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Featured: Michael Brown, Production Designer for The National, on the road with LMG Touring

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LMG Touring is on the road this summer with Smashing Pumpkins, Fall Out Boy, Train, and more. See the featured work of Production Designer Michael Brown, on tour with The National, at:



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Contact Craig Mitchell, National Sales Manager Craig.Mitchell@lmg.net



CONTENTS

vol.6 issue 7 2013

In The News

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|---|
| 4 | Prevost Updates Mobile Apps, Volvo Group Introduces Apps | 12 | Brilliant Stages:
Truly Living Up To Their Name |
| 6 | DPA Microphones Rock With Metallica's Big Mick | 16 | Stageco:
Built On A Solid Foundation |
| 8 | Bandit Helps Light the 'Fuse' For Keith Urban and Yahoo | 18 | XL Video:
Getting the Vision Right |
| 10 | Mojo Barriers-TomorrowWorld | 20 | Quantum SFX:
Quantum Leap Into the Future |

Feature Story

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| 22 | MUSE The Unsustainable Tour |
| 28 | MUSE CREW |



FROM THE *Publisher*



This issue is a source of personal pride for me. Our coverage of the Muse Tour and some key vendors once again underscores our aggressive expansion into the overseas markets. I got my big break in the Industry from my early work bringing the North American and overseas markets together. It has been my goal from the beginning to provide both a series of publications and an annual event that addresses our business as a global entity and this issue is another demonstration of that commitment.

Regarding that international effort, this year, we have expanded our Tour Link Conference Nominations Committee and instructed members to consider companies from all over the world in their nominations. We will have the results ready for the general ballot in December, but our hope is that it will represent the industry as a whole and not just a profile of North America.

To participate in the general ballot voting, you need to be registered for Tour Link 2014 or at our MobileProductionPro.com industry website. Instructions on registering can be found on Page 32 with our Advertisers Index. If you've already registered, why not take a moment now to confirm and update your listing.

To be sure, another priority for us is in recognizing the growing importance of the many hard-working Regional Production Companies that seldom get credit or press for their efforts. We are exploring ways of reaching out to these companies in the near future and hope to have some exciting news on those efforts soon. We are in the process of expanding our team to better serve both the International and Regional markets, so stay tuned for some interesting announcements from us in the near future.

Finally, I want to encourage all of you who have not yet made the decision to attend Tour Link to get registered and secure your hotel room soon. We have a discounted registration rate still available, but as with all good things, there is a time and availability limit, so don't delay. This conference is shaping up to be very special and as usual, we plan to outdo the previous year in the quantity and quality of the events and sessions that will be presented. I hope to see you there.

Publisher
Larry Smith

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Prevost Updates Mobile Apps

The Prevost Locator App

Prevost has enhanced two of their Mobile Apps. The Prevost Locator App, which provides an easy way to locate a Prevost service provider anywhere in North America, has added some new functionality.

The 'service level' for each of the 160+ providers is now displayed, letting users know what coach services are offered by each service provider. Additionally, each service provider pin on the map is color-coordinated and icon-coordinated by category, so users can easily identify providers on the map by type.



The Prevost Tools App has been updated with some new resources. The Prevost Tools App puts access to many Prevost Service tools all in one handy application. These new buttons have been added to the app:



- 'My Bulletins' gives users access to a list of service bulletins according to their specific vehicles.
- 'Contacts' gives users a list of service team contacts and an auto dial function for those reading the document on a phone.
- 'Marketing Tools' gives users a link to the Prevost Marketing Tools site, which provides print ads, photos and presentations to help operators with their marketing.
- 'Conversion Portal' gives Prevost authorized converters a link to conversion coach resources.

Prevost Tools App users can also link to wiring diagrams, pneumatic diagrams, technical manuals, driver's guides and service bulletins for any Prevost or Volvo motorcoach. The app also provides links to Prevost online warranty services, Prevost Liaison telematics system, and online parts ordering.

Volvo Group Introduces Apps

Volvo Group Introduces Volvo Transporters and Volvo Sustainability Apps

The Volvo Group has introduced a new online game called Transporters. In Transporters you get behind the wheel of one of the Volvo Group's wide range of vehicles and carry out a number of assignments. By picking up objects and avoiding obstacles in a variety of environments, you take part in a virtual journey through the everyday operating world of the Volvo Group.



You can play Transporters on www.volvogroup.com/transporters or download the Prevost and Volvo Group Apps from Apple Apps Store or Google Play.

The Volvo Sustainability App describes Volvo Group's approach to Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability and gives an overview of different projects and initiatives.

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The Volvo Group is one of the world's leading manufacturers of trucks, buses, construction equipment and marine and industrial engines. The Group, which employs about 115,000 people, has production facilities in 18 countries and sells products in more than 190 markets. Its core values are quality, safety and environmental care.

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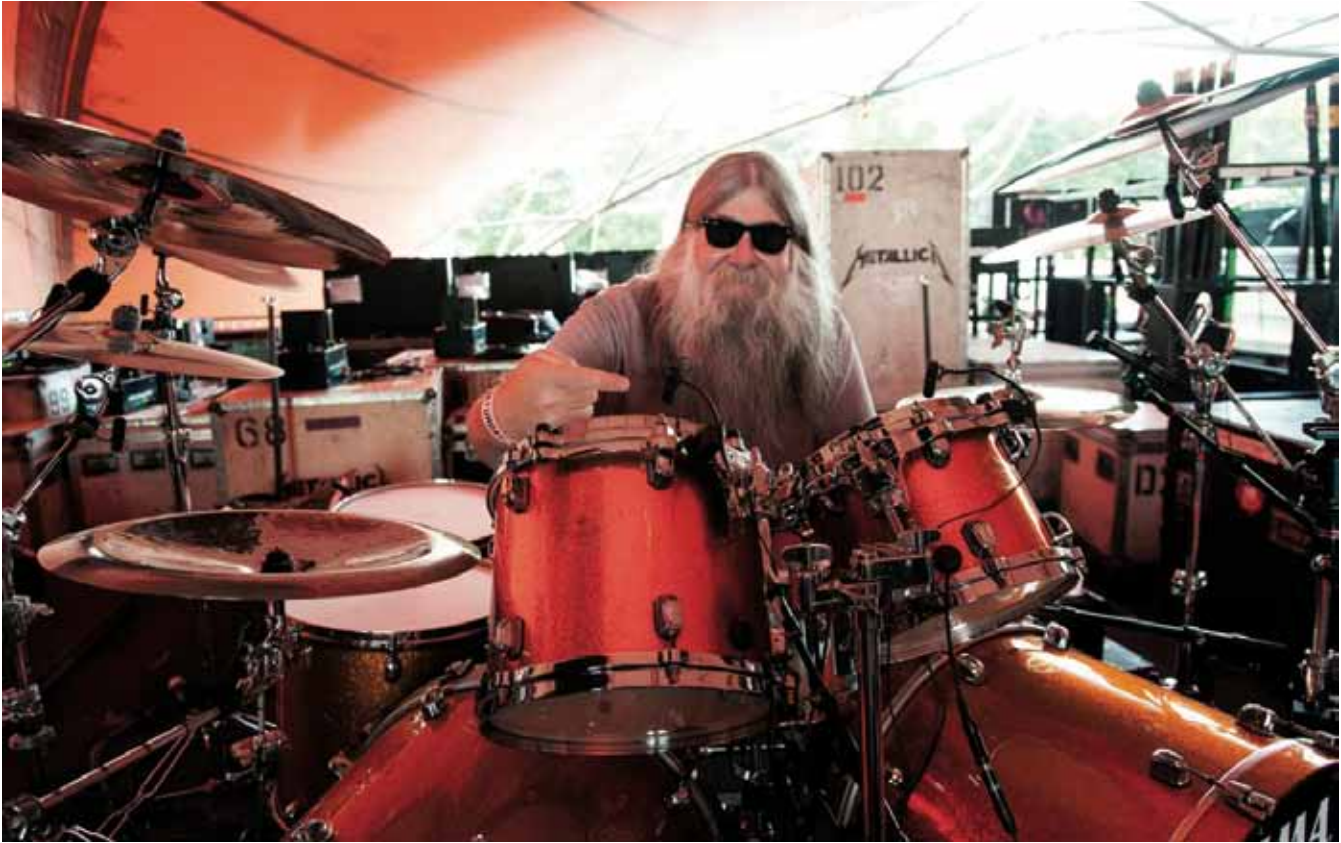
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DPA Microphones Rock with Metallica's Big Mick

Legendary FOH Engineer makes the switch to d:vote™ 4099 Instrument Microphones to deliver a clear rock sound for live shows and the band's new 3D documentary

Mick "Big Mick" Hughes, front-of-house sound engineer for the heavy metal band Metallica, is using DPA Microphones' d:vote™ 4099 Instrument Microphones for drummer Lars Ulrich's cymbals and toms during the band's live

performances. The mics were also used to capture sound for Metallica's 3D film *Through the Never*, which premieres worldwide on October 4, 2013.

"After 30 years with Metallica, and 15 years miking Lars' drums with another brand, I was finally persuaded to test

DPA Microphones by Morten Uldbæk, who is the Danish distributor for Midas consoles," says Big Mick. "I have to admit, I had never considered DPA as the right kind of microphone for live rock music, but after giving them a try I was really impressed with their brightness and crispness."

The final impetus to switch to DPA Microphones came from the studio engineers who were working on the soundtrack for *Through the Never*. "The recording guys were not happy with our old mics because they didn't deliver the audio they wanted across the full frequency range," explains Big Mick. "Obviously for the surround sound on a 3D movie it was important that the audio was perfect, so I suggested the DPA d:vote and, after carrying out A/B testing, they were very happy for us to switch to them."

Big Mick adds that in addition to delivering brighter, crisper audio, the d:votes are much clearer in the higher frequency ranges. As a result, he no longer needs to use an exciter across the cymbal and toms sub group on his Midas live sound console. "Technology does move on and I'm always looking for better solutions," concludes Big Mick. "Now that I have discovered DPA, I am looking forward to trying out a few other models. I already have my eye on the d:diccate™ 2011 recording microphones as I'm told they are great for drums as well."

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Bandit Helps Light the 'Fuse' For Keith Urban and Yahoo

In today's digital age, music fans are able to hear entire albums before their official release date, and Keith Urban made sure he delivered to the entire world as he streamed a live performance of his seventh album, Fuse. The event was part of Yahoo! Music's Ram Country and took place September 6 in the heart of downtown Nashville.

LA based lighting designer Victor Fable worked with Bandit Lites to deliver a functioning, flexible design for both those streaming the concert and those attending the show. Additionally, Fable wanted to give the appearance of a full tour production concert.

Using the truss and lighting as the scenic elements, Fable utilized the curves of the outdoor stage at Cumberland Park, taking advantage of the beautiful Music City skyline. Half circle trusses made up three arches: one upstage center and two upstage right and left, while the overhead lighting was a simple up, mid and down-stage design which provided a nice blended look with the surroundings for both the audience and the cameras.

"Every show has its challenges, but challenges is what makes designing so much more rewarding," said Fable. "In this case, the biggest challenge was time. The show was a one day wonder and we went LIVE on September 6 at 8 pm and we didn't get the venue till 10 pm on the 5th. A lot of work needed to be accomplished in a small amount of time. Besides loading the truss and lights, we had spot towers, stage extensions and lasers. I knew based on the schedule that dark time to focus and set up

spots was going to be almost non-existent. Fortunately, I had an outstanding group of people behind me to make this all happen. My programmer, Susan Rose, did a great job at the helm of the GrandMA. I called upon old friends, Mark Carver, Andy York and Buddy Lunn to help make the show a success. They did not disappoint."

Equipment for the event included Robe Pointes, Robe 1200 LED spots, MAC 2k Washes, Robe 600 LED Washes, Robe 100 LED Washes, Color Kinetics iWhite Blast, Comar Pars, GRN Moving Washes, VL 2500 Spots, Lycian M2 Spots and two GrandMA 1 consoles.

Although Fable has been a part of the lighting industry since the mid-80s, this

event was his first time to directly work with Bandit, and he found himself blown away by the level of skill and dedication that the Bandit team brought to the show.

"Without a doubt, Bandit's reputation is stellar, and even while working with the likes of Vari*Lite, I have never heard anything but praise for Bandit's work," explained Fable. "After working with Mike Golden and the crew at Bandit, I can say they made it happen at every level, way beyond my expectations. From pre-production, budgeting, prepping the show, to execution, I had a no stress experiences. What more can a designer ask for? I have the highest respect for this company and cannot wait to work with them again."

"I had the extreme pleasure of meeting and working with Victor for the first time on this project and I can say in complete sincerity that I cannot wait for the opportunity to do more," said Golden. "Victor,



Steve Angus and the entire Yahoo team were a complete joy to work with."

Fable was so impressed with Bandit, he expressed his desire for a Los Angeles location saying,

"Hell! I'll even help move you in!"

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Mojo Barriers' US office kept the crowds safe at the inaugural TomorrowWorld, as the event set new standards in electronic dance music

TomorrowWorld is the newly-launched sister festival to Belgium's epitomes Tomorrowland, an EDM event which every true fan of the genre has visited, or wants to visit. Nearly 300 artists performed at the highly-anticipated first international edition including Calvin Harris, Afrojack, David Guetta and Armin van Buuren.

Organisers Backbone International engaged Mojo Barriers at the early stages of planning to supply 146m of its aluminium stage barricade for the main stage. Mojo's experienced crowd control team designed a configuration that included an unobtrusive thrust from the centre of the main stage barricade line, offering added protection to the 45,000 strong crowds.

Mojo Barriers' project manager Jordi van Berkum said: "A thrust works by breaking up the crowd, easing pressure which was vital for this event where everyone was going to be dancing and moving around a lot. We used an additional 80m of barricade to safely section off the camera platforms and front-of-house tower."

In total, Mojo Barriers installed equipment across 20 different areas of the huge festival site which totalled over

3,800 acres in the rolling landscape of Bouckaert Farm along the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta.

Jordi continued: "A large part of this project was also our bar barriers; we installed over 315m for food and drink vendors, alongside the main stage configuration. It was huge logistical undertaking, with the site being so spread out. Careful attention and planning was needed."

Backbone International have since contracted Mojo Barriers' US to deliver crowd control products and services to all of its North American and Canadian 'Sensation' events, a global series of

events bringing together dance fans – united wearing the colour white – with some of the hottest names in the genre.

"The organisers of TomorrowWorld put a tremendous amount of effort into creating something you've never experienced before, with out-of-this world decor, entertainment and experiences," Jordi concluded. "It's fantastic to be involved with such an exciting event and we look forward to seeing how it grows in the future, and working with them across their wider portfolio."

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Truly Living Up To Their Name

UK-based staging company Brilliant Stages Ltd does exactly what it says on the tin - supplies high quality and innovative production solutions for some of the biggest names in the live touring industry. Mobile Production Monthly sat down for a chat with General Manager Tony Bown to discover the reason behind the reputation.

Formed more than 30 years ago, Brilliant Stages has built a strong reputation as one of the main go-to companies for many a set designer and production manager. Throughout the company's existence, it has earned a well-deserved level of trust for its ability to implement a high level of quality with its designs and the use of various manufacturing processes to supply the touring market.

By creating designs which translate into lightweight, secure, practical and easily assembled structures, it has maintained its objective of ensuring both successful productions and happy crews.

Its client list reads like a Who's Who of some of the biggest selling artists in the world. From P!nk's Funhouse tour to Robbie Williams' latest outing, Brilliant Stages has helped to create some of the most visually stunning shows ever to grace the arena and stadium circuit.

When English rock band Muse decided to embark on a stadium tour in support of their latest album, *The 2nd Law*, it was Brilliant Stages they turned to once again.

"We have been working with Muse for quite a few years now. For the pyramid set for the arena legs of their current world tour, and the subsequent stadium set, we have taken our lead from set and lighting designer, Oli Metcalfe. Oli is not only a really nice guy but - more importantly - we get on with him really well, which is a key factor in what we do.

For the stadium runs this time around, we were more involved with the dressing of the set than anything else. The parts we supplied are what are referred to as the 'chimneys' which are sections that clad the stage towers which extend above the set. They have LED integrated into them, supplied by London-based Neg Earth. Below that, we had extra cladding to

extend the video screens on and off stage. For this we took the design of the video panels and put dummy panels off each side of the stage to form the angular backdrop for the video screens. Then, as far as anything technical and structural goes, we supplied the B-stage, which incorporated a lift for the piano. We worked very closely with Oli and production manager Chris Vaughan to produce something that they were very happy with," says Bown.

Bown and his team's strict working methods and high standards have not only created a well-deserved reputation within the industry, but have also led to their clients continually coming back to them, year after year, something Bown puts down to building strong and trust-based relationships, as he explains:



"As a vendor, our relationships with the production managers and the lighting designers are crucial. Working with any designer, for instance someone like the late, great Mark Fisher who we did a lot of work with, the interaction is really built around trust. He respected what we did and we respected his designs. What we try to do is get as near to a finished product that replicates their dreams, their designs and more importantly their visions. In the modern world of live production, you can find yourself not so much dealing with the design but more with the budget. Creations also need to be able to endure a touring schedule while meeting everyone's criteria, not just the designers, but the crew and all the other trades associated with the production. An important element of what we do is to always make sure that we interact with the other teams involved, such as the sound and lighting

guys."

It is this business ethos, strictly followed by Bown and his team, that lies at the centre of Brilliant Stages' success.

"Before we start anything, or even cut the first piece of metal, we turn the order into approved designs that meet everyone's criteria. Most times, due to our knowledge and experience, we are pretty much left to our own devices, which again comes back to the element of trust between the designer and set builder. Once we have the process underway, we often actually have very little interaction, apart from getting approval on things like the style of finishes or materials for a particular set piece. It also depends on how complex it is as well. Some sets are a lot more intricate than others, and therefore you would expect a lot more interaction with the designer during the process."

It was a chance meeting with Charlie Kail of Brilliant Constructions in the early eighties, which laid the foundation for Bown's induction into the staging business. Working for a local sound company, Bown was looking for a chance to get off the road. When Kail offered him the opportunity to join the business, the young sound guy jumped at the offer.

"Back in those days it was just folding gate risers. There weren't the big stage sets from a pioneering point of view. Now there are so many big productions out on the road using the same sort of methods to tour, that it's all down to budget. The quicker the set can be built and torn down, the fewer trucks it can fit into and in the most cost effective way, the happier everyone is," says Bown.

With so many years of experience in the ever-changing world of the live touring industry, the Brilliant Stages team has always been able and willing to adapt to whatever comes along.

"An increasing amount of documentation is required before a set goes out, regardless of the size of the project we are dealing with. The onus is on us to supply structural calculations and details of compliance to quality and safety codes and procedures. We are very strict in terms of meeting such standards. Occasionally we've faced some challenges when involved in projects in territories which

don't have equivalent safety standards to those we routinely work with. For instance, we recently supplied some kit to Japan where their codes don't match any British, European or even American codes, so we had to also ensure full compliance with an additional set of guidelines."

The company has experienced growth in recent years, mainly down to the detail, attention, respect and sheer enthusiasm Bown and his team exude. Bown explains:

"We have a responsibility, which we take very seriously, not only to the artist and crew, but also the public. We would never cut corners. We adhere to very strict internal processes and make sure we get it exactly right, each and every time."

It is this understanding that has kept Bown and Brilliant Stages at the cutting edge of the production industry and created a reputation for quality that is not only well deserved but also hard-earned by sticking to what they do best, creating Brilliant Stages.

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Built on a Solid Foundation

Created on one man's vision along with the growth of the outdoor festivals in the mid seventies, Stageco have built a solid reputation for what they do. The company's Director of International Projects, Dirk De Decker, talks to Mobile Production Monthly's Richard Bennett about long term relationships, the changing face of the industry and why it's down to a team of structural engineers that creative visions become reality.

There is no question that our industry has changed in recent years. Bigger and longer tours are the norm, as are the ever present tour accountants and the beast known as the touring budget. One of the positive aspects of these changes is the vendor relationship. Tour and Production Managers are more likely to use a tried and tested vendor, one they have used before and that they have a relationship with, built on trust and quality.

For internationally award winning staging, event and engineering company Stageco, the relationships and high quality of service has seen them grow into the biggest player in the market. When Muse decided to do a summer European stadium tour, it was no surprise that they went back to their preferred supplier.

"We started working with Muse back in 2006/2007 on their first stadium shows. In those days, the shows were limited to two shows in Wembley Stadium and one show in Paris. We then worked with them on the last two tours.

"In the initial stages of The 2nd Law tour, we had a lot of meetings with Oli Metcalfe and Malcom the Technical Director. It was a combination of talking to the technical teams as well as the creative teams. There were a lot of changes as we proceeded. The first designs were completed around November 2012, then things developed on from there into what it actually finished up looking like. It is our job to make sure that the creative ideas get turned into something that is practical and durable, which is one of the challenges for us. We adhere to production values. People buy a ticket to see a show.

If we help to deliver a show that works, it will bring the people back for the next tour and hopefully, we will get that tour," says De Decker.

Formed by Hedwig De Meyer way back in 1975, Stageco (as it was re-named in 1985) has proved itself year after year, tour after tour. The company's success is down to the quality of their products, the above average service they offer, and the experience of the crews they supply. For De Decker these qualities have been easy



year, they don't change and they will always be a priority. A touring crew is different from a festival crew and we as a company will always make sure we send out the best crews for the environment they are working in. I think what we provide to our clients is a solution for their problems. If we get a phone call asking for a stage build in say Moscow next week, those deals are done on a handshake. There is no time for tenders or contracts. Contracts are part of the paperwork that pours the deal into a written format. It's all about the trust that we will deliver what they need," says De Decker.

It's this old school way of doing business that has helped the company not only keep its market but helped to grow that market, which is no mean feat in the current cost pressure environment the industry currently finds itself in.

to achieve, down to the main foundation, which the company has been built on, as he explains:

"We have a team in our office of structural engineers and CAD Designers that, although they have never been on the road, are part of the foundation of Stageco's business and reputation. All of our structures that go on the road are passed by our engineers who have years of college or university training. In this industry you have to have a theoretical base to build from."

With a client list that reads like a who's who of the music industry, Stageco's reputation for the technical side of their structures is their biggest advantage. It is something that has been their lifeline since the early days of supplying numerous festivals since 1975, and is still at the forefront of their business.

"It is Stageco's policy that our regular customers, some of who have been with us for more than twenty years come first. Whatever can be done afterwards to attract extra work comes after that. We do a lot of the same festivals every year. They are already on the planning board for next



"Maybe nowadays it's becoming a question of quality over quantity. There is a case in future of there being smaller productions but done well. I think the industry is at a crossroads at the moment. One area of concern within the industry is the quality of equipment out there, and it can be seen on a number of different levels. One level is that a vast number of shows are getting more complicated, which does not always necessarily mean that the teams dealing with it are at the level of the job they are there to do. On the other side, there is a lot of pressure from the budget side of things, which sometimes makes it hard to justify to the accountants why you need certain pieces of equipment and why things cost so much. We will always supply the best crew for the job at the best price and quality," says De Decker.

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Getting the vision right

XL Video has worked with Muse for many years now – having been involved with almost every tour they have done. Mobile Production Monthly caught up with Phil Mercer, XL’s Head of Touring, to talk about the changes they’ve seen in the past several years, bringing them up to the band’s current The 2nd Law Tour.

“Our relationship with Muse goes back to the very beginning,” says Mercer. “In the early days, we supplied a couple of 12 x 9 projection screens and some low-powered projectors. We have grown with them and for the last couple of campaigns, they have been doing stadium tours.”

As the band’s The 2nd Law, or as they have now renamed it The Unsustainable Tour, travels around the world, jumping between arenas and stadiums, Mercer and his team were confronted by a number of challenges, something that they all took in stride.

“This time out, the stadium shows were sandwiched between a fairly extensive arena run, which was by and large played in-the-round. It featured a big inverted, automated pyramid screen as its centre piece, with LED all around it. With the stadium shows, we have gone from a 360 situation to the more traditional end of venue set up. So taking the content and concept of a show from one type of run to another is always going to present challenges.

“The basic camera and control systems were the same for the arena and stadium runs. The main element that changed was we had more LED in the stadium shows. Because we had no roof, the pyramid could not be used. For the stadium run, the screen was kind of folded out with a much bigger surface area to project on,” says Mercer.

The varying changes in venue size, while a major challenge, were not the only ones faced by the XL Video crew. With so many tours currently out, bands are playing more and more shows, but in a smaller time frame. This situation was no different on the Muse run, placing greater pressure on the crew, as Mercer explains:

“It’s the time to turn things around that has been one of the biggest challenges on this tour. The arena tour finished in Canada and there was a chartered 747



to bring everything back for the start of the stadium run. We had no time to sea freight anything because the time scales were so tight. Then, when the stadium run finished, we had to turn it around again for the second arena run in the US.

Another challenge for us as a company this summer, has been the amount of bands that have been touring Europe. The vendors have really been up against it to supply everything.”

Another aspect of the modern live touring industry that Mercer feels has had a major impact in recent years is the fact that it has become much more of a money making environment. With more accountants out on the tours and the budgets becoming much more of a deciding factor, there is no question that our beloved industry has changed. Mercer is not

alone is his view of the current situation:

“The business has changed, from the days of friends making a deal on the strength of a hand shake to the world of contracts, terms and conditions and expectations that are very different. It’s evolving and we all need to be aware of that. Traditionally, vendors would spend large amounts of money on new equipment in the hope it would pay off, but now that does not happen so much. The risk element seems to have been taken out of the whole thing.

There are positives and negatives, but XL Video will always step up to the mark and deliver the best service and the right people for the job. That’s one thing that will never change,” concludes Mercer.

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Quantum SFX Leap into the Future

UK Based Special FX company, Quantum, has made a huge impact within the touring industry in a relatively short space of time. Mobile Production Monthly talks to Founder and Managing Director Shaun Barnett and discovers that an established reputation for quality is just one of their many attributes.

Over the past few years, our industry has seen a number of changes, some for the better and some questionable. One thing that remains the same is reputation and in the live production industry you can live or die by it. It's not just the big companies that are subject to this unwritten code, but a number of individuals, whose professionalism, experience and knowledge sets them high above the rest.

Quantum's Founder, Shaun Barnett resigned from SFX Company BPM in 2009, down to, as he so delicately puts it, "some directional changes" just before he was due to go out on Take That's *The Circus Live* tour. Unsure of what the next step was, the bands Production Manager, Chris Vaughan, rode across the horizon with the answer:

"When I called up Chris to tell him I had left the company, his answer was 'I don't care what you call your company, it's you I want on this tour', and that was that. Phil Maggs and I went on the road and Quantum SFX was born," says Barnett.

It was on that tour that Barnett & Maggs developed a pressurized liquid flame system for the hit song *Relight My Fire*, which eventually turned in to the company's signature Spitfire Flames™. With a flame height of 20 meters outdoors and 10 meters indoors, the system most recently wowed crowds for the Muse tour in the UK and Europe, to the point that during rehearsals in Coventry, UK, residents thought their stadium had been set alight.

Trust is a big thing in our industry, never more so when you are dealing with the explosive world of pyrotechnics. It's their reputation that has not only seen the company get repeat business, but grow from strength to strength. It's this focus on client service, coupled alongside the philosophy that anything can be done. Even if the artist has some crazy ideas, Quantum has the best team out there to make it a reality.

Having recently brought in a computer-based visualisation artist, ideas can be taken from the drawing board and seen exactly how they'll look in a venue, right at the initial design stage of a tour.

With some modern tours carrying more accountants than backline crew these days, everyone is feeling the cold and icy hand of the tour budget on their shoulders. For the Quantum team and their distinctive approach to any situation, they have turned this newfound and slightly unwanted pressure to their advantage and expanded their operation, by opening a US office, something Barnett admits they had been thinking about for a while. It was a Production Manager who gave them the final push to make it a reality.



"P!nk's PM, Richard Young, called us up and offered us *The Truth About Love* tour. The only problem was that infamous budget word. His budget couldn't stretch to fly all of our gear in from the UK to the US for rehearsals and the first leg of the tour. Having worked with us on the last P!nk tour, he wanted us on this one. It was the kick we needed to open a US office," laughs Barnett.

Based in Dallas, TX and run by Maggs, the company has already started to make an impression based on their reputation and ethos for great service, an experienced team and the ability to think outside of the box. Barnett admits that to maintain their strong and well-deserved reputation, they need the right kind of staff on their team. It is this guiding philosophy that is at the core of the Quantum business model, as Barnett explains:

"We've expanded our team recently. Phil Mundy has come on board as a full time Project Manager. He has an extensive background in fireworks and pyrotechnics. Mike Badley, our engineer, recently joined us, having worked on the Batman films as well

as *Inception*. We look to have people who are excelling in their field and use Quantum as a platform for their work," says Barnett. "We are also very keen to bring our team up through the ranks. A new technician will go out on the road with one of the experienced guys and learn the trade. It can take a long time and we are lucky with the people we pick."

Barnett is not only passionate about Quantum, but about the reputation of the pyro world in general. He expresses grave concern about a recent trend in the industry that may have its origins in the financial pressure of touring, and that is the influx of inferior products into the market. With some companies quoting cheaper prices, there has been an increase in the amount of equipment coming out of China.

"My biggest concern is that most of this stuff is not certified correctly or in some cases may be poorly produced. It increases the chance of there being a nasty accident, which could affect the whole industry. We know our products. We select them and with the experience and knowledge we have, we pick the best. Our firing systems are 100% accurate," says Barnett. "Our engineer makes sure all of our equipment is certified and meets the highest standards. Safety of performers, crew and the audience is always our highest priority."

With the attention to detail, quality and the people he sends out, Barnett has in a very short period of time, established Quantum as one of the stand out pyro companies in the business. This is evident when you look at their workload and client list, which include Katy Perry, The Foo Fighters, Muse, Arctic Monkeys and P!nk, to name just a few.

"Last year was crazy for us. The Olympics was an amazing production to be part of. During the opening ceremony, when the five rings descended, it was a magical moment for the whole team. We put our heart and soul into it. Our team virtually lived on site for the whole of the Olympics, overseeing our contribution. This year has been a bit steadier, which has been a nice change. I even managed to take a holiday," laughs Barnett.

The rest may be short lived as the company is back at what they do best once again, with a number of tours gearing up over the coming months and plenty in the pipeline for next year. Quantum continues to make massive leap in one hell of an explosive industry.

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THE UNSUSTAINABLE TOUR

MU

*When Muse headed out across Europe on the stadium leg of their **The Unsustainable Tour**, the crew came together to deliver one of the slickest shows out there. Richard Bennett joined the tour in London to see how the whole thing is greater than the sum of its parts.*

The older you get, the more staggering the advances in technology seem to be. The social network phenomenon of recent years has allowed everyone to not only have an opinion, but the ability to share it instantly with the world. From Facebook to Twitter, the most intimate details of what you are up to can be broadcast worldwide at the push of a button. Although this medium is relatively new, it can still fall victim to the oldest of communication follies, the Chinese Whisper.

When Kate Mulgrew posted a photo on Twitter, of what appeared to be Coventry City's football stadium on fire, with the comment, "Oooh fire at the Rioch," little could she have known that within minutes it would be re-tweeted more than 400 times, causing concern and panic.

In reality, the truth was not some terrible, devastating fire, but British rockers, Muse, rehearsing for their summer stadium tour. And the cause of all this concern was down to one man, Dan Ivory-Castile, Quantum Special Effects crew chief.

"The Coventry situation was funny. We were doing a full pyro rehearsal in the early evening and firing up Quantum's Spitfire Flames™ system which is situated on top of the four chimneys on the main stage roof. They are big flame units with a flame height of between 15 and 20 meters, burning for 1 and a half seconds. That's what people saw, but they are so powerful, I can understand why people thought we were burning down the stadium. The funny thing is, at Coventry, we were using only two chimneys. On the rest of the dates we are using six," laughs Ivory-Castile.

The Spitfires were also used during the run of shows for some short sharp snaps, depending on the cues. With the Spitfires being used on four songs, the need to refuel them after two songs is a challenge, considering how high they are situated within the production.

"We have two accumulators out there, one stage left and one stage right. Each holds 40 litres of fuel and one accumulator will feed three heads a side. The challenge for us has been getting the stuff up to the top of the set. The riggers devised a system for us to get the chimneys up there. We have an A & B system that lives in the chimneys, so all we have to do is haul up the loops to the top of the chimneys and plug them in," adds Ivory-Castile.

USE

And that's just the start of Quantum's contribution to this massive production, as Ivory-Castile explains:

"We also have 20 stadium shot confetti cannons which fire out the Muse Euro banknotes during one song. There are four situated around the B-stage in FOH and four stage left and right. The rest are on the delay towers. Each cannon holds 1 kilo of notes, so we're using 20 kilos a show. And then we have 16 CO jets along the front of the stage, housed in sixteen removable pyrotechnic effect platforms attached to the main stage, along with smoke machines on the top of the chimneys. I get a direct camera feed from the video team for the cues and I have two spotters out there in constant radio contact, so we always have a direct line of sight as to what's going on."

The stunning and powerful array of effects supplied by UK based Quantum, while spectacular, were just one part of a huge and visually stunning stage set. Delving deeper into the family that is the Muse crew, a number of surprises are unearthed.

Walking into FOH, you are confronted by a rare but beautiful sight, sitting there in all its glory, like an oversized piece of antique furniture is a Midas XL4 console. Since ceasing production back in 2007, the XL4 has gained legendary status amongst sound engineers. In this modern industry we call touring, the demands of back to back shows and more and more travelling, the XL4 is not the easiest of desks to lug around the world, even if the analogue sound it creates is in a class of its own.

"It's a bit of a hybrid really. I have a Midas Pro TC as an out-rid-er, but the core sound is run through the XL4. There are some people who choose a desk for the philosophy of it. I choose the desk for the job. Within the context of Muse being a rock band, the XL4 is the best tool for their sound, partly because of the warm tones on the vocals and I find it glues the band together. I have been using the XL4 with Muse for years. We did tour a while back with a Digi board, but in the back of my mind I just knew it was better with an analogue desk. One problem is that the Midas XL4 doesn't handle time code and with Muse some of the program can be quite complex, so I came up with a system to automate this. What I ended up doing was using the Pro Tools system midi track which allows me to pick any note or bar and I can put a marker on it. The protocol handles all the automation which is happening in the background, I have my hands on the faders watching the band all the time throughout the show," says FOH Engineer Marc Carolan.

The FOH set up has been universal to the whole world tour. The system is an expansion of what Carolan uses in the arenas, the same tonal velocities just on a bigger scale. This, of course, requires more channels to be used on the XL4, mainly down to the fact that there is a little bit more action going along with the inclusion of a B-stage.

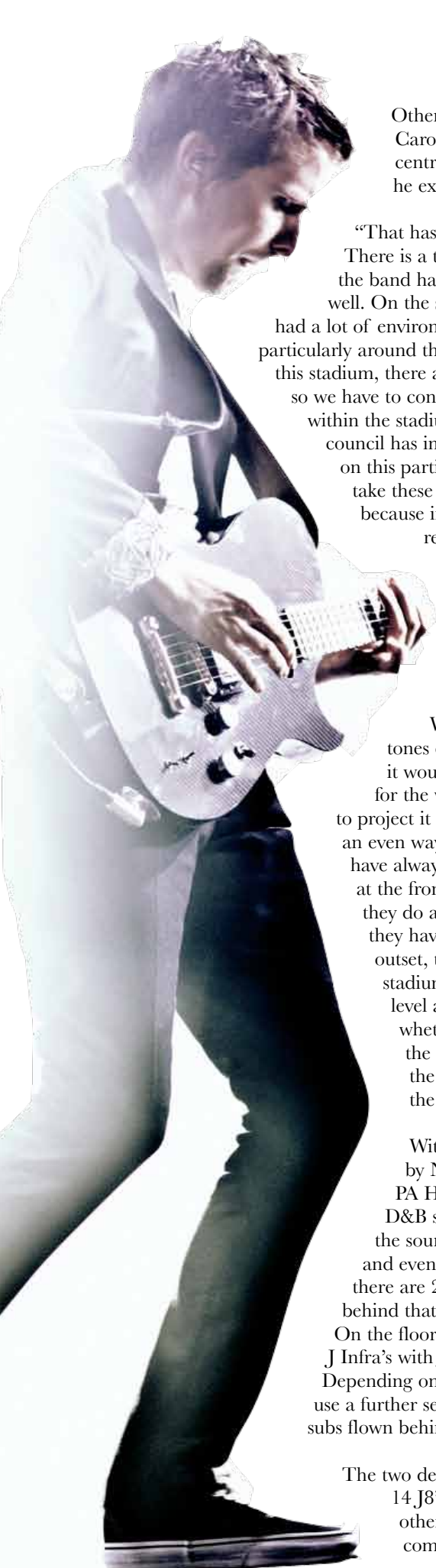
"It's mainly just extra radio channels for the vocals. There is a lot of stuff that happens on the B-stage, which returns back to the core backline world anyway. There are songs where we have all the band or one or two of the band on the B-stage at any given time. The challenge is that when they are on the B-stage, they are in the long throw of the system. The FOH is universal to the whole world tour. The system is an expansion of what we use in arenas. We are using the same tonal velocities with it, just on a bigger scale. We are using more channels on the desk because there is a little bit more action going on, plus we have a B-stage," says Carolan.

The choice of microphones helps make the challenges easier. Using a Norman 105 on a wireless Sennheiser and a Lake Audio contour system, Carolan is able to enable fine points of EQ, allowing him to obtain very clear vocals while also sorting out any feedback problems, taking into account the set up is an open mic.

Working with Muse for a number of years, along with his years working in studios, has given Carolan an almost sixth sense on how to get the best sounds from any situation, particularly when it comes to setting up the drums, a key element of any rock group.

"The mic set up is pretty basic. The kick drum is a Beyerdynamic M88 Shure SM91. The snare top is a Shure SM57 and the snare bottom is a Norman 105, which is really a vocal mic. Then I have an Akg 451 on the high hats, Shure Beta 98's on the toms and an Audix D4 on the gong drum and the ride symbol is a 451. We under-mic the cymbals with Norman 105's," says Carolan.





Other challenges facing Carolan on this tour have centred on the B-stage. As he explains:

“That has been a challenge. There is a time lag out there that the band has dealt with really well. On the stadium tour, we have had a lot of environmental challenges, particularly around the sound levels. In this stadium, there are houses around it, so we have to concentrate the energy within the stadium, as the local council has imposed restrictions on this particular show. I always take these restrictions seriously, because if we break those restrictions, the venue will lose its licence and then how many sounds guys and other crew members will be out of a job?”

With the warm and rich tones of the XL4 available, it would be a shame to settle for the wrong type of system to project it around the stadium in an even way. Muse and their crew have always put the paying public at the front of their mind when they do anything. On this tour, they have made sure from the outset, that everyone in the stadium will hear the same level and clarity of sound, whether you're right down the front of the stage or in the last seat at the back of the stadium.

With a system supplied by Newbury based Skan PA Hire Ltd, consisting of D&B speakers throughout, the sound is loud, vibrant and even. On the main hang there are 20 J8's and 4 J12's, and behind that are flown J8 subs. On the floor there are 16 pods of J Infra's with J subs on the sides. Depending on the venue, they may use a further set of 20 J8s with 6 J subs flown behind it.

The two delay rings, one with 14 J8's and 4 J12's and the other, venue dependant, is comprised up of 16 J8's.



“The ring system for this show is made up of four each side just for coverage of keeping everything in the room. In this venue there is a lot of noise pollution so we have to keep to strict council levels. We did site visits which helped hugely. In my view, site visits for a stadium event are essential,” says Tony Smith, Systems Designer.

Walking around the stadium, during the relative quietness of the afternoon, you can't help but be overwhelmed by the sheer scale and beauty of the whole production. Minimal equipment on stage, crisp clear lines, and the size of the set is incredibly impressive.

This monument to visionary design is down to the band and show designer, Oli Metcalfe of Oli Metcalfe Design Ltd. Calling on his many years' experience of working with Muse, he is also the bands LD. Along with input from Production Manager Chris Vaughan and TAIT Technologies, Metcalfe was able to create the outstanding stage set.

TAIT provided the large 61 metre by 17.6 metre rolling stage. With a thrust extension of 26 metres connecting the main stage to the B-stage. Ever aware of the often inclement European weather, the main stage and thrust is finished with specially treated marine wood, paired with a quartz treatment to prevent water damage. This devotion to protecting the stage, band and crew from bad weather was truly represented within the stage design. With two custom designed technical bunkers with an integrated water protection plumbing system for the backline and sound techs, the bunkers kept the techs close to the band, but out of sight of the paying public. A 6.7 metre long and 3.4 metre high custom built waterproof canopy covered the main stage performance area.

“It is a challenging design, in that all the elements of the show have to be synchronized. They need to go up and down at the same time in very close proximity. All the crews need to work together. It has been built to our spec and we like the show to be clean, literally a clean stage, no wires etc. Keeping with the same suppliers and the same crew is key for us. Everyone knows each other and how they work which makes for a streamline production,” says Assistant Stage Manager, Mark Cameron.

With lighting company Neg Earth supplying an array of lights, Metcalfe had plenty to play with.

“We have VL 3500 washes as the main soft edged washes, a good number of MAC Vipers (48), 38 VL 3500s and 16 Shoguns, which run full width of the pelmet. Above that, you have a high level run of Mac Auras (30 running along the top header) which play quite a big part in doing all the grandiose daytime type of effects. Because they are nice and bright and flare nicely to the naked eye and the camera, they are also running all the way down the B-stage. We also have some Martin Atomics behind the meshes, on the low level, the tech bunkers and wings as well. In Front of House we have some show beams which are used for audience lighting and they have a nice variable twin beam effect. They are not hard edge and you can get a nice double aspect beam from them which you can rotate. We have 4 units looking like eight and they can cover a nice area with that twin beam function, so it can go quite wide,” says Metcalfe.

The whole system is run through a Hog 4, with a Luminex backbone, and a fibre snake system running between FOH and the stage. A number of Luminex Art-Net nodes are everywhere across the system for distributing data, with no DMX in the dimmer world or FOH. This means that everything sits within the units.

“We can route universes where we need them to be. We can add universes where we need them. If we need additional channels, we don’t need to run five pin everywhere. We just have local nodes that we run converter cables to. We have a main hub in the tech shed area. We are also running their new 16XT switches, which are really reliable,” says Metcalfe.

Metcalf freely admits that getting it right has a lot to do with the vendor and more importantly the relationship with that vendor. As he explains:

“Relationships are extremely important when it comes to putting the new technology in the right place. Neg Earth have always prided themselves on the quality of their service as well as the equipment they have to rent, which for me is the right balance. Neg Earth’s Dave Ridgeway has always looked after me.

Anything I have wanted to try or get a demo on, he has always got for me. If it’s not the right thing, he will always take it back, and for a large touring production like ours, that type of support is vital.”

With so much production on one tour, you would think that there is no more that could be added to enhance an already exceptional show. A view that Video Director Tom Kirk would hastily disagree with.

“The visuals should fit and feel right within the set. They should not distract from the band but they should add to the energy coming off the stage. I only tour with Muse and this is a great crew. They all pull together and work really hard to make sure the show is of the highest quality. I have two dedicated camera guys on this tour, Mark Hughes on camera one and Robert Wicks on the pole cams. They are always trying to find ways to be more creative and I am very humbled to work with these kind of guys,” says Kirk.

Working in collaboration with video companies XL Video and Chaos Visual Productions, Kirk has been able to not only be creative but also bring a large amount of innovation.





“Camera-wise, we have two front of house long lenses. We have two track and dolly cameras in the pit and two pole cams operated by Robert. On top of that, there are four robot cams: one on the B-stage and the other three around the stage, plus three locked off mini cams. Everything is HD. We also have a wireless steady cam which we use during the show to roam around the arena and stadium to film live actors. This footage is then transmitted straight into our system and pulled up on to the big screens, supplied by Chaos, turning their performance into a live visual. This is the first time we have used the screens and I am really pleased with them,” says Kirk.

As the show gets under way, all the individual elements come together in a seamless and spectacular way. Sitting in front of house, when Quantum’s Harvey Wall Banger bursts into life and the Spitfires Flames™ go off, a wave of heat hits you full on. From there, the production hits full gear, delivering an outstanding lesson in how a cohesive crew can deliver beyond expectations. One of the main reasons for this is summed up by veteran Production Manager Chris Vaughan.

“As a crew we have worked together for the last 8 years on consecutive stadium tours, and last summer on the Olympics Closing Ceremony. Everyone is very comfortable working at this level, and my role is to give the guidance and leadership that allows a top team of professionals to go about their business.”



THE CREW

Chris Vaughan-Production Manager
 Paul English-Stage Manager
 Mark Cameron-Production Assistant
 Liam Wheatley-Venue Security
 Maya Gas-Production Coordinator
 Zoe Buttling-Production Assistant
 Chris Risner-Accountant
 Jim Allison-Rigger
 Matt Lazenby-Rigger
 Des Broadbery-Pro Tools Op & Keyboard Programmer
 Jason Baskin-Guitar Technician
 Shane Goodwin-Bass Technician
 Gavin Ellis-Drum Technician
 Ben Doyle-B-Stage Tech
 Rick Worsfold-Head Set Carp
 Sam Augustus-Carpenter
 Jem Nicholson-Carpenter
 Ray Bogle-Carpenter
 Aico Boshoven-Carpenter
 Scott Turnbull-Carpenter
 Pete Geary-Carpenter
 Matt Augustus-Carpenter
 Angelika Griebel-Carpenter
 Chris Aram-Carpenter
 Kevin Baker-Barricade
 Dirk Henneberger-Barricade
 Des Butcher-Drapes
 Oli Metcalfe-Lighting Designer
 Jonathan Sellers-Lighting Crew Chief
 Peter Horne-Lighting Technician
 Mike Maslen-Lighting Technician
 Dave Cox-Lighting Technician
 Davide Palumbi-Lighting Technician
 Barry Branford-Lighting Technician
 Gareth Williams-Lighting Technician
 Tom Kirk-Video Director
 Matt Vassallo-Video Engineer
 Yves Van Acker-Processing Server/
 Tech
 Gary Beirne-Video Crew Chief
 Al Wright-Video Technician

Dylan Wilson-Wright-Video Technician
 Rob Wick-Video Technician
 Mark Hughes-Video Technician
 Andy Tonks-Video Technician
 John Richardson-Video Technician
 Shane Watson-Video Technician
 Marc Carolan-FOH Engineer
 Adam Taylor-Monitor Engineer
 Liam Tucker-Sound Crew Chief
 Eddie O'Brien-Sound Technician
 Tony Smith-Systems Designer
 Marty Harrison-Sound Technician
 Ben Sliwinski-Sound Technician
 Rob Wilkins-Sound Technician
 Finbarr Neenan-Sound Technician
 Dan Ivory Castile-SFX Crew Chief
 James King-SFX Technician
 Jackson Wheeler-SFX Technician
 Frank Cribley-Caterer
 Stuart Jackson-Caterer
 Ben Albertson-Caterer
 Stuart Allford-Caterer
 Emily Cribley-Caterer
 Joe Cribley-Caterer
 Marisa Zoccolan-Caterer
 Steve Knudsen-Caterer
 Rob Oliver-Caterer
 Gary Dall-Caterer
 Simon Mitchell-Caterer
 Pete Bailey-Band Chef
 Dave Loudon-Ambienteer
 Ian Thomason-Ambienteer
 Karen Nicholson-Wardrobe Mistress
 Paul Traynor-Power Crew Chief
 Matt Murphy-Power Technician
 Andy McGillan-Power Technician
 Neil Whybrow-Power Technician
 Julian Bracey-Performer
 Andy Adams-Performer
 Steve Edgar-Performer
 Robyn Simpson-Performer
 Bill Fairhall-Performer
 Graham Rees-Performer
 Jeff Skellon-Merchandise
 Arjan Koeman-Merchandise
 Gary Workman-Lead Truck Driver
 Phil Gurney-Lead Bus Driver

TOUR RELATED OFFICES

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 SHOW DESIGNER-Oli Metcalfe Design
 TRAVEL FLIGHTS AND HOTELS-Ibero Travel Service
 LIGHTING-Neg Earth
 BUSSING-Phoenix Bussing
 TRUCKING-Stage Truck
 SHOW COMMS-Channel 16 LTD
 RADIOS-Radiotek
 CATERING-Snakatak
 EVENT CUISINE-Feedback Event Cuisine
 PASSES & ITINERARIES-Publicity & Display
 VIDEO & LED-XL Video, Chaos Visual Productions
 PA COMPANY-Skan PA Hire
 STAGING-Brilliant Stages, TAIT Technologies, Stageco
 DRESSING ROOMS-Lovely Things
 SFX-Quantum SFX
 POWER-Fourth Generation
 BARRICADE-EPS
 HEALTH & SAFETY-Piper Event Services
 MERCHANDISE-Firebrand Live
 CARGO-Rock-It Cargo

RED STEEL CREW

Jez Craddick-Site Coordinator
 Mark Hitchcock-System Advance
 Antonio Duarte Da Cruz-Stageco Crew Chief
 Cezary Gorka-Stageco Crew
 Sean Hawkins-Stageco Crew
 Dominik Sonntag- Stageco Crew
 Nuno Lopes- Stageco Crew
 Joao Mendes Antunes- Stageco Crew
 Steven Scrivens- Stageco Crew
 Jöel Brams- Stageco Crew
 Björn Böhme- Stageco Crew
 Marco-Pieter Van De Panne- Stageco Crew
 Stephan Schumacher- Stageco Crew

BLUE STEEL CREW

Toby Fleming-Site Coordinator
 Ian Twell-System Advance
 Patrik Vonckx-Stageco Crew Chief
 Romeu Nunes- Stageco Crew
 Bert Van Humbeek- Stageco Crew
 Drika Matheus- Stageco Crew
 Sonya Schubert- Stageco Crew
 Terence Farrell- Stageco Crew
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American Mobile Staging.....7	Four Star Wire.....8	Quantum SFX.....21
Apex Stages.....28	Gallagher Staging.....IBC	Roadhouse.....2
Brilliant Stages.....12	Hemphill Brothers.....29	SJM Radio.....15
Bearcom Communications.....19	IMFCON.....14	Stageco.....17
Country Coach.....5	Impact Marketing.....10	Upstaging.....5
Cube Passes.....9	LMG.....IFC	XL Video.....18
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familiarize yourself with how the website works

mobileproductionpro.com

- ■ **Create an Account** Registering an account on Mobile Production Pro is free and easy. Just click "**Create an Account**"
- ■ **Log-in / My Account** When logged in, you can list and categorize your own businesses, adding expanded data relevant to your business type(s) by choosing "**Add My Contact**" from the "**My Account**" menu. Once listings have been added AND approved by our staff, you can access and manage them by choosing "**Manage My Account**" from the "**My Account**" menu. Logged-in users can modify their user account information from the same page. Employee information and photos can be included in any contact listing. Coach leasing companies and venues can add availability calendars. Hoteliers can add hotel-specific information. Companies handling production equipment can list and describe their equipment. If your business listing is already in our database and your user account has not yet been paired with your listing, please call us at 615.256.7006 and we'll pair your account with your business so that you may edit and expand your data.
- ■ **Contact Search** Once you're logged in, your contact listing search results will include contact email addresses and expanded information. To search our database of contact listings using a combination of criteria, choose "**Contact Search**"
- ■ **News / Event Calendar** the website provides other valuable resources such as current news on concert production topics and an industry event calendar.
- ■ **Publications** When logged in, you can subscribe at no cost to our magazine, Mobile Production Monthly for one year by choosing "**Subscribe to Mobile Production Monthly**" from the "**Publications**" menu or download issues freely by choosing "**Mobile Production Monthly**" from the "**Publications**" menu.
- ■ **Advertise** Advertising on our site and in our print publications is a great way to get your company's brand in front of all the people who work in the mobile production industry. Our advertising rates are still the lowest in the WORLD for the Live Event Production Industry. To purchase advertising you may call us at 615.256.7006 or email your inquiry or request to advertising@mobileproductionpro.com.



Photo: Scott LaRockwell



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