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Volume 8 Issue 3

JOHN MELLENCAMP

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Notes from the Publisher

As we know, touring is not always to an arena or stadium show. The bulk of our business is concentrated in theaters and mid-size venues. This has nothing to do with the quality of the show or a statement about the artist. Quite often, it is a decision to get closer to the audience and that has a lot to do with our cover feature this issue. The John Mellencamp show at the Morris Performing Arts Theater gave us a chance to profile an established artist in a more intimate environment.

In addition, we had a chance to take a look at the Morris Performing Arts Theater that is a true multi-use facility. Not only is this a great venue in Northern Indiana that brings in top acts and shows, but an interesting rehearsal facility with cost-effective pricing and close proximity to several markets, including Chicago. It is a good alternative for shows to consider from a number of reasons. We think you will like this profile.

We are bringing in new writers, expanding our coverage, reaching overseas and making our stories more diverse. To this end, we welcome Jordan Haymaker, Victoria Fausnaught and Shelby Cude to Mobile Production Monthly in their debut articles for Mobile Production Monthly.

We pride ourselves on the fact that we focus first and foremost on people, issues and business. Certainly, we cover technology and products, but usually we are interested in how these things impact people and how they do their work. This is a distinction that separates us from all the other publications and is the foundation of our annual conference.

As you are reading this, we invite you to take a look at our conference website www.tourlink-conference.com. We have posted additional photos of several of the functions on the site and for those of you who have been on the fence about attending, I hope these images will help you decide to join us next year. In response to your enthusiastic response to the hotel and the city, we will be back in Palm Springs in 2016.

Larry Smith
Publisher



mobileproductionpro.com

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VAN Y TOURS NOW OFFERS MB SPRINTER VAN RENTALS IN NASHVILLE



Phoenix-based tour van company, **Van Y Tours** keeps literally pushing boundaries. Not only have they just built what may be the 1st of its kind Splitter van, they are now expanding into the Nashville entertainment market. Van Y Tours will now be able to offer van rentals in Nashville, conveniently at Soundcheck.

“As many nationwide music tours start and end in Nashville, it was only a matter of time before we opened a shop out here,” says owner Luke R Van Wyhe of the additional location.

Van Y Tours has been in business just over 2 years now, and has almost quadrupled in size due to the demand for vans with bunks in them. And the growing demand for more options and locations helped pave the way for a complete new type of van and the Nashville location. The new van design features 4 large reclining captain chairs, a wrap-around couch, a huge rear cargo area and much more. More images of the vans can be found on the website’s gallery page. The Nashville location will help fill a large need for touring bands that start and end a tour in Nashville.

The owner of Soundcheck Nashville, Ben Jumper has stated that bands are asking him for tour vans all the time. “Van Y Tours was a perfect solution to fill the need.”

The Sprinter van business has been a growing market for a few years now. Bands are out on the road much more often now, in order to keep revenues up, and gain exposure. Tour van rental is a great way to offset the overall cost of touring. The cost of a tour van is almost 3-4 times less expensive than a traditional tour bus.

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STEVE KNIGHT & THE STORY BEHIND THE STEALTH CHAIR

by Ocea Demer

I am a huge advocate and supporter of “wellness on the road” but wellness doesn’t stop when the tour starts and it shouldn’t end when it is over. It’s also the reason I am looking forward to working with Mobile Production Monthly to discuss information and products that address some of the biggest needs for taking care of oneself on and off the road.

For this story, Steve Knight of ErgoLab talks about the design and development of chairs that reduces physical strain caused by extended sitting. Steve is the CEO and founder of ErgoLab, a specialty chair manufacturer based in Colorado with offices at Soundcheck Nashville.

Steve Knight is my kind of entrepreneur. Not only is he an avid music fan, but when he sees a problem he solves it. What set ErgoLab apart was their understanding of niche markets, and their willingness to address the particular needs and demands in those markets. When asked why he began a focus on the music industry after working with the dental industry since 1992, Steve answered, “Well, it’s another niche, but one that’s closer to my heart. I identified with the music industry, having gone to numerous shows, and being a specialty chair manufacturer, I of course notice how people are sitting and what they are sitting on while working the boards out in the venue or on the side stage. Yes including the creative milk crate at an outdoor festival.”

Steve did his research – asking and observing more keenly how engineers in the industry were using their bodies while working the boards. He found that they were sitting for long periods and were regularly leaning forward with nothing supporting them. Thus, the Stealth Chair was created in order to be supportive while leaning forward as well as sitting upright. Steve added, “One of the reasons our chair is also popular with studio singers now is the forward tilt our chair provides opens up the diaphragm in a way that lets them sing better.”

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UPSTAGING

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Hunter Hayes Has Two Custom Non-Rolling Stealths For His Tour Bus AND Chairs for the Crew

The seat of this chair adjusts its slope to keep the natural curve of the lower back. The seat shell pivots, has a convex shape, and a special mesh which all combine to eliminate pressure under the thighs while leaning forward. This seat also has a springy, floating backrest shaped exactly like the curve of the lower back. When the user leans forward the chair moves with them and actually massages their back!

The Stealth Chair comes in 3 different styles: Stealth, Stealth Pro with a little wider seat, and the Port-a-Stealth which comes with a touring case for road worthiness. Steve said, "We have had tremendous response. For me, this isn't about adapting a user to the chair, I want to create an "instrument" that conforms and adapts to the person."

The next natural move was to Nashville, a town where there are an estimated 322 studios in a 25 mile radius. They opened an office at Soundcheck three years ago and word of mouth spread! I personally call that viral marketing.

You put something out there that people need which really works and the word will spread. Whether it be an awesome song, a bad ass lighting engineer, or in this case the Stealth Chair. There are currently 20+ recording studios as well as the folks at the Grand Ole Opry who are all using the Stealth Chair in Nashville.

To dig a little deeper into how long people in the production offices along might be sitting, I spoke with Gabby Parra, Assistant Road Manager for Earth Wind and Fire. I remembered Gabby being in the production office for hours. I asked her count up the hours she spends sitting in a typical touring day. With a normal load-in of 9 a.m., load out around midnight, and accounting for a few tasks out of the office, Gabby estimated an average of 12 hours a day spent sitting.

My take is whether you sit at a sound board or at a production desk in this industry, it would benefit you to look into the Stealth chair at www.ergolab.com. Save your body and help your back!!!

Ocea Demer has been working in the Music and touring industry for the past 17 1/2 years supporting bands on and off the road with holistic approach to wellness, as well as creating amazing products like vocal-eze, a staple in touring kits and recording studios.



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Cam Beachley, Monitor Engineer for Carrie Underwood in his Stealth

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The Exceptional Sound and Look of "Plain"

ON TOUR WITH JOHN MELLENCAMP

by Jordan Haymaker

When I rolled into South Bend, Indiana where John Mellencamp (JM) was kicking off the opening date of his "Plain Spoken" tour, I was initially surprised to find out he was doing his first concert in an old vaudeville theater. I wondered if it was part of a theme meant to represent the more stripped down feel of Mellencamp's new album, also titled Plain Spoken. Then I saw the Morris Performing Arts Center for the first time with its mix of historical architecture, gilded decorations and a contemporary state-of-the-art performance space—it made perfect sense that someone with Indiana roots and his own embodiment of musical history would be at this venue. Plus the acoustics are amazing.

Prior to the show, *Mobile Production Monthly* met up with Production Manager, Paul Binder. Actually, Paul explained, the Plain Spoken tour is only playing theater venues and they use AEG for promotions. Still, the Morris Performing Arts Center is amazing enough to warrant its own focus with its own side story inside this issue.

With regards to Paul Binder, he's been in the business for 17 years. Paul is from the Bay Area in California and got his start while working with an AV company for studio installation during college. He then met Sammy

Hagar and was out on tour shortly afterward. Paul has toured with Hagar for the past 16 years as well as Chick-enfoot and the Ref Hot Chili Peppers and produces a music festival in Todos Santos (1 hour north of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico) with REM guitarist Peter Buck.

On the Plain Spoken tour, Paul oversees two trucks from Upstaging, two busses from Senator, sound, lights, and crew. He joked he just tries to stay out of the way since everyone on the crew has been with Mellencamp for so long he's basically the new guy. More seriously explained, "We're not trying to reinvent the wheel. Everyone on this tour is a grown up, so everything works out really well."

Paul added, "My main goal is to fix problems, not create them, and I can just kind of let everyone do their own thing."

As I was interviewing Paul, different people kept stopping by asking for various things. Without missing a beat he responded to the crew members, took care of their issues and then finished answering last interview question that had been asked before the needs of his job intervened. When a crew member stopped by requesting assistance with his shoe odor.

Paul joked, "I'm an expert at multitasking. See, I'm even in charge of foot spray!"

With the tour just kicking off, Paul said the main focus in the beginning is getting the game plan up and running, and hopefully within five shows it will be set in stone. But for now, Paul shared that the show is split into three phases: a cocktail portion with the drum kit and upright bass, next Mellencamp's acoustic songs, and last but not least a strong ending with Mellencamp's rock hits. Paul said one of his favorite parts of the show is how the sound from the band is so good and clean sounding.

AUDIO

Bill Sheppell, FOH Engineer, is in charge of mixing the stage sound, dealing with the inputs, and mixing the sound. He's been with Mellencamp for 9 years but got his start in 1986 when he got his foot in the door with an internship in Dallas, Texas with a show company. Since then he's worked for Bon Jovi, Paramore, Alanis Morrissett, Michael Jackson, Prince, Korn, Greenday, Weezer, Kiss, JLo, Rhianna and he was a monitor engineer for both ZZ Top and Jeff Beck.



Since this tour consists of both old and new songs, the songs that have done for so long are mixed up a bit to keep the audience from getting bored. The hollow-body floating top Gibson guitar helps change the dynamic of the show, but has had some feedback issues. There are also the two very different drum kits to deal with; the main kit and the cocktail kit. Adding in the upright bass gives the cocktail portion of the show a very unique characteristic as well. “It’s just a really rootsy Americana set.”

When Bill first started working with Mellencamp, he used an XL4 analog console but it began having issues and losing inputs. He switched to a Digico SD 10 console. He records all of the shows in case something is needed for a live album. He can also do tracking of virtual sound checks. Protools 8 is used for mixing and Reaper for controlling the live show because he says it’s much more stable. His powerhouse of choice is a Mac Mini and Digigrd MGB interfaces.

Bill noted how “some theaters are great and some are just strange. You get some reflections in a theater that you don’t get in an arena.” Even a venue built for sound with the bub-

ble walls for example, you can still have a dead bass spot. With this in mind, Bill said how much he appreciates working with a band that is so consistent night after night. “Every day I know where I’m starting from, it’s just a matter of dealing with room anomalies.”

Monitoring Engineer, Mark Vanderwall, is in charge of mixing the stage sound for Mellencamp and the band. He is a freelancer who has been with JM since 1997 and has been in audio touring since 1994. “I was always a drummer,” explained Mark, “but I bought my own sound stuff. Then I eventually just floated over to the tech side.” He was a drum tech until 2001 when he became an audio assistant. Since then he’s worked the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Bruce Springsteen, Motley Crue, and Prince, where he met Bill Shepell.

For the Mellencamp show, there is one in ear mix and the rest of the on stage sound is provided by live wedges. Mark uses twelve D&B M4’s, four M2’s, Q subs for drum fill, and two V series all provided by 8th Day Sound. He explained that with the spectrum crunch, it can make it difficult to get good RF signals for the in-ear mixes. Therefore, John’s vocal mic and the violin are the only things on RF aside from the in-ear mixes. The first and second mixes are tech mixes, the backup FOH mix

is the third, and the last one is for the violinist.

When asked what the biggest challenge is, Mark confidently but modestly responded, “I’ve doing this a long time, so there really aren’t any major obstacles. Starting a tour and figuring out how best to achieve what John envisions and what is logistically possible is the main challenge.” He said that on each tour, it’s all about getting into the groove in the beginning. Recently, he has worked at getting the stage volume down, and having a more controlled



photo above: Paul Binder

feel. "It important because it causes less fatigue on the musicians. One thing you can't fix...you can't get new ears." Loud stage volumes also complicate things with unwanted bleeding into the mics. The in-ear mix helps alleviate that. The best aspect of the show? "Energy-wise it just flows," Mark responded.

LIGHTS

Nate Cromwell, lighting director on the Plain Spoken tour, has been on Mellencamp's crew since 2010. He got into the business because at 15 he wanted to light Ani DiFranco. "I realized, hey, someone has to do the lights, and I want to do that." He had a 9-5 job for a week and said it was pretty terrible. He has previously worked with Billy Joel, Carrie Underwood, and Melissa Etheridge. Nate said he hasn't written a resume in years. "Everything has pretty much been by word of mouth. I sat down to do a resume once, and it took an hour just to get started."

Since the tour is set in smaller venues, the biggest trick is trying to make the show seem larger than it really is. The stage is outlined by soft legs and borders provided by Atomic Lighting, which gives the illusion of a picture frame. The backdrop, also provided by Atomic Lighting, is the cover of the new album with Mellencamp's picture removed. It was digitally printed first, then touched up with paint. The digitally printed image on the back-

drop was chosen to eliminate cracking that usually occurs with painted canvases. The backdrop is also easy to fold up and weighs much less, making it extremely versatile. Not only is it a convenient, but as Nate demonstrated, different lighting creates different effects on the backdrop. With one setting, he was able to achieve what appeared to be a concrete wall; with another, it appeared to be rippling. During the show, it really does draw the audience in, making it easy to forget one's surroundings.

His favorite part of the tour is just being able to light Mellencamp. "That's really the most fun, said Nate, "he is just phenomenal, and his music is so lyrically driven. He is a true singer, songwriter, and poet. It is true Americana rock and roll."

Nate worked hard to keep the lighting for the show true to form, explaining, "it's not a disco... it's a very small street to drive down visually." Nate said the lighting provided by Atomic Lighting compliment the lighting design perfectly. He uses a couple of CVC lights from the side to light Mellencamp and draws attention to minute details by varying degrees of intensity in lighting to highlight the equipment and band members. Leko lights from the side can be used for a dramatic feel or for shadow play on the backdrop.

And of course, what ends up looking so natural and vintage looking to the audience, took a lot of creative experimenting. "I do a lot of fine tuning like I'm using a scalpel,"

explained Nate, "a lot of time was spent shaving off 40% of the intensity here, and 10% here."

Nate uses the Martin M1 console. "I like it because it's really straight forward. I look at the consoles like motorcycles, this one is nimble and agile like a Cafe Racer." He's also equipped with four universes of DMX outputs, with VL 3000 & 3500's used as the proverbial workhorses, and VL 500's with dimmers. As for favorite pieces of equipment, Nate said he really just believes in having the right lighting console and gear for the right job. But he admitted the lights they're using color mix like nothing else, "It's like living on the edge of the spectrum." While adjusting the colors to show they really can achieve any color imaginable, he said excitedly, "Look at this green here! I couldn't get that color of lime green anywhere else."

Nate said people in this industry are pretty much his family and he loves working with Mellencamp's amazing crew. "There is no drama, no egos, no attitudes. There's no place for it here. Most guys have been here a while. Here, the squeaky wheel doesn't get the grease. We're just doing rock and roll."

The Plain Spoken Tour runs through August. For tour dates and more information:

www.mellencamp.com



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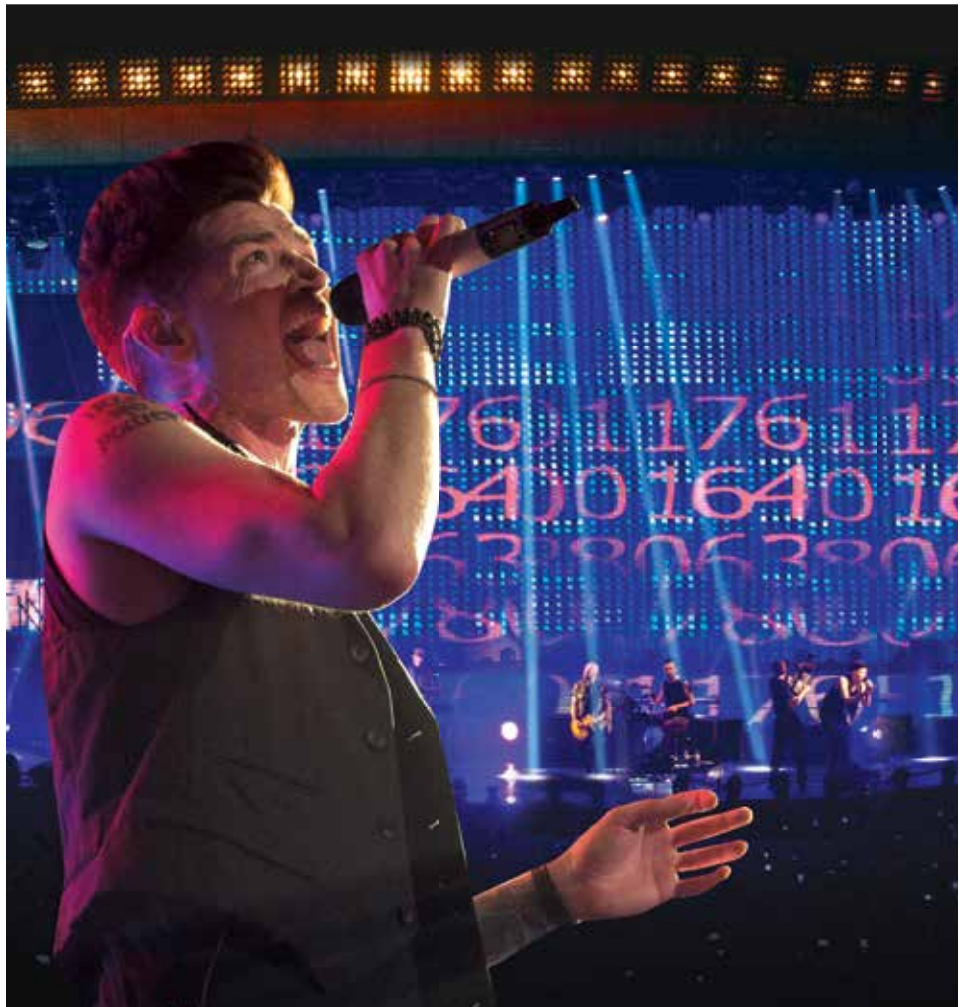
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IT'S NOT THE SIZE, *It's How You Use It!*

by Jordan Haymaker

The Morris Performing Arts Center is a historical gem located just south of the University of Notre Dame campus in South Bend, Indiana. Only a little over an hour's drive from Chicago, it is conveniently located between Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Indianapolis. The venue is just ten minutes from the I-90 Indiana Toll Road which connects to Chicago.

Opened in 1922 and originally named The Palace Theatre, vaudeville acts originally performed in its beyond gorgeous and beautifully decorated European style interior. It reopened to the public in 2000 after an extensive two-year renovation. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is one of the few remaining Palace Theaters in existence with an attached ballroom.

Greg Southard, Technical Stage Manager, noted the theater was renovated with Broadway productions in mind and to take advantage of the relative ample building size. They have, for example, fully movable pit seats via a Serapid auto lift that saves on stage production time and costs. "Most smaller theaters, unlike the Morris Center, cannot accommodate large Broadway productions," said Greg. This attention in the renovation process to bringing big acts to

the theater means they can easily accommodate the bigger acts and shows that just would not be able to be produced in some of the smaller market venues regardless of demand.

The theater can comfortably seat 2500+ patrons and made the 2014 Pollstar Year End Top 200 Worldwide Theater Venues based on ticket sales. Not only is the Morris a top-rated performance space, it is also a great option for pre-production and rehearsal rental. Mary Ellen Smith, Director of Marketing and Promotions, noted, "As a rental facility, it costs less for the artists to rehearse their shows here." Lower cost for artists relative to the larger cities doesn't mean there's any skimping on the services and equipment available to them.

During the renovation the Morris installed three new movable loading docks, a 72 ft. fly space with 68 fly lines, a larger stage measuring 45 ft. deep by 103 ft. wide, and numerous dressing, chorus, catering, hair & wardrobe, and laundry rooms throughout the two levels. The venue was originally built with bubble walls with sound and amplification in mind. The façade of the theater is equally breathtaking. The new LED Daktronics Prostar display board marquee adorns the front,

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“DON'T LET THE SIZE FROM
THE OUTSIDE FOOL YOU.”



JOHN MELLENCAMP

PLAIN SPOKEN TOUR

SPECIAL GUEST CARLENE CARTER



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measuring 39 ft. wide by 3.5 ft. tall, with 11 ft. by 3.5 ft. Galaxy display boards on the sides.

For parking, trucks and buses may line up on Main Street, the city's Convention Center, or Four Winds Baseball Field. A variety of hotels are nearby.

The Palais Royale ballroom is used for meet and greets, private events, or in the case of an especially large production such as Wicked, can be used for additional storage. Catering is provided by Masterpiece Creations by Centerplate. The Morris Bisto, seating 100 guests, is another favorite pre-show dining experience that is available through dinner/show ticket packages.

were treated to some encore music and dance performances as the producers filmed some "retakes" for the new DVD.

Executive Director, Dennis Andres, proudly noted that artists who have rehearsed and opened their tours at the Morris include John Mellencamp, The Moody Blues, Kenny Rogers and Bonnie Raitt.

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Something else you get with Morris is a professional and dedicated staff who are willing to go above and beyond to make sure every performer need is met. "When David Copperfield's ducks for an illusion appeared to get overheated, staff purchased and set up a kiddie pool area for the ducks to cool off backstage," noted Denise Zigler, Operations Supervisor: Booking & Events. "Alice Cooper required a gurney for a new skit. Staff managed to get one from a local mortuary and brought it to him. Alice loved it so much that he ended up buying it and taking it with him for the rest of his tour."

The theater has hosted a variety of sold out performances including: John Mellencamp; ZZ Top; Chicago; Blue Man Group; The Moody Blues and REO Speedwagon. The venue is home to the South Bend Symphony for their classical and pop series and the Broadway Theater League of South Bend. The Morris Performing Arts Center has expertly hosted shows like Wicked that have huge production and gear requirements.

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COUNTRY SONGSTRESS SUNNY SWEENEY

Uses PixelFLEX FLEXCurve LED in Music Video to Tell the Story of “My Bed”

Sunny Sweeney’s duet with Will Hoge of “My Bed” addresses the heartache at the end of a failed marriage while bringing the memory of classic country days like a George Jones and Tammy Wynette duet. The Parnelli Award-winning FLEXCurve LED tiles from PixelFLEX gives the boldness and contrast needed to shoot a music video for the song off the country songstress’ new album, *Provoked*.

The video is a two-scene set up, with Sweeney and Hoge performing on a white bed against a stark,

black background. The idea for the chorus was to have a complete opposite, almost oxymoronic feel to the forlorn meaning of the song. Sweeney and Hoge sing into a vintage microphone while the FLEXCurve blasts imagery of blissful wedding days and happier times.

Music video director Michael Poncé worked with PixelFLEX Project Manager Mark McIntosh to design the scenes to convey a direct and immersive emotional setting using the LED video wall.

“Actually having the LED video wall during the performance was great because one, they show up great on camera, and two, it helped to shoot a better story and ultimately helps to tell a better story,” Poncé said. “I think you get a better performance out of the artist – they’re also seeing the imagery some of the time, and it works a little better than something a little bit more traditional than a big wide, empty space. It’s one more tool to tell a story. And they can be used for any other type of music video to tell a story.”

continued on next page



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The FLEXCurve screen can be curved from -10 to 10 degrees, allowing both concave and convex contours like the one used in the “My Bed” music video. With a refresh rate of more than 1200Hz, it is extremely camera-friendly and perfect for television and film. The curvable LED screen is currently used by many touring acts including reigning Academy of Country Music Entertainer of the Year Luke Bryan and movie star and rapper Ice Cube.

To view the “My Bed” music video, visit CMT.com for the exclusive video release.

For more information on PixelFLEX and its growing line of lightweight LED video screens, visit PixelFLEX at pixelflexled.com

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Atomic Pro Audio Reinforces John Fogerty With Adamson

American music legend John Fogerty continues to entertain fans around the world with regular touring throughout North America and overseas. His most recent tour marked a complete departure from his regular audio system of many years – this time going on the road with the new Adamson Energia PA provided by Atomic Pro Audio.

“I’ve been working with Atomic for almost 20 years,” explains Tim Schad, production manager working with John Fogerty since 2006. “I was sold on Adamson the first time I used it and have started working in different pieces of their gear with John over the last 6 years, but this was the first time we went out with 100% Adamson PA and monitor rig. The new Adamson Energia PA was “way better sounding” than any PA available out there at any cost.”

Atomic Pro Audio, located in Rutland, Vermont, has been a supporter of Adamson since 2002. Most recently they expanded their huge Adamson inventory with the addition of Energia E15 and E12 line array enclosures as well as E218 and E219 subwoofers. They have been providing audio equipment for John Fogerty tours since 2009.

“Atomic owner Kevin Margolin did an amazing job putting together a complete

audio and video package for us this year that included the new Adamson PA and monitor system” adds Schad, “Atomic’s crew headed up by system-tech George Perone is easily one of the best I’ve ever worked with in my 35 years in this business. Ingenious packaging, great gear and a talented, caring team make all the difference out here and both Adamson and Atomic do beautiful work in engineering their systems assuring we have great sound, ready in time for doors... every night.”

John Fogerty is known for his attention to detail, particularly when it comes to the sound quality of the audio system. He regularly walks the room working with the system tech, Schad and FOH Engineer Felix Brenner, to make sure that every seat in the house has the same high fidelity sound.

“The move to the E15 rig is a huge change – it sounds so good John doesn’t comment on system tuning anymore. It completely eliminates the need for me to walk the room with him and the system tech, freeing up valuable time,” Schad says. “He basically just works with drummer Kenny Aronoff on his snare sound for the day, then gives George a thumbs up and heads to the stage – we are all very, very happy with the new Energia PA.”

The main PA consists of up to 32 E15s for the main arrays and 20 E12s for out-fill. Twelve E218 subs were flown – six per side – while ten E219s were ground stacked (5 x 2) placed equidistant across the width of the stage. Ten SpekTrix front fills complete the package.

“I’m a big fan of Adamson’s T21 subs but I have to say that the E218/E219 combo was perfect for John’s music style,” explains Schad. “For old school rock they’re just super tight and extremely punchy.”

The monitor rig also featured Adamson gear. A total of 26 M15 monitors were used on stage. Fogerty uses an array of nine M15 wedges on stage along with flown left/right arrays of six Adamson Y10 side fills to surround his performance space. Band members also use multiple M15 wedges.

“The new Energia rig provides us with impeccable clarity throughout every seat in the venue,” concludes Schad. “The sound is absolutely amazing and the system goes up and comes down very quickly. We’re all looking forward to taking it out again this coming summer.”

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SOLOTECH INCREASES ITS PRESENCE IN TORONTO



Solotech announced they are continuing expansion in Toronto with the acquisition of the assets of P.A. Plus Productions.

According to François Ménard, Solotech's CEO, this transaction will allow us to add P.A. Plus Productions' sound system expertise to services already offered by Solotech in the greater Toronto area. This acquisition will complement Solotech's offer in audio, lighting, video, rigging and scenery and will be an addition to the activities of Midnite Hour Productions acquired last November.

P.A. Plus Productions' specialized expertise combined with the employees' know-how will contribute to Solotech's success.

"This is our second acquisition in Toronto in the last 3 months. Toronto is an important market and we want our clients to have access to a diversified list of equipment as well as a team of experts with technical capabilities and creativity to answer their needs," explained François Ménard.

ABOUT:

P.A. Plus Productions provides professional audio services, installations, and rentals for a diverse client base at a wide-range of events and various locations throughout the Greater Toronto area and beyond. P.A. Plus Productions has a large number of loyal and long-term clients that uses PA Plus for events

ranging from press conferences and gala events, to concerts and live national television broadcasts. www.pa-plus.com

ABOUT SOLOTECH:

For over 35 years, Solotech, a 100% Canadian owned company, has been developing technological expertise made available to artists, producers and events in Quebec, Canada and around the world, including

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Jack White: ANALOG IN BLUE

by Victoria Fausnaught

Concert photos by David James Swanson,

Crew photos by Shelby Cude



Jack White and The Lazaretto Tour have been touring hard since May 2014. With shows ranging in size from the Glastonbury Music Festival in Somerset, England to The Eagles Ballroom in Milwaukee, WI, and everything in between, this is a crew who knows how to adapt and adjust to build a set that perfects the magnificent visions of a visionary artist.

Mobile Production Monthly caught up with some of the crew to talk about production and their current tour while they were in Jack White's hometown for the January 28th show at the Bridgestone in Nashville.

Production Manager, Kit Blanchard honed his skills working as Main Stage Manager for festivals like Austin City Limits, Lollapalooza, Outside Lands Festival, Life is Beautiful Festival, and as a Stage Manager for Bonnaroo. Before that, he toured with Phish from 1997-2012 first as their Production Rigger and later as their Stage Manager. He hired on with Jack White at the beginning of the Lazaretto tour.

Like so many in production, Kit mentioned he has a long standing love with live performance. I asked Kit what in particular he loves about this gig. "One of the things that I really enjoy is working towards Jack's vision," said Kit, explaining "I can use my skill set, these skills that I have acquired over the years to make changes in the way our production is presented, to make it appropriate for each different venue we go to."

Because every show has a different set up depending on the size and type of venue, Kit explained that the crew needs to be able to "adapt the lighting design and adapt to the different acoustic differences in all these rooms to still present Jack White and The Lazaretto Tour as Jack would want it presented." Kit gave high marks to his crew for both their expertise and their adaptability in attaining the "high bar" in production values they and Jack White strive for. "We have an incredible team, from our

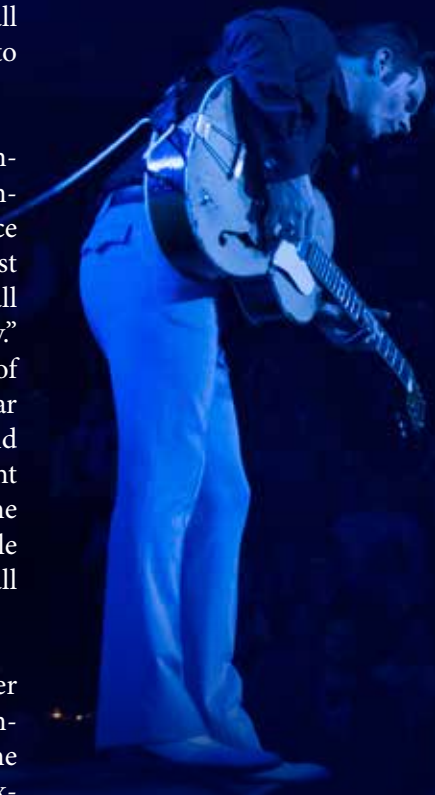
Lighting Director, our Front of House Engineer, our Monitor Engineer to all of our technicians. And they're able to roll with the punches."

Chad Brouillette is White's Stage Manager. He started with White in the summer of 2012. He's been touring since 1995 and says it's been one of the best tours to be on, "We're such a small group we're all kind of like a family." When asked about his favorite part of the tour he joked, "the last piece of gear on the truck!" More seriously Chad said what he still loves every single night of White's tour is, "looking out in the crowd and seeing thousands people jumping up and down and chanting all in unison."

Brad Madix is the tour's FOH Engineer and one of the incredible team members Kit mentioned. He spoke about the transition from venue to venue and explained that every day is it's own set of challenges, "You're changing from not just venue to venue, but from one type of venue to another." Far from complaining, Brad has taken any challenges in stride, "We're just gonna do what we gotta do, turn that knob we need to turn, and work within that framework and be creative within that framework. And it's great!"

Brad said his equipment of choice is "an old Midas XL4 with a rack full of fine compresses, and junk." On his feelings about still working in analog in a so-called digital age, he explained, "I think it's really a mindset, more than

a gigantic difference in the quality of sound...more about how it affects the way you work and the way you think about what you're going to do." Brad acknowledged it can be fun to experiment with range of possibilities a digital setup offers but the downside is the ease in doing "too much" or making decisions in the moment that takes the sound away from the artist's vision. In contrast, "with analog you have to make a lot of your decisions in advance because you can't just change it from that piece of gear to another piece of gear." And those restraints, Brad argued, "can be good. In a way



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“JACK WHITE’S *performance* IS ALL W
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it makes you think about things, you think things through more thoroughly, because you have that constraint. You can't just go down some blind alley. I think that happens a lot in the digital world, you sort of, screw yourself in a way because you stack one thing on top of another."

Brent Carpenter is the Monitor Engineer for the Lazaretto Tour. He is a long time Clair Brothers employee of 19 years and got his start working at Nashville's Starwood Amphitheater. For the Lazaretto Tour, he is working on a Midas Heritage 3k and using DBX 900 Series Compressors, some slap delay for Jacks vocals, and some simple reverb on Lillie Mae's voice and on the snare.

The new mic he is particularly excited about is the Telefunken M81.

He had never used the M81 before this tour but was won over with the smooth response and nice bottom end. Brent added the mics "have a really tight pickup pattern so you can really get them loud in wedges without feedback problems." Which luckily they have yet to encounter. On White's acoustic, he uses a Neve Pure Path Compressor that is a complete channel strip with a pre-amp, compressor and EQ built in. "I really have kind of fallen in love with it," said Brent, "it's a really nice sounding piece."

Emmanuelle "Gigi" Pedron, has been the Lighting Director for Jack White since the Blunderbuss Tour. Joining with 4Wall Lighting to create a memorable display, she brings a true artistic vision to the Lazaretto tour. She is ever ready

to manipulate the lights just by watching Jack White and following his lead.

Jack White's performance is all within a blue spectrum ranging from 3-4 shades of blue, and I asked Gigi what it's like to work within those parameters. "For me it's a challenge, for any lighting person it's a real challenge to just use one color." She explained she works hard to get people "immersed" in the blue and "treats it as a painting, each song is a different painting" and that is just how she sees it.


For more information on Jack White or the Lazaretto Tour please see:

www.jackwhiteiii.com

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 MOLLY MOORMEIER..... ASST TOUR MANAGER
 REBECCA CHOLEWA.....PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
 BRAD MADIX.....FOH, GIANTS FAN...
 BRENT CARPENTER.....MONITORS STAGE LEFT
 GIGI PEDRON..... LIGHTING DIRECTOR
 ABE DAVIS.....BACKLINE --GUITARS
 JOSH SMITH.....BACKLINE --KEYS, PEDAL STEEL, THERAMIN
 BOBBY SCHAYER.....BACKLINE --DRUM AND BASS
 CHAD BROUILLETTE...STAGE MANAGER/CARP/CORNERMAN
 JOSH BENNETTRIGGER /AUTOMATION TECH
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 NAJA BANZ.....WARDROBE AND BACKSTAGE COORDINATOR
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