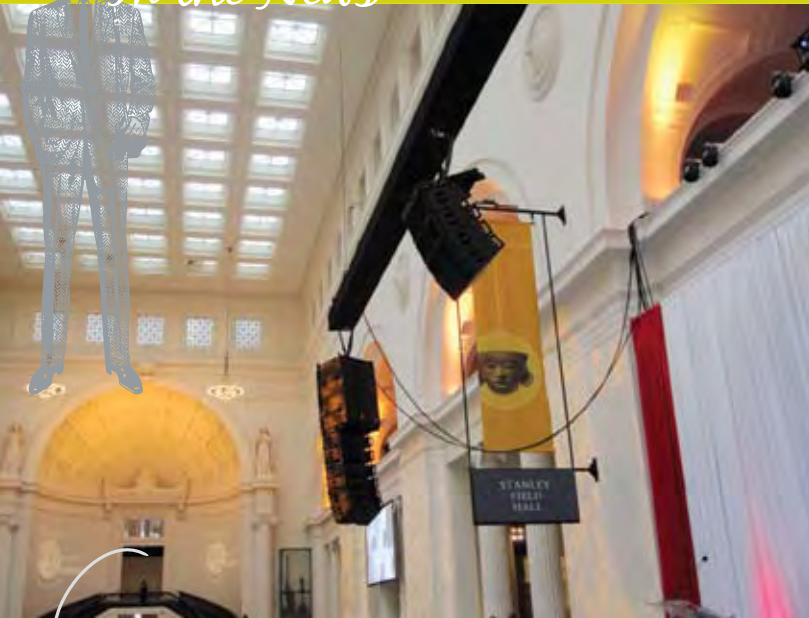
charisma, Bryan hopped up and down encouraging the audience to join the party on stage. Lasers for Bryan were placed upstage left and right in between band risers, as well as in the upstage truss, and on the LED video walls stage left and right. Six Cryo Jets, operated by Pyro Shooter Gregg Pearson, were placed upstage center and blasted while Bryan finished his performance.

Newcomer Brantley Gilbert performed “Country Must Be Country Wide”. Designer Cornacchia worked closely with Brian Stonestreet and Alana Billingsley to devise the look for the performance. Four 7’ Dragon systems lit up the stage from behind the band, as Gilbert strutted around the stage which was decorated with two motorcycles. Along with the dragon tails, Pyrotechnician Kevin Hughes also operated ten Cryo Jets.

The awards ceremony was seen by 12.8 million viewers and was acclaimed as one of the most successful in recent years. Pyrotek Special Effects and Laser Design Productions were excited and proud to be on hand to create some of the evening’s most memorable effects. [pyrotekfx.com](http://pyrotekfx.com) [laserdesignproductions.com](http://laserdesignproductions.com)







## Venues

### Frost Chicago Gives L-ACOUSTICS KARA a Warm Welcome

For over two decades, Frost Chicago has served as one of the Windy City's premier event services companies. Providing audio, video, lighting, staging and fabric design for large-scale private events, social gala functions and Fortune 500 client productions, the company recently made the decision to invest in a full L-ACOUSTICS KARA system.

Purchased through Clearwing Productions of Milwaukee, Frost Chicago's new sound system inventory includes 36 KARA enclosures, 12 SB18 subs, eight coaxial 8XT and eight 115XT

HiQ systems, and four LA-RAK touring racks each loaded with four LA8 amplified controllers, plus an additional spare LA8.

"We are the exclusive vendor for production at the Field Museum as a special events venue," says Frost Chicago Account Executive Jonathan Bancroft, who has been with the company for seven years. "Its Great Hall is a very large environment that can host anything from a 150-person dinner to 1,500 people. When making the decision to expand our audio offerings, we knew we needed something that could accommodate the wide spectrum of events there, so we immediately locked on to KARA for its size, power, fidelity and, obviously, the L-ACOUSTICS name, which has such a great reputation. We use the system there all the time now and have always had superb results with it."

In addition to the Field Museum, Frost Chicago often stages events

at Union Station's Great Hall and other impressive historical sites throughout the city. "In these acoustically challenging venues, KARA has really been a home run for us," Bancroft adds. "The ability to precisely target our audiences in SOUNDVISION and keep audio off of the walls and other reflective surfaces has been the hallmark of what has made it truly successful for us. We're very happy with KARA and proud to be the first Chicago-based company to carry the product."

In the coming weeks and months, the company plans to deploy its KARA enclosures for an audience of 1,500 at the 12th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, which will be held at the UIC Forum, as well as at the University of Chicago's 511th Convocation later this spring.

Based in Chicago, with partner

locations in Boca Raton, Boston, New York and Washington DC, Frost Chicago can be found online at [frostchicago.com](http://frostchicago.com) or [facebook.com/frostchicago.com](https://facebook.com/frostchicago.com)

### JELD-WEN FIELD POWERS UP WITH COMMUNITY

One of Portland's storied sporting arenas, Jeld-Wen Field has been reborn following a \$40 million renovation.

Originally opened in 1926 as Multnomah Stadium, the venue has hosted a number of landmark events, including one of the first-ever outdoor rock concerts when Elvis Presley performed there in 1957. Now home to Major League Soccer's Portland Timbers, the remade Jeld-Wen Field boasts 5,000 new seats, bringing its capacity to 22,000, with more than 800 square feet of LED video screens and a state-of-the-art sound system featuring Community Professional Loudspeakers. Previously, the stadium had been used as a Triple-A ballpark utilizing 36 R2 all-weather loudspeakers. The format change to Major League Soccer called for additional Community WET-Series 15" two-way and 15" three-way systems and R-Series R.5 weather-resistant loudspeakers. Designed by Wrightson, Johnson, Haddon & Williams, Inc. (WJHW), the audio system was installed by Denver, CO-based Empowercom. [jeld-wenfield.com](http://jeld-wenfield.com)





## New Hires

### LOREN ROBINSON JOINS COMMUNITY

Community Professional Loudspeakers has announced the appointment of Loren Robinson to the position of Regional Manager for Western US and Canada.

Robinson, a veteran pro audio manufacturers' representative and installation team manager, joins Community after many years with Harman Corporation, where he held positions as National Sales Manager for Selenium and Western Regional Manager for Crown Audio.



"We're very excited to welcome Loren to Community," said Julia Lee, Director of Sales and Marketing. "His expertise in installed sound and his solid track record in management are ideally suited for the growth Community is presently experiencing."

"I'm thrilled to be working with such a legendary company like Community," added Robinson. "This is an amazing group of people with an amazing history, and they're still breaking new ground today."

Robinson will be responsible for all outside sales management in the western United States, as well as in Canada. He can be reached at [lrobinson@communitypro.com](mailto:lrobinson@communitypro.com).

### GARY HENLEY to Join ETC as new Rigging Sales Manager

ETC (Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc.) is pleased to announce the hiring of Gary



Henley to the new role of Rigging Sales Manager for the ETC Rigging™ brand of automated hoists and rigging-control systems. Henley will begin with the company effective April 10th, 2012.

Henley is a respected veteran of the entertainment-technology business with a long resume, including over two decades with Texas Scenic Company, most recently as Vice President of Marketing. He will be based in Birmingham, Alabama, where he has been the owner for the last three years of Southern Lighting Group, a stage equipment-based manufacturer's rep agency.

ETC's Director of Sales Mike Griffith says, "ETC could not have found a more qualified and experienced person to fill this job and to help take ETC Rigging sales to the next level. Gary has over 30 years of experience in the entertainment rigging and lighting worlds. For the last three years, he has been our ETC representative in Alabama and the Gulf Coast region and greatly increased our sales and overall success in that market. Additionally, he had been serving in an advisory and consulting capacity to help us in our efforts to grow the rigging business."

Bill Gallinghouse, ETC Vice President of Marketing and Business Development, and head of the ETC Rigging division, adds: "I've known Gary for 20 years, and he is one of the best salespeople in our industry. We are very excited to have him as part of the ETC Rigging team." [etcconnect.com/rigging](http://etcconnect.com/rigging)

### 'KK' Tan Strengthens RENKUS-HEINZ APAC SUPPORT TEAM

Renkus-Heinz has announced an important addition to its APAC international application support team, Singaporean national Tan Kheng Keong ('KK').

Technically trained and fluent in Chinese, Indonesian, and English, KK joins the company from Renkus-Heinz's Singapore distributor, Electro-Acoustics Systems, where he was part of the technical team involved in the execution of several major projects including the new Singapore Supreme Court, National Institute of Education, Resorts World Sentosa, and Universal Studios Singapore. Before this he worked both as project and design engineer for an engineering company and an audio consultancy firm.



KK will be offering system design assistance, commissioning support and more, focusing on supporting the company's Asian/Pacific Rim customers.

He comments: "At EAS, my role was as an internal system consultant: design, commissioning and troubleshooting, all highly technical. My relationship with Renkus-Heinz goes back to when I was consulting over 11 years ago. I was impressed with their loudspeakers and specified them on numerous projects, so I'm already familiar with the products and their ethos.

"The future here is about moving more into digital technology and live sound. The new IC2 system, for example, is just right for concerts. Audio and IT are coming together and at Renkus-Heinz, convergence is happening quickly, and for me it's natural, having been exposed to IT from a young age. I'm very excited about the future here." [renkus-heinz.com](http://renkus-heinz.com)

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# UniverSoul circus

– POWER & ELEGANCE ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

The UniverSoul Circus is a traditional traveling big top tent circus with a predominantly African American influence. It was founded by Cedric Walker who is currently the CEO of the production.

In a narrative on the UniverSoul Circus’ website, Walker explains the show’s origin; “Our journey began in libraries, first researching African American entertainment from the turn of the century until today. We came across a single African American owned circus operating in 1893. I envisioned hip-hop musicals, a return to vaudeville and animal acts. That’s when the decision was made to create a new entertainment complex—a full-blown circus complete with its own big top tent.”

Walker continued, “While walking through a Black Expo, a particular booth immediately caught my attention. The sign read: OF BLACKS AND CIRCUS RINGS. It was so exciting! I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. This vendor had artifacts, pictures, videos and in-depth knowledge of our contributions to the circus industry — the real contributions of people who looked just like me. He shared a wealth of knowledge and contacts with us. He led us to Prince Bojino, one of the first African American lion tamers. He introduced us to legend-

ary performers of color who helped us pull it all together. We sent out an international call for acts to perform in our new form of live entertainment. Recruiting, training and production for UniverSoul Circus began in 1993.”

The show has all to the classic features of a traditional circus including acrobats from around the world, performances of various animals – including a tiger trainer who works in a cage with six enormous tigers – circus clowns, and of course the frequent need for cases and cases of air freshener. What is completely unexpected when the UniverSoul Circus cranks up, is the spectacular use of production technology more typically employed in the concert world; namely lighting and video. However, when one takes into consideration that Tom Marzullo is the production designer, it’s easy to understand the marriage of the long running tradition of the circus with rock n’ roll lighting.

Marzullo, who’s been with the show since its inception in 1993, recalled the mindset in creating the production, “We didn’t know anything about the circus, but from the very beginning it was important to create a couple things. We wanted to create a show that catered to a narrowly branded urban pride. We also wanted to take the old and make it new by surrounding the circus acts with popular music such as Soul Train and other music of the urban culture.”

While the music and the acts have always been at the center of the production ethos of the show, production technology was also a pivotal part of



the picture from the beginning. Marzullo explained, "The technology has always been more of a rock concert than a circus especially when we started. At that time circuses were very traditional in terms of light. There was a four color wash, spot lights and that was it."

That wasn't enough for this team. From the very onset this show had the technology of the day including Cyberlights and lasers. Although the desire to rock the house (as it were) had its appeal, there were some serious issues to be addressed before they could fill the tent with light. Because of acrobatic acts that require intense concentration and attention to precision, the parameters of where a designer can put light are much tighter than what can be done in a concert setting.

Eventually everyone got comfortable with the marriage of technology and tradition and found a workable groove. However, because there has always been a strong emphasis on keeping ticket prices as low as possible, budget is the devil that bedevils the details.

The 2012 UniverSoul Circus was a brilliant example of how less can be more. Of the 159 lighting fixtures on the show only 11, including four Lycian M2 2500w short throw follow spots, were used in spotting the talent. In one exception, the 36 Clay Paky Sharpys were used to augment the effect of the seven Mac III's in spotting a ballerina who does an aerial performance. Apart from that, the rest of the rig was used for the purpose of washing the audience and big top as well as lighting the four towers that support the tent.

While the Sharpys were used to great effect as tight parallel beam instruments, they had to be carefully applied because of the aforementioned hazard of interfering with dangerous acrobatic moves. As the first half of the show was winding down, the big top was cleared and the lighting rig was unleashed to play with a dynamic musical piece to close out the half. The audience was as impressed with that as any other part of the show largely because it was so unexpected.

Where it is fairly standard convention to enter the acts of a circus through a drape array or other type of cloth backdrop, this production stayed in keeping with the desire to be as high tech as possible. The reveal for this show took place through a Daktronics PST 12-HD LED video screen that separated at its center to create an opening through two sliding doors. Because the show typically plays in parking lots where the ground is not perfectly even, the sliding sections of the video wall could not be floor mounted. The answer was to build a goal post over the entrance and hang the video doors on a track attached to the horizontal truss in the goal post. This way the doors opened and closed like a sliding barn door.

In addition to the 12mm video product that comprised the entrance doors, the entrance was framed with 72 panels of G-Lux 37mm Mesh LED video product. All in, this made for a powerful visual anchor to the show.

The visual element of the production was both powerful and elegant in its presentation and the manner with which the challenges of putting this show together on a very tight time line and budget were met. That elegance was vividly clear in how utterly clean the presentation was. The tent holds 2,000 people and a big top. That's a tight fit with nowhere to hide the backline of the production. That being said, one has to look extremely hard to see any evidence of cabling, amp racks, dimming or anything else.

The logistical facet of this production is daunting to say the least. Typically the last show in a given city will close around 9:30 on a Sunday night, travel to the next city and open the first show by Tuesday night. To those who tour with concerts, that may not seem like a big deal, but they are not traveling with Noah's Ark and building their venue wherever they play. Most importantly, they're not shaving every financial corner they can in order to keep the ticket price as low as possible. Traveling with a circus is the hardest work there is in the touring world

The circus is the oldest form of touring entertainment yet it often gets lost in the parade of gigantic and incredibly complex behemoths that go out with U2, The Rolling Stones,



Madonna and Roger Waters just to name a few. In terms of sheer size it can be argued the disparity has its place, but to those who say that the people who design and muscle this production down the road shouldn't be considered as legitimate members of the touring community – and they do exist – we would advise you to go see the UniverSoul Circus...

Coming to a city near you. ♦







## South by Southwest Puts A Roof Over Austin

**F**or the uninitiated South by Southwest is an event in Austin, Texas that began as a music festival over 20 years ago. As time passed it picked up a film element and a conference on interactive technology was brought on.

BY MICHAEL A. BECK

several blocks through Austin during its busiest time of the year. The question was will the lasers read with all of the ambient light of the city.

It would be great to say they came in with thousands of dollars of metering gear and took every conceivable reading to determine feasibility, but that's just not how it worked. "We just honestly trusted Howard to make it happen," explained Spies. "He said, 'It's going to be awesome.' We just said, 'Alright, let's do it.'"

Ungerleider's team put the city's infrastructure to work for the project mounting 83 mirrors to city light posts and close to 80 buildings. "I knew this thing was going to look great because a lot of the buildings in the area where we were had low profile, so we were only two stories off the ground. We knew we had to terminate everything and there were so many downtown buildings we could terminate on. We hit the concrete walls and spread the beam out flat and it looked great."

The termination Ungerleider speaks of is necessary because a laser beam has, for all practical purposes, infinite range and, therefore, after it has bounced off all of its mirrors it must terminate by hitting an impenetrable surface in order to be contained.

According to Spies, the biggest challenge of the gig was – predictably – logistics. Just knowing the buildings upon which to mount the gear existed wasn't enough. Permission had to be acquired to use the structures. There were a few business owners who wanted to be paid for the access, but for the most part everyone was pretty cooperative. Having the staging areas



Brad Spies, who handles "SXSW" brand development, explained the line up, "South by Southwest is comprised of three separate conferences, Music, Film and the Interactive. Interactive and Film happen in the first five days of the event and the music takes place in the last five days."

As with everything in today's world, technology is the watch word at SXSW. This year's event was no different. When the organizers turned their attention to the visual aspect of the festival, they decided to venture into uncharted waters for an event of this scale. LASER.

Spies described the thought process, "There was a group of us who wanted to focus on lighting and the overall esthetic as a way to tie the downtown area together with light. I had been talking with Craig Burross over at Barco, and he said, 'It's a great idea and totally

doable. If you're thinking of doing lasers Howard [Ungerleider] is your guy."

The next call was to Ungerleider who, in addition to his renown as RUSH's lighting designer, is the Director of Production Design International (PDI). "They flew me in for a site survey and asked my professional opinion about what I think should be done," Ungerleider recalled. "They wanted to map out the route of South by Southwest, so we spent 2 1/2 days down there determining where to put lasers and projectors. We also had projection that we enhanced with laser."

The idea was to lay a laser canopy over several blocks of the downtown area of Austin where the festival was most concentrated. One of the more touchy aspects of making this happen was the issue of light pollution. They couldn't exactly turn out the lights of routes stretching



secured wasn't the end of preliminary work that had to be done. Such concerns as power, liability, labor and official (governmental) authorization still had to be addressed.

Lasers cannot be used in outdoor applications without first being cleared on a federal level by the FAA and CDRH (Center for Devices and Radiological Health) and an untold number of local ordinances. This was taken care of on federal level by Ungerleider while Spies managed the local ordinances. Both agreed that the bureaucratic aspects went very smoothly. "Working with FAA was very easy. I have a great relationship with them. The local authorities in Austin were great to work with as well. As long as everything was terminated and nothing was hitting below three meters above where people were walking it was fine."

The entire process of turning the area into a massive painted canvas – which included several huge projections (provided by California based Lumens) shot onto the walls of some of the taller buildings – was paid for by a sponsorship by Chevrolet. That was no small tab to cover. However, when SXSW organizers approached Chevy executives on the matter they jumped at the prospect.

As Ungerleider said, it was a huge help to be able to work off the roofs of the low profile buildings upon which he and his team stationed 3 Custom PDI High Power full color RGB Systems, 2 Custom PDI High Power DPSS YAGS and three Custom PDI High Power ND YAG (with PDI Full Optic Effects Projectors). All of this bounced off 83 mirrors. However, there still had to be something in the air off of which the lasers could react. To that end the PDI team employed 30 High End F-100 Foggers and 10 High End FQ-100 Foggers. The entire system was run by 8 separate control systems with PRO Pangolin cards at the control including 3 Pangolin Network boxes running on Macbook Pro's being controlled wirelessly by iPads. The entire system was powered by 3 separate power distribution systems.

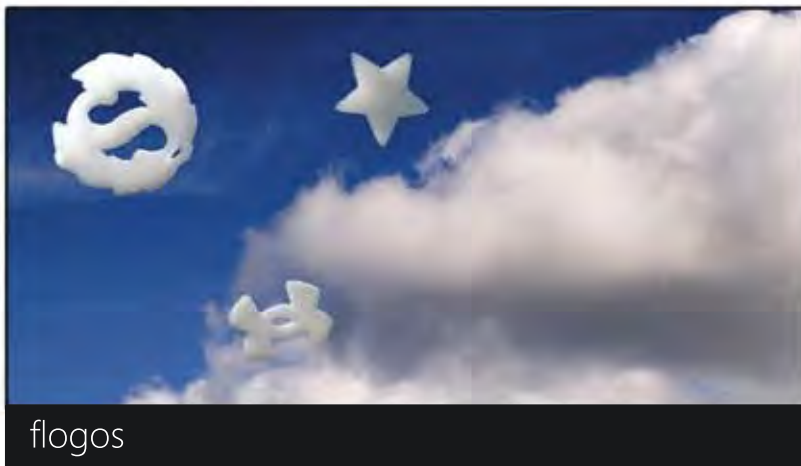
Once everything was in place and powered up, it was up to the elements. While Spies was a little nervous about how it looked when everything was first turned on, he patiently waited and that patience was rewarded. "Howard is such a pro. He just kept taking stuff out of his bag of tricks and adding gear and smoke machines until it wound up looking great."

Although some nights looked better than others, the general consensus was that it was a smashing success. "It was a lot of work," said Spies, "but the finished product was what we had envisioned in the beginning."

Mission accomplished. ◆

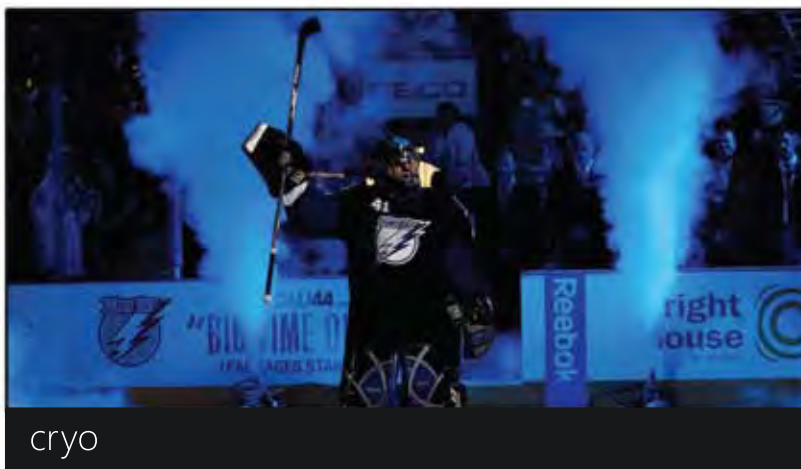


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# Pyrotechnico Keeps the Fires Burning for Warrior Dash

BY MIKE WHARTON



**H**ow do you enhance something billed as, “The ultimate event for thrill seeking athletes?” The short answer is *with fire!* Red Frog Events, the producers of the Warrior Dash wanted *something with fire* when they contacted Rocco Vitale, Creative Director for Pyrotecnico Special FX three years ago. The timing could not have been better for both parties involved. Building on a 200 year reputation for outdoor fireworks displays established by the Vitale family in Italy, Rocco Vitale had recently created the special effects division.

“It all started with a simple phone call when Red Frog contacted us about doing a fireworks show in Dallas, Texas which turned out to be one of Warrior Dash’s first events,” recalls Vitale. Vitale had hired Matt Wood in 2008 to help build the Special Effects Division of Pyrotecnico. He immediately put Wood to work on the project as its Production Manager. Wood came on board with a theatre degree acquired in 2000 from Indiana State. The practical application of his craft began when he was just a kid helping his father.

“My dad used to build rockets and aerial shells for outdoor fireworks displays,” says Wood. “It was kind of a hobby of his that I helped with. Since then I’ve always wanted to work with special effects.”

Post college graduation Wood worked with a local special effects company in Terre Haute, Indiana. This broadened his spectrum of knowledge to include indoor theatrical effects, concert touring, and the occasional Las Vegas magician.

Warrior Dash is a “mud crawling, fire leaping, extreme run from hell,” according to producers Red Frog. The 3 to 4 mile course goes through 12 different obstacles. These obstacles vary from event to event as Red Frog is constantly updating them to provide participants with a new experience each time. The race starts at 9 a.m. with successive waves of about 500 runners taking off each half hour after that. Bands play live music throughout the day with the last contestant crossing the finish line around 4 p.m. Oh yeah, there’s barbed wire

involved in the course too.

Awards are presented for best completion times to every age decade from teens to 60 plus. Costumes are highly encouraged and judged by audience applause, as is The Best Warrior Beard.

After the race the party really kicks in with vendors providing food, beer, and Warrior gear while the bands continue to play.

As the Warrior Dash appeal grew in popularity, from 20 or 30 races originally to 68 this year, so did Wood’s responsibilities; becoming Pyrotecnico’s Creative Director for that event.

For Wood, more responsibility just means more fun. Building a bigger show means







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on Saturday and Sunday.

The special effects Pyrotecnico supplies on Warrior Dash consist of Dragon Head Flame

Throwers which fire from truss above the start line as each “wave” of contestants begins the race. Usually there are six to eight “waves” in a race. The photo op area at the end of the race has two custom cauldrons which burn as well as produces a five foot burst of flame on the hour, every hour throughout the day.

The Stageline SL 100 mobile stage has Pyrotechnic Flame Projectors and Confetti Cannons, Cannon Simulators and 30’ Crackle Mines hanging from its roof. Gerbs are used as well.

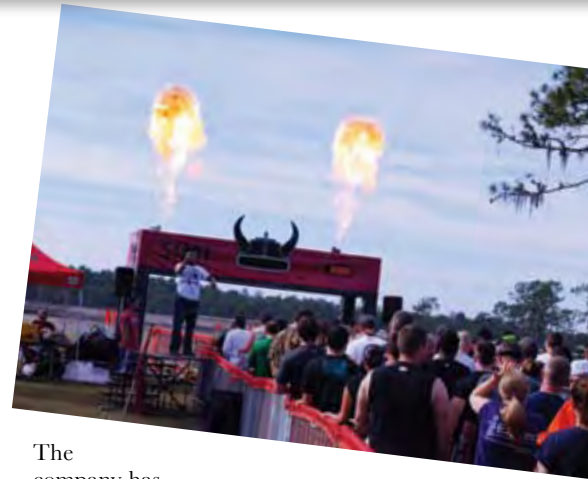
Though Pyrotecnico’s US corporate home office is in New Castle, Pennsylvania, thirteen satellite offices throughout the United States located from Miami to New York to Las Vegas, make the company well situated to have tour support immediately at hand.

bringing more creative ideas to the table. “That’s the fun part,” he says. He likes to introduce a “wow factor” to the client and audience.

That wow factor catches the client’s attention when concept discussions first start concerning the needs for the event. Rehearsal time and space while building a show is a costly aspect in today’s economy. These costs hopefully can be recouped during the run of a tour. With pyro and the commodities needed to produce special effects you are literally burning up dollar bills, which is why Vitale has added 3D rendering suites to Pyrotecnico’s resources. Via iPads or iPhones Vitale and Wood can present these renderings to the client at the conference table or transmit for the client to view and download. “This way,” says Vitale, “you can see it before you see it.”

Wood adds, “Our design team comes up with such unique effects that it is sometimes difficult to explain in words what we are presenting. Quite often there is simply nothing to compare it too. That’s why these renderings are so essential.”

At the start of each tour Wood will be onsite going over logistics, power, gear placement, and run of show with the Pyrotecnico crew hired and Red Frog’s production manager. The Warrior Dash event requires two technicians to direct and setup each event. Races are loaded in on a Friday with the event running



The company has also developed a deep roster of certified technicians in the various regions as well. With resources like these, Pyrotecnico Special FX is able to support and staff the Warrior Dash events locally.

Wood is emphatic about the quality of staff on hand to execute this and all the Pyrotecnico events. “We have the most creative and passionate people in the industry. We always strive to take it to the next level in giving our clients new and innovative ideas that will separate them from everyone else,” he says.

Or, as Rocco Vitale states, “Par for the course is just not good enough for our company.” ♦



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## BECOMING PART OF THE PICTURE, A Look At Landscape Video at the Arab Games

BY RACHEL PFENNIG

The effect is undeniable. Breathtaking from within the stadium or even just watching on TV. When 55,000 individual video pixels sync with over 14,000 square meters of net lighting are spread across an entire stadium, the image is engulfing. December's Arab Games in Doha, Qatar proved just that, as Creative Technology and Tait Technologies came together to produce the largest scale video installation to date.

"It's as if the audience disappears into the scene." Frederic Opsomer, of Tait Technologies in Belgium, still seems overwhelmed by the outcome. "It's a whole new level of audience integration. It's quite exciting. We all become part of the show." Using low resolution LED lights, the team took a relatively small video screen and installed through out an entire stadium, adding roughly two LEDs per square meter. The result could be seen from space.

It is not the first time Opsomer has worked with Dave Crump, CEO of Creative Technology (CT). Over the last 25 years, CT has been providing video equipment from 12 different offices around the world. Tait Technologies, a relatively new member of the Tait Towers franchise, specializes in the custom mechanical aspects of video parts and screens. When CT was approached by David Atkins, Executive Producer and Artistic Director of David Atkins Enterprises (DAE), about creating a stadium-sized video installation in only six weeks, Crump knew it could only be done if the two companies worked together.

The idea and concept was the brainchild

of DAE and their creative team. The vision was to combine video projection and mapping with a massive audience LED installation, and merge both in real time. "I honestly wasn't sure if we could do such a big project in such a short period," admits Crump. "Nothing that big had ever been produced for temporary installation, and we only had six weeks until load-in started in Doha. We didn't even know what we were building yet. But it always gets done. Impossible is not a word to be used in this industry."

The opening ceremony of the Arab Games would take place on December 8, 2011. A center projection, provided by ETC, would act as primary content. Atkins and James Lee, technical manager for the ceremony, needed a video system to integrate with the projection. The goal was to capture the event's energy, primarily, through video. Confident of the bold result, only 200 actors were needed, compared to the usual one or two thousand for such a production. It was a bold technical move, relying on all components to act as one unit, and all those involved worked at least twelve hours a day for five weeks in Doha.

In order to create a functional video effect in the bowl of the stadium, Tait and CT relied on lighting nets and a custom designed LED rail system. Each rail was fitted with Barco FLX pixels, the same video pixels used on U2's drop-down video screen during their 360° tour. Programming information was distributed from nodes and cables also installed into the railings. All the technology was then mounted on four-hundred millimeter centres that ran above every seat of every row in the stadium. It took over a week to assemble all of the parts on site before placement even began.

Tait Technologies project manager Hans Cromheeke was on site to install the unusual system, "The basic idea was in place, but we had to adjust a lot on site." After several tests, it was determined each LED should be installed at a 30 degree angle from the seat below. This insured the image was captivating not only from within the stadium, but also when viewed on TV. "Every detail was crucial," Cromheeke continues, "even the exact height of the railing. Too tall and it would obstruct the audience view. Too short, and the audience would block the unit. It was the first time working on such a scale. Everything needed personal attention."

It took roughly three weeks to place and connect all 22 kilometers of video railing. However, the primary concern throughout installation was safety. Ysabel





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Vangrudenberg, production coordinator, explains, “This system was unique. The audience was, in a sense, inside of the screen. Everything had to be securely in place.” Custom-made trunks were produced in Doha to hide the cables. Crew also circled the stadium dozens of times, taping down every component. “It was as much to protect the equipment as it was to protect the people,” Vangrudenberg continues. “If just one pixel was broken, an entire row of video content would be lost.”

Once the railings were put in place, a system of video ‘netting’ was added to span the space between seating and projection. In order to leave room for rigging and other show aspects to be installed, the 128 nets had to be attached to the rail system in only two days. The challenge was matching the resolution and coloring between the railing and the nets, creating a cohesive image.

The result? One picture. One scene. Video emerging from its two-dimensional world and becoming 3D. Opsomer does not see an end to the potential of this format, “From here, we will be able to install this system much faster and easier in the future. It can be used for any large scale event. Maybe even engaging the audience. Cues to have them stand or sit to create images. Creating a world that swallows up an entire groups of people and allows them to be part of something bigger. It is quite exciting to see where this may lead.” ♦







# Four Seasons Leasing Still Setting a Path to the Future

BY MIKE WHARTON

**Four Seasons Leasing** is an entertainment coach company with a list of a lot of “firsts” under its belt. This company didn’t acquire that list by just being there, though it has been around practically since our industry’s inception. No, that list was developed through a solid understanding of the industry. Four Seasons serves and works with the ability to see how resources outside of the industry can be of benefit and an entrepreneur’s basic ingredient of innovation.

Mike Slarve, the owner of Four Seasons Leasing (FSL) possesses all these attributes. His enthusiasm for the business he’s been a part of for over 30 years is contagious. “We have a big summer this year,” says Slarve. “We’ve been booking very early with many of our larger and long time clients including Dave Mathews Band, B.B. King and over 30 other tours we have lined up. In fact, the general consensus seems to be that it’s gonna be a very good year for everyone,” he restates smilingly.

Originally Slarve got involved with our industry in the 1970s through artist management and as a promoter. However, in the mid 1980s he began brokering buses on a \$25 a day commission. Given that, by Slarve’s estimation, FSL ran most of the buses in the industry, and he might at any given time have had as many as 100 buses on the road back then.

Slarve says FSL was created out of this brokerage experience. “Back in those days you had two interior choices, the disco ball and chase lights, or the red crushed velvet whorehouse effect.” He goes on to say, “We were the first coach company to incorporate the calmer colors and more luxurious interiors like a high end hotel.”

It’s old hat now and has become such a standard, but Four Seasons also was one of the

first to do bunk windows, bunk televisions with wireless internet being the next logical innovation.

The “slide-out” was another new feature designed and engineered by FSL and introduced to the entertainment touring world after which it became industry standard. The single slide-out is preferred by most bands and is a definite crew favorite. The double slide-out bus allows the rear lounge to convert as well. Both of these conversions can be accomplished with a simple push of a button.

The single slide-out was built into another first by Four Seasons; the 45-foot bus. An Eagle was chosen by Slarve in the late 1980s for this conversion. Previously 40 feet was the longest motor coach available or legal on the road.

The introduction of the series 60 motor was another innovation of FSL. The old V-6 and 8 engines popular in freight trucks did not perform as well for the bus application since the engine sat in the rear of the bus. Getting approximately 350 thousand miles of usage and constant overheating problems set Slarve on a quest. He found his treasure in the series 60 army tank motor. “That engine is good for a million miles before you even have to think about pulling any major maintenance on them,” Slarve half jokes.

His most telling contribution to the industry perhaps though is his decision to go to biodiesel on all his busses. And this transition was made back when it was pretty hard to find bio fuels. Usually a 40 or 50 mile side trek off the highway to a farmers co-op had to be made.

The bands have supported him completely in this endeavor, most notably the Dave Mathews Band. “They’re very aware,” says Slarve, “and recycle everything.” They along with several other larger artists actually make arrangements for a biodiesel truck to make deliveries to the venue, while the bus is parked.

Slarve has worked hand in hand with the American Bus Association to stay abreast

of what is current in the transportation industry. He recently became President of the Entertainment Motorcoach Council (EMC) of which about 90 percent of American Coaches on the road are members. EMC is a loosely knit organization for all entertainment coach owners to have a forum through which to voice opinions, concerns, and interact with each other for breakdowns and tours. This allows them to keep up with all new rules, regulations and laws and gives immediate access to the most transportation attorneys and experts in the world.

These days FSL owns and leases around 50 coaches with all of them out through “their season” June through middle of October. Slarve contracts out to Nick Audino to build out all his coaches. Audino used to drive for FSL and now owns Superior Coach. Dave Wilmer, who spent 21 years on the road with Cheap Trick as Rick Nielsen’s guitar tech and later production manager, is the company’s General Manager. All of FSL’s drivers are fulltime employees with five years being the shortest tenure and over 20 the longest.

Slarve reminisces that, “We’re one of the oldest coach companies still in one piece. Maybe four or five can make that claim. Dave Mathews and Green Day have been with us since their first tours. BB’s been with us for 30 years, and we have many artists who have been with us over 10 years. With an 80 percent return rate from our other clients we must be doing something right!” he laughs.

As for the process of getting one of those artists out the door and on the road there are no set rules. Slarve says, “It can be anywhere from 6 months, so the artist can book the driver he wants, to 6 days when a sudden change occurs with an opening act on a tour.” He continues, “There are drivers who are asked for a lot; they have that personality that can keep everyone happy and the technical knowhow to maintain the bus. The veteran drivers who have a deep list of clients and can work all year every year or whenever they want.”

In reference to the not too distant past Slarve says, “Everybody got hit very hard for a cou-





ple years, starting 2007-08. We were all doing well up till then.”

In a sequence of events that Slarve refers to as “the perfect storm” he goes on to say, “The recession hit about the same time a particular entity built 100 buses and dumped them on the market. Concerts and ticket sales slowed down dramatically. Bands were kind of sitting back to see what would happen rather than committing to touring. Then the banks closed their doors. Not only was it difficult for the owners of companies to secure financing, it was also impossible for the motor home sector to purchase these coaches. At the end of the day you want to sell your bus off to rotate and renew your stock. I went from selling 12 a year to zero instantly.” This of course affected the manufacturers as well. They went from selling over 100 a year to 20 at the most.

Though the industry has been frozen for 4 years or so, the usually competitive nature of the business has pulled together to make this all work.

Slarve is reminded of the 80s and 90s when bands used to ride on 20-year-old buses. “The

affluence of society in general caused an upshot in requests for newer equipment,” he says. “It got to a point where no buses over two-years-old were acceptable.” Presently the bands are coming together under the fact that a little less may need to be the norm as we move toward our rosier future.

Slarve feels very good about the future, believing the potential to be fantastic because there continues to be more genres of music coming out, more bands developing, and more venues being built.

“That all means more touring,” states Slarve, adding, “The key part of all that is the record industry’s current situation where the royalty stream is a small percentage of what it used to be just a few years ago. The real money is in touring ticket sales and merchandise.”

Slarve mentions a conversation he had with a well known artist about to embark on tour, his new album release, and all the records sales.

“The guy turned to me,” says Slarve, “laughed very loud and said, ‘You know today that album is only the promotion for your tour!’” ♦

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# q&a

with **Ron Delsener**  
PART TWO

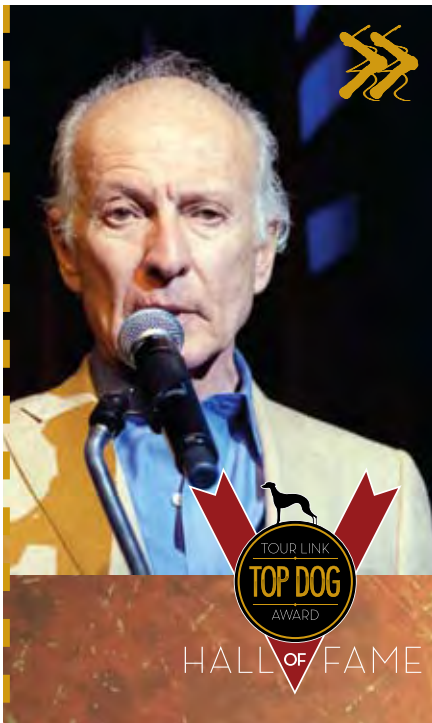


**TOP DOG HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**

## Ron Delsener

### "I'm Still Alive Baby!" Part 2

*When you sit down and chat with Ron Delsener,* you wind up getting an astonishing cross between a history lesson on the touring industry and a comedy routine. There simply was no way to fit the entire conversation into one issue, so strap in and enjoy this conclusion to Ron Delsener - I'm Still Alive Baby!



**mPm:** This whole [concert production] industry was really just finding form and becoming something solid. What was the metamorphosis like from what it was then to what it is now?

**RD:** I saw a change coming in 1992. National tours by promoters, taking small fees as local promoters was becoming the "norm". Huge artists were taking 92.5 to 95 percent and, if a promoter had an in-house advertising agency, he or she was expected to "eat" the commissions. That means out of your 5 percent, you had to pay your staff to provide the proper service artists' demanded such as a graphic designer, a traffic manager, a promotion department, poster team, etc. The commissions from which these salaries came to fuel this team would be omitted. In other words, all advertising had to be "net" and it came out of your 5 percent fee. This became a negative financial loss for promoters. Our profit margins became thinner and sometimes negative on a sell-out. Sometimes managers and agents would set a ceiling on your profits but there was no limit on what you could lose.

**mPm:** It seems like those are some pretty big dice to roll no matter who you are. Is that what made the worm turn for you?

**RD:** In 1996, after 32 years in the business I said I don't want to lose 32 years of income, plus my house and everything else. I went to Madison Square Garden who were my biggest clients at

the time and I said, "Why don't you guys buy me out?" Paramount Pictures owned the Garden at the time. They turned it down because they thought the business was risky and the margins were too slim. Very smart!

**mPm:** If nothing else that answer confirmed that you were on the right track in wanting to get out.

**RD:** Well, I was still distraught for the next two years until I met Robert F.X. Sillerman at a Crosby, Stills and Nash concert at the Southampton Campus of LI University. He was the Provost at the College and I said, "Hey I'm looking to sell my business and would you be interested in buying me out?" He said "Sure." I told him that I'd gone to the Garden and Allen & Company and I met with the Blackstone Group. They asked me to produce a spreadsheet from the past five years of P&L statements. I needed to hire professional accountants to outline years of work and explain my ideas for future expansion. However, Robert Sillerman said, "Forget about doing the work. I will hire Arthur Andersen & Company, I'll pay them to spend three months in your office to obtain all checkbooks, receipts, etc. and I will come up with an offer". I was the first on board at SFX Entertainment. He rolled up "the best of the best" from around the world and within two years sold the entire company to Clear Channel. After five years, Clear Channel "spun" us off to Live Nation, and here we are today.

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**mPm:** And part of the deal was that you stayed on?

**RD:** Yes, what am I going to do, play golf? Most promoters took the money and ran. The only one still active is Don Law and he's on his sailboat most of the time.

**mPm:** So you got all this done and...

**RD:** No, Robert Sillerman did the buying and selling. That was 16 years ago and I'm still working for people. I have a title of Chairman. It's just a title, like Putin.

**mPm:** This is a pretty amazing love story. At your age people are thinking about bouncing grandkids on their knee and playing golf, but it seems like the needle is still in your arm until one looks closely and sees is not so much as slavery or an addition as a love affair.

**RD:** As long as my friends, Roger Waters, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Elton John, Mark Knopfler, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt and many other "world-class" artists are still working, so will I.

**mPm:** So after all has been said and done, what do you tell the guy just coming in?

**RD:** To become a doctor. Cure cancer. Becoming a scientist, mathematician, social worker, stop pollution, stop drilling for oil, find substitutes, etc, etc.

**mPm:** Okay, so you give your warning to get into something more substantial - for want of a better term. What do you tell to the person who doesn't heed the advice and says, "Thanks anyway Ron but this is my passion"?

**RD:** I believe there still is a training program at the William Morris Agency and perhaps at Creative Artists Agency (CAA). You start in the mailroom and progress to assistant to an agent and hopefully become an agent with a territory. This is the best introduction I can offer that may be still available to young hungry people wishing to get in the music business. There are no short cuts unless your father has a lot of money. ♦



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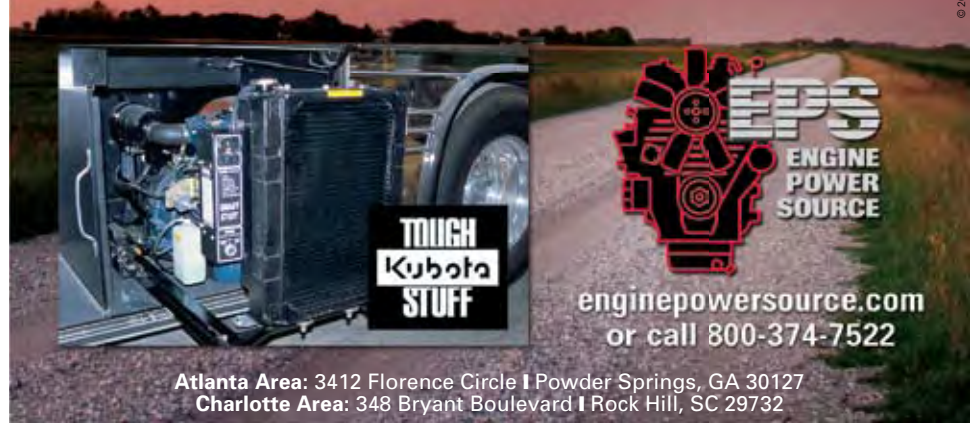


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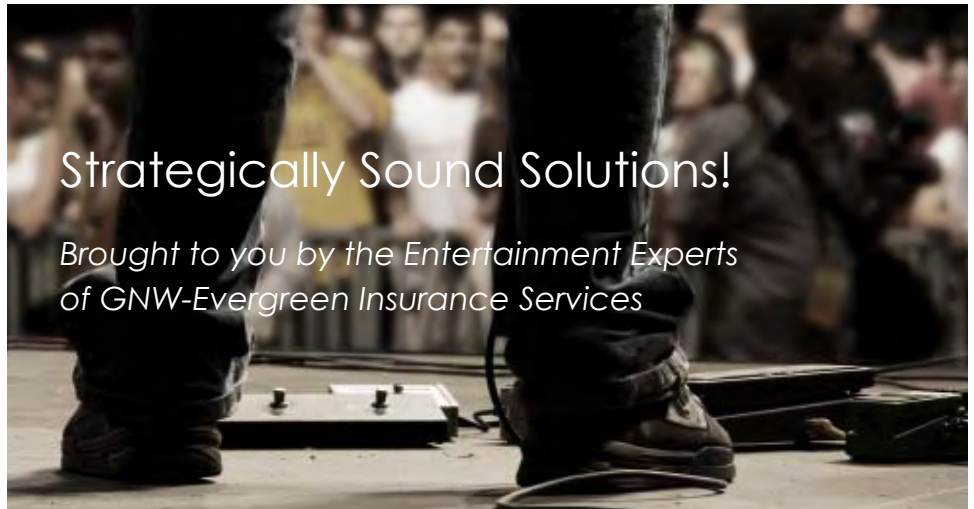
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# Romeo Santos

*You Want It When?*







*When it was decided that Romeo Santos* would strike out on his first solo tour, the wheels of progress moved at blinding speed. Tour Director Veikko Fuhrmann had to come out of the gate in a dead run. "I got the first call to produce and direct this tour on January 9, and we did our first show in Madison Square Garden on February 11," Fuhrmann told us. "Nothing existed on paper until January 9."

Typically such a short timeline means shortcuts that ultimately lead to a cheap looking show, but nothing could have been farther from the truth on this production. Indeed, just the opposite was true. The only part of this production that was bolder than the chronological constraints was the look of the final product. However, that doesn't mean that certain corners weren't cut in the process.

At first glance, the stage and lighting system had the appearance of massive customization. However, there was little time for that so some dancing had to be done. Fuhrmann and Argentinean Production Designer Wady Rodriquez made the rounds to PRG and Accurate Staging to come up with a show that would be loyal

to the design. Fuhrman laid out the process, "Obviously the production experienced growing pains based upon the short amount of time we had to put it together. Thank God Accurate had the gear on the floor that we could modify and put into the show."

**I got the first call to produce and direct this tour on January 9, and we did our first show in Madison Square Garden on February 11. Nothing existed on paper until January 9.**

With very few exceptions, the entire build was completed by Accurate Staging with off-the-shelf equipment but you would never know to look at it. This very ornate set had six different levels of risers. Most of the risers were inhabited by the band members who never moved from their positions throughout the show. The highest level of the set was an upstage catwalk that was accessed via winding staircases that wrapped around the outside of the risers. While the structure of the catwalk and "spiral staircases" were stock gear, the deck pieces and railings were custom parts as well as the decking for the lift on the stage.

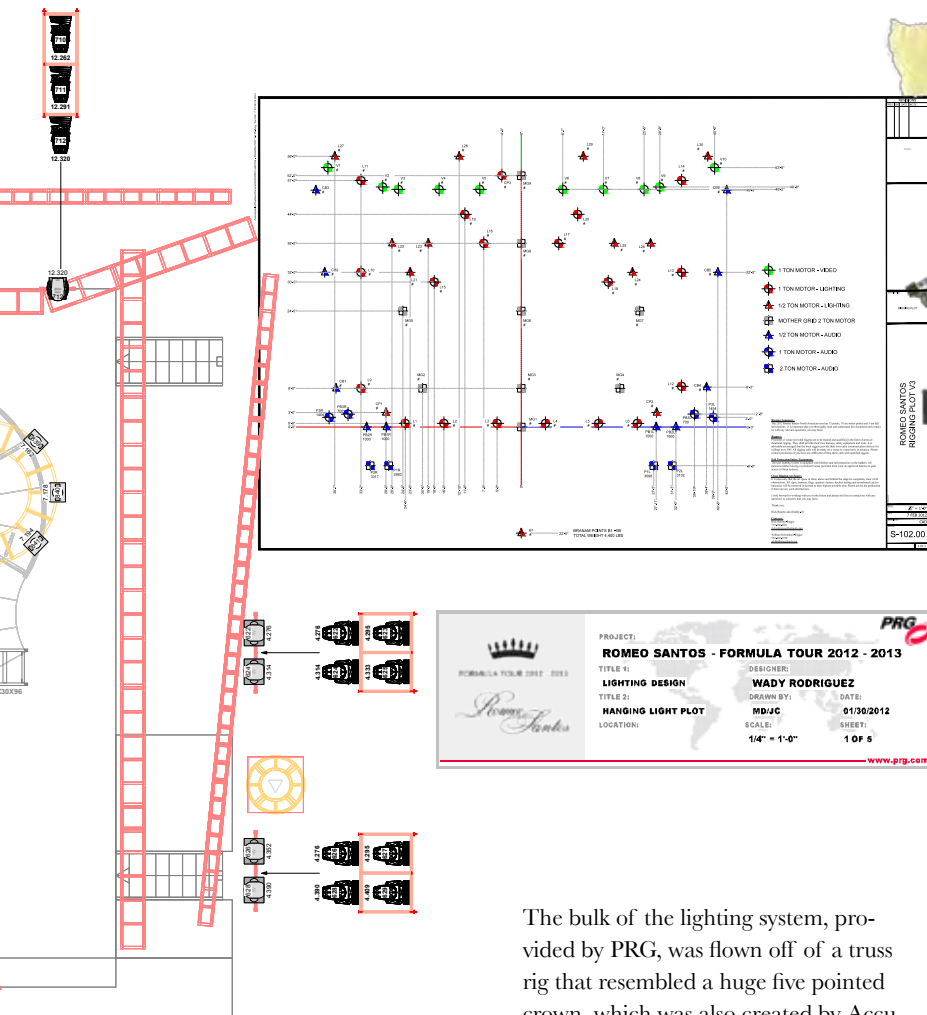
The band risers were built at ShowFX where the decorative trim







3D renderings of the Madison Square Garden kick off dates of which many production elements were cut for the tour.



was all done and applied to the entire set including LED lighting trim. It was the same story there as with every other vendor on the production – “You want it when?” But as with the rest of the vendors, the approach was to simply get it done. The primary bulk of the fascia on the set was made up of 800 linear feet of RGB tape that was applied to the step risers and patched into an RGB controller.

A fascinating aspect of the design was two crouching lion sculptures that sat on either side of the top step of the main riser of the stage. These were also built at ShowFX. There’s no shortcut in making something like this. It took an in-house sculptor working in 12-hour shifts to cut the images out of foam. From there, molds were made from the foam images in which the fiberglass statues were cast. Once the lions were painted, they had to be fitted with CO2 lines so cryo plumes could jet out of the torches the lions were holding during the show.

The bulk of the lighting system, provided by PRG, was flown off of a truss rig that resembled a huge five pointed crown, which was also created by Accurate Staging. The first position of the rig had the points of the crown flown down toward the floor at an angle about 22 degrees below level. As the show opened, the points flew up into the show position, which was 40 degrees above dead flat. Each point was a delta comprised of two 20 foot truss sticks that anchored at the circular hub of the system and connected at the point with a three foot semi-circular truss section. Each delta also contained a larger circular truss section at its base.

Just upstage of the crown’s hub was a curved truss that backed the entire system. There was a smaller truss that flew behind that and two circular trusses that flew independently just upstage of the ends of the long curved truss.

The lighting system was a mixed bag of instruments from all over the lighting map that was ever changing throughout the show. Beam play was a major factor in the design. This was achieved through the use of Clay Paky Sharpys, Vary\*Lite

Obviously the production experienced growing pains based upon the short amount of time we had to put it together. Thank God Accurate had the gear on the floor that we could modify and put into the show.

VL3000 Spot and the enormous power of the PRG Bad Boy.

Video production on the tour was provided by PRG Nocturne. At the heart of the six camera video display were three walls of V-9 Classic video product. The center screen was vertically oriented while the two on the outside were horizontal. In addition to the V-9 walls, there were the usual satellite I-MAG projection screen flown outside of the PA arrays, which utilized two 20k Christie projectors per side.





Whereas most tours run the video through the lighting console this show sent everything directly from the switcher and bypassed the front of house all together. This made for a busy day for Video Director Omar Montes Rangel who was calling/switching cameras, running one of three robocams (with the aid of Video Engineer Benjamin Rader) and calling cues to Assistant Director/LED Tech Nicholas Keiser who was performing the functions normally carried out by the lighting console.

In terms of sheer mass this show wasn't the biggest we've ever covered. This is a great example of how you can't ever gage what a show might look like on the number of trucks in the parking lot. The production was a powerful balance of elegance and glitter, but that isn't even the real story. Regardless of why, this show went out with an incredibly short lead time. With all the custom work that ShowFX had to deliver in such a short

amount to time, there was one guiding premise that rides over the top of every show and design challenge in this business, "Well what are we waiting for?"

ShowFX Owner/CEO David Mendoza was grateful for one thing, "Fortunately Veikko [Fuhrmann] was quick to get them to look at samples and make decisions and get stuff approved." The process of pulling this show together in the time allotted may not have qualified as herculean. However, it was certainly noteworthy that one month before the tour opened it never existed in any form. While the very low key Fuhrman was proud of having pulled it off and very quick to pass the praise on to his team, you got the feeling the he and his team might be sporting a tattoo of the U. S. Navy Seabees motto...

"Can do. With willing hearts and skillful hands; the difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a bit longer..." ♦







## Crew

Tour Production Manager – Chris Coffie  
 Tour & Production Assistant – Ximena Pineda  
 Stage Manager – Aaron Draude  
 Monitor Engineer – Nick Sodano  
 FOH Mix – Rafael Alvarez  
 Audio Techs: Arnaldo Antonio Hernandez, Jason Dennis O'dell  
 Monitor Asst. – Aquiles Espinal Rosado  
 Artist Production Supervisor – Rolando "Rolo" Figueora  
 Backline Tech – Rene Lopez Guzman  
 Backline/Guitar Tech – Miguel Esteves Jr.  
 Backline/Teleprompter – Wilfredo Medina  
 Artist Lighting Director – Jorge Caraballo Gonzalez  
 Lighting Crew Chief – Clifford Web Sharpling  
 Dimmer Tech – Douglas Eder  
 Lighting Techs: Matt Schneider, Robert Simoneaux, Matt Tucker  
 Video Director – Omar Montes Rangel  
 Video Engineer – Benjamin Rader  
 Video LED – Nicholas Keiser  
 LED #2/Cam Op – Scott Lutton  
 Head Rigger – Rick Baiotto  
 Rigger/Carpenter – William Heinzlmeir Jr  
 Head Carpenter – Jose "Pancho" Ramirez  
 Carpenters: Reynaldo Rodriguez, Javier "Cholo" Echevarria Orta  
 Pyro/Effects – Stephen Richard Ward

## A Party

Anthony Santos  
 Personal Manager – Johnny Marines  
 Executive Manager – Angelo Medina  
 Management – Shirley Rodrigxuez  
 Tour Director – Veikko Fuhrmann  
 Road Manager/Tour Accountant – Sasha Yabraian  
 Road Manager – Amelfis Diaz  
 Personal Assistant to RS – Ramon Goris  
 Artist Barber – Luis Channel Cruz  
 Assistant To Johnny Marines – Ivan Lora  
 Stylist – Laureann Osorio  
 Show Designer – Eduardo Rodriguez  
 Artist Security – Eduardo Pou Fernandez





Ximena Pineda  
- Tour &  
Production  
Assistant



Road Manager /  
Tour Accountant  
- Sasha Yabraian

Romeo Santos' Crew Members



Jason Dennis O'dell - Audio Tech, Nick Sodano - Monitor  
Engineer, Rafael Alvarez - FOH Mix, Aquiles Espinal Rosado -  
Monitor Assistant, Arnaldo Antonio Hernandez - Audio Tech



Matt Schneider - Lighting Tech, Douglas Eder - Dimmer  
Tech, Matt Tucker - Lighting Tech, Clifford Web Sharpling  
- Lighting Crew Chief, Robert Simoneaux - Lighting Tech



Chris Coffie -  
Tour Production  
Manager, Aaron  
Draude - Stage  
Manager



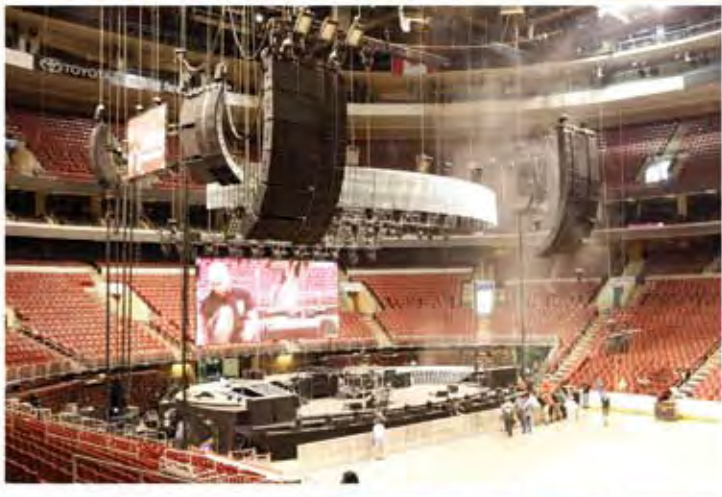
Nicholas Keiser - Video LED, Scott Lutton  
- LED #2/Cam Op, Benjamin Rader - Video  
Engineer, Omar Montes Rangel - Video  
Director, Rick Baiotto - Head Rigger



Javier "Cholo" Echevarria Orta - Carpenter,  
Reynaldo Rodriguez - Carpenter, Jose  
"Pancho" Ramirez - Head Carpenter, Stephen  
Richard Ward - Pyro / Effects

# Romeo Santos





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# PRG NOCTURNE

## *Better Than Imagined*

BY MIKE WHARTON

*A year has passed since Nocturne merged* with the Production Resource Group. With the volume of what was formerly Nocturne's clients currently going out the door or already on tour, coupled with PRG's broad-based and active client list, compounded by the operational changes taking place, to say the company is busy is an understatement.

After a week of exchanging voicemails and late night emails Todd LePere, Nocturne Logistics Director of Touring, sounded just a bit weary over the phone at first. Apologetically stating he wasn't sure he could devote 30 minutes for an interview, he quickly warmed to the subject at hand.

All PRG Nocturne gear slated for a US tour is still prepped out of its DeKalb, Illinois office. The Romeo Santos show in Madison Square Garden referred to elsewhere in this edition did have extra projectors and screens specific to The Garden dates. PRG had the resources in Secaucus, NJ to provide the extra gear and defray shipping costs.

LePere brought up that Nocturne's proprietary line of LED has been renamed with a simple V letter and its associated millimeter pitch, however he was unable to speak of anything currently in development by Co-President Ron Proesel, the inventor of the V series of LED, other than to say that

Videcon, the Research and Development company within Nocturne was purchased as well and is now called PRG LED Technologies. "Ron always has something in the works and we're all looking forward to what he may have in store for the future," said LePere.

Although PRG Nocturne is still in the flux of integration, LePere says he and Co-President Bob Brigham maintain the inventory. LePere will enter data per a salesman request and provide that information to the account rep to work up a quote.

"Sometimes the sales staff will just put us directly in contact with production, since we speak video and not everyone on PRG's concert touring staff does. After that we may just take the ball and run with it. It's a learning curve, with a lot of give and take right now in order to maintain quality control and consistently to provide the artists the best the company can offer," explains LePere.

As LePere defines the process, all needs of PRG Nocturne's principal clients are looked at first, then any and all requests from PRG's different offices around the world, be it concert touring, Broadway, corporate, TV or theatre, come to he and Brigham. One of the basic agreements between the two companies upfront was that PRG Nocturne will not jeopardize a Paul McCartney or Lady GaGa tour, for instance, by parsing out its LED to the 46 offices PRG maintains around the world. However, anticipation of having such resources available is a future goal.

Having that global accessibility and specifically establishing a presence in Europe is what led Bob Brigham to enter into the merger discussions with PRG.

Brigham tells how those discussions developed, "We've always managed to bring in a large amount of work and we send a lot to Europe. After talking to my partners (Ron Proesel and Paul Becher) we discovered the costs involved to open a support facility over there were pretty scary."

The partners decided too, they'd rather continue to work at getting better and better at the details of putting out a great show. "It just didn't make sense at this stage of our careers," says Brigham. Brigham realized too that Nocturne and PRG had worked on a lot of projects together stating, "Over the years Mickey Curbishly, who's head of PRG Concert Touring, and I have developed a wonderful relationship."

The merger has brought on a lot of growth for the company which necessitated the addition of operational staff. No one has been let go, neither has there been any major overhaul of staff. In fact to accommodate the expansion asset manager John Schaeffer, continued on 38





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# ShowFX

*Making Magic...*

*With Sets, Stages and More*

BY BILL ROBISON



## *MagiCraft Design by David Mendoza*

was founded in 1984. The name was appropriate as the firm's major focus was fabricating and crafting illusions used by magicians. The projects were custom built for specific performers. David Copperfield has been a client since 1986 and continues to rely on the company to create mechanisms and structures for his elaborate presentations.

Over time the company grew and built more elaborate projects. Siegfried and Roy's production at The Mirage in Las Vegas contained examples. Being approached by the Superbowl halftime show producers and directors of pop artist tours, such as Michael Jackson's Dangerous Tour and Reba McEntire in the early 90s, the company expanded into the music business. It was a natural evolution for Mendoza to branch out from magic illusions to sets and effects for live and touring events. In 2000 televised award shows became an important addition to the company's portfolio. That year Mendoza provided set construction and artist reveals for The Grammy Awards, MTV's VMA's, the BET Awards, the CMA's, and the Billboard Awards. The next year, in order to reflect its' expanded services, the company name was changed to ShowFX.

Along the same timeline, the live event industry required more production value

to maintain and expand its audience. The public expected live performance to present an experience that rivaled or exceeded the highly produced events that had become the standard on television. In 2002 ShowFX added show action and scenic fabrication for several Cirque Du Soleil productions. Over the next five years Van Halen, Tim McGraw, Toby Keith, Mariah Carey, Christina Aguilera, and Beyonce all relied on Mendoza and his staff to build stage sets, props, scenic fabrication, or other elements for their tours.

Theme Parks and attractions are another industry that benefited from the creative staff at ShowFX. Added to its client list were Universal Studios Orlando, Paramount Parks, and Disneyland (California and Tokyo). The Fantastic World automated mobile performance stage at Universal Studios Japan designed by Ray Winkler of Stufish is an excellent example. These massive and incredibly intricate structures

were built at ShowFX's 30,000 sq. ft. facility in Los Angeles. The parts had to be broken down for container shipping to Japan and reassembled all in a timely manner. The project was completed on time (with just 6 months lead time) and on budget.

ShowFX worked with The Jonas Brother and was the primary set builder for their first two major tours. For the 2008 *Burnin' Up* Tour a number of elements were provided. The Magic Carpet was an articulated platform that raised the boys to a height of 15 ft. over the stage and gently landed them on the downstage apron. Additionally provided were two 35 ft. long curved ramps which contained video modules. ShowFX's work has also been seen at the *SuperBowl Halftime Show*. Artist reveals and effects were provided for Michael Jackson in 1993, in 2004 for Shania Twain, and in 2011 for the Black Eyed Peas.

Cirque Du Soleil's *Viva Elvis Show* at City Center in Las Vegas features a number of spectacular elements. ShowFX initially was asked to provide the set for the finale. This elaborate project features multiple tiers, an automated stairway with illuminated treads, colored LED details, and an integrated elevator. Six weeks from opening, Mendoza and his team were again called upon to build another set featuring another large multi-tiered stage with a giant juke box as the centerpiece.

Onstage VIP seating incorporated into the 2007 Justin Timberlake *Sexy* Tour as well as Brittany Spears *Circus* Tour 2009 was also provided by ShowFX. Mendoza designed and built unique custom signature ringside seating for lucky guests who sat onstage as close to Spears as possible. These seats had to be durable as well as portable. They were constructed from gold powder coated continued on 38



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# ACCURATE STAGING

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*Accurate Staging has been providing top quality sets and stages for over 10 years. Current and original owner Jose Cantu along with partners Freddy Gomez and Tye Trussell, all work together with one common goal; catering to the industry with all its show needs from concerts and television to corporate events. However, the primary market for the company is the concert touring industry.*

Accurate had a large presence on the extravagant Romeo Santos tour that recently wrapped up in America. While much of the staging and set pieces the company provided for the tour were “off the shelf” stock items out of the company’s rental inventory there were a few bits that had to be custom manufactured such as three foot radius semi-circular truss pieces that were used for the tips of the crown shaped articulating lighting system, which consisted of 20-foot-long points that extended out from a central hub. Additionally, Accurate provided custom built decking for a lift in the stage and custom decks for a catwalk in which a hand rail system could be inserted.

The ramp and cat walk custom set pieces and the customized parts of

the lighting rig were some of many Accurate Staging’s rentals on the tour along with a versatile thrust that could be reconfigured to fit various sized rooms, spiral staircases, turntables and seating platforms used on the Romeo Santos tour. As might be expected, Accurate also provided a rolling stage used on the tour.

Accurate Project Manager Carlos Alveranga headed the effort in the shop of getting the show out the door in one week. Although that sounds like a short amount of time to prep, paint and manufacture all of the gear needed for the project, Alveranga seemed unfazed by the timeline, “Yeah it was a lot to do. But it was nothing more than a hard week.” He told us, “We had the drawings for a month, but we weren’t approved. Everything started changing

in the last couple weeks.”

It starts with a plot layout that is drawn in CAD and then built by Accurate’s rental department to meet the customer’s specific needs, whether it be a walk through structure for quick change rooms and quick performer access or an 8’x8’ turntable lift.

The gear then gets its finishing touches in Accurate’s fabrication shop in the Gardena area of Los Angeles. The fabrication shop has earned its top-notch reputation due to its quality work the custom rotating guitar it created for Britney Spears as well as a plexi /turntable /lift/ mobilator combo built into the riser for Mana, scenic and light box signs for iHeart-Radio, and the aforementioned work on Romeo Santos.



# ACCURATE STAGING



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aluminum tubing and included flame retardant cushions and gold anodized drink holders.

A recent ShowFX project was for Romeo Santos' debut solo tour. Santos built his popularity with the hugely successful band Aventura bringing the new genre of Bachata into the forefront of the Latin music scene. Bachata originated in The Dominican Republic and is Latin flavored guitar based music combining Caribbean rhythms with a percussive African beat. This music has been very popular in Latin America as well as Europe. In February and March, Santos sold out shows across the US on his first tour as a solo artist, and his music is wildly popular.

Santos' tour stage features very clean smooth lines and incorporates several stage levels together with a number of video images and intelligent lighting. Edges of the set are lit creatively adding additional dimension to the production. Prominent on the stage are two sculptured griffins as well as other items.

Clearly Mendoza is at the "top of the game". Sporting a client list of top artists, venues and events, it is clear that ShowFX can be expected to be front and center in its field for many years. ♦

production coordinator Annie Fenner and additional project managers have been brought on board.

Stefaan Michels, a previous Nocturne employee in the late 90s, recently based in the PRG Germany office, has now relocated to the Birmingham, England office exclusively dedicated to video sales.

"Between the two companies we've created quite the network," says LePere. "PRG in general is a great bunch of people, with a lot of resources all over the world. The mass of connections our company has as a whole is really something, and they're not fighting us. To the contrary, they came in, and asked, how can we help?"

Brigham adds, "There is a lot of crossover in our relationships with Mickey and his team, but there is also a lot of work Nocturne never got near. We now have entre to come in together and do projects like Nickelback, Romeo Santos and Van Halen."

PRG also has its 250,000 square foot warehouse facility strategically located in Longbridge, England. The facility is capable of setting up lighting and LED systems

and deploying shows anywhere in Europe. Nocturne is supporting The Red Hot Chili Peppers tour and Metallica stadium tour out of this warehouse.

When told that Mickey Curbishly stated he felt lighting and video were "joined at the hip these days," LePere couldn't agree more, emphatically adding, "We talk several times a day on a daily basis."

The blend of the two companies' has raised a lot of interest and possibilities. A typical conversation LePere has these days when talking to production managers or artist management goes along the lines of "hey we hear you've been bought by PRG, and we don't know yet what direction we're going with lights and audio; what options do we have?"

LePere explains, "The industry is aware we've been purchased by PRG, it's no secret, but we aren't pushing it on people. Obviously we're not gonna get everything on every tour. We're still only selling video. PRG concert touring is trying to sell the whole package of lighting, sound and video." There are people who aren't necessarily fans of PRG and those reasons are as varied as with any company.

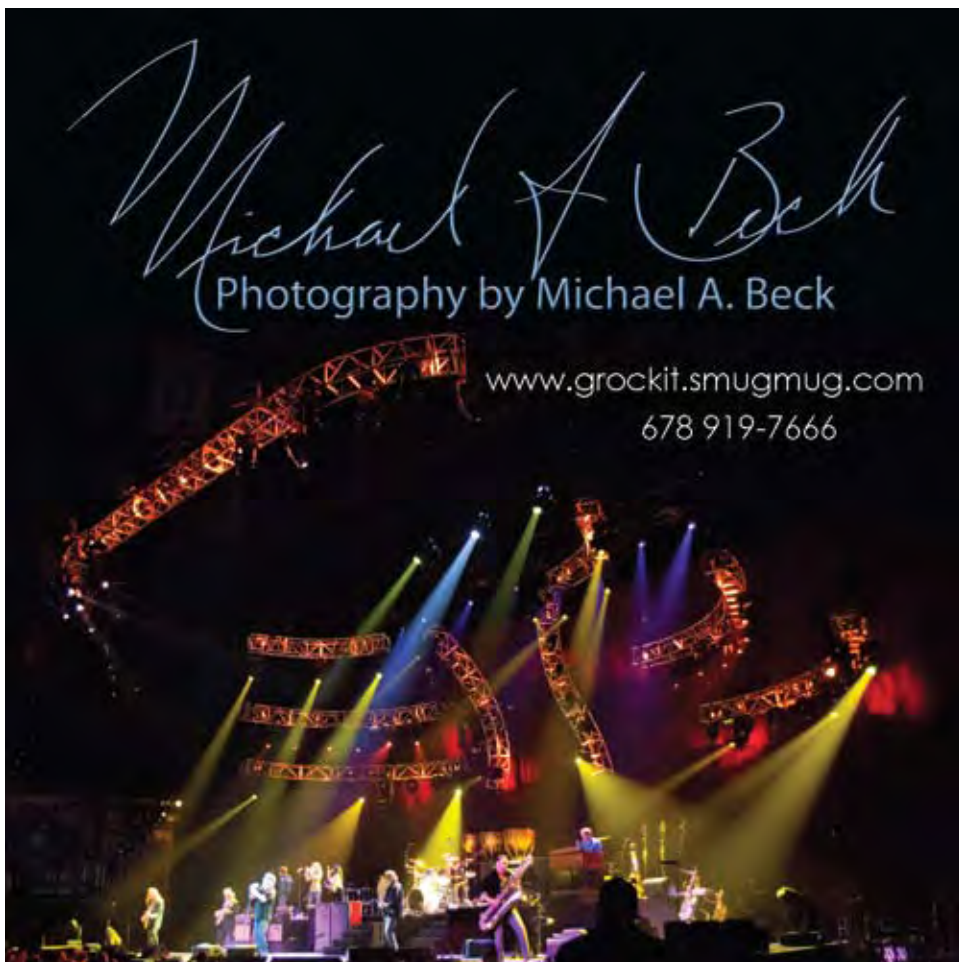
"Even though PRG is perceived," says Brigham, "as a very, very large global company, which it is, there are a lot of divisions that make up the company. When it comes to concert touring with lighting and video, we're very much a boutique shop with a custom design for every show. We're not just cranking it out like a factory warehouse."

A small group of us run it," he continues. "Whether it's Mickey and his guys or ourselves, we still have a desire to do great shows and get it right."

So while they may not be "pushing it" as LePere says, they are definitely moving forward and offering the advantages and possibilities that PRG provides.

Brigham points out some specifics, "PRG's attention to detail corporate wise, whether accounting, human resources and health plans, or asset management is beyond anything we could have done in our small company. We are quite impressed with their desire for organization. That is the well built infrastructure Nocturne was looking for so the customer could be better supported. With everything a tour has to worry about on a daily basis, we try to make sure that video is not one of them."

"Besides," he laughs, "we're just in it for the goose bumps." ♦





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Alan Poulin Photography.....40	Global Special FX.....13	Prevost.....BC
Blue Star Jets.....1	GNW Evergreen - Insurance Services.....22	PRG Nocturne.....33
Celebrity Coaches.....21	Horizon Entertainment Cargo.....17	Pyrotek Special Effects.....5
Clair.....31	I-MAG.....39	Roadhouse Coach.....4
Cube Passes.....20	Impact Marketing.....21	ShowFX.....35
D&S Classic Coach.....2	Jet Division, The.....19	SOS Transportation.....9
Daitz Personal Logistics.....11	LMG Touring.....15	Stage Call.....21
Dynamic Lighting Systems.....21	MD Live.....17	Tour Supply.....15
Engine Power Source (EPS).....22	Michael A. Beck Photography.....38	Upstaging.....5
EPT - European Production Transport.....IBC	NIC Freight.....19	
Five Points Production Services.....9	OSA - On Stage Audio.....22	

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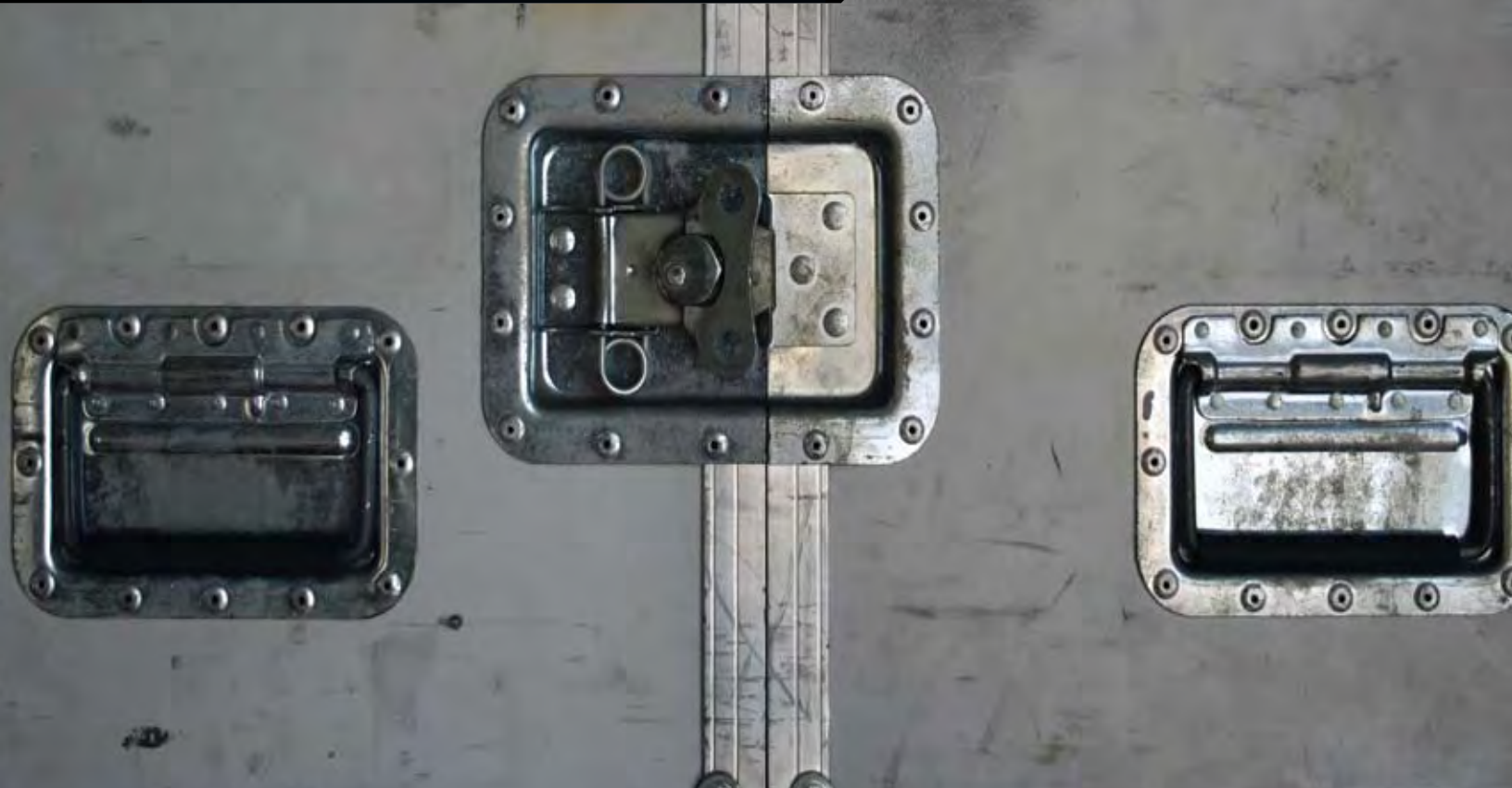
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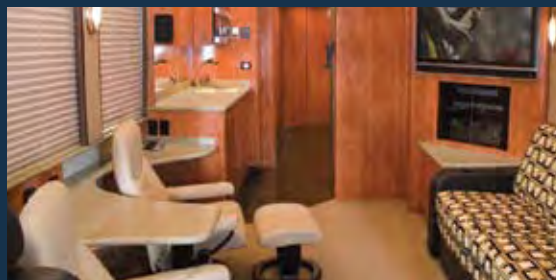


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