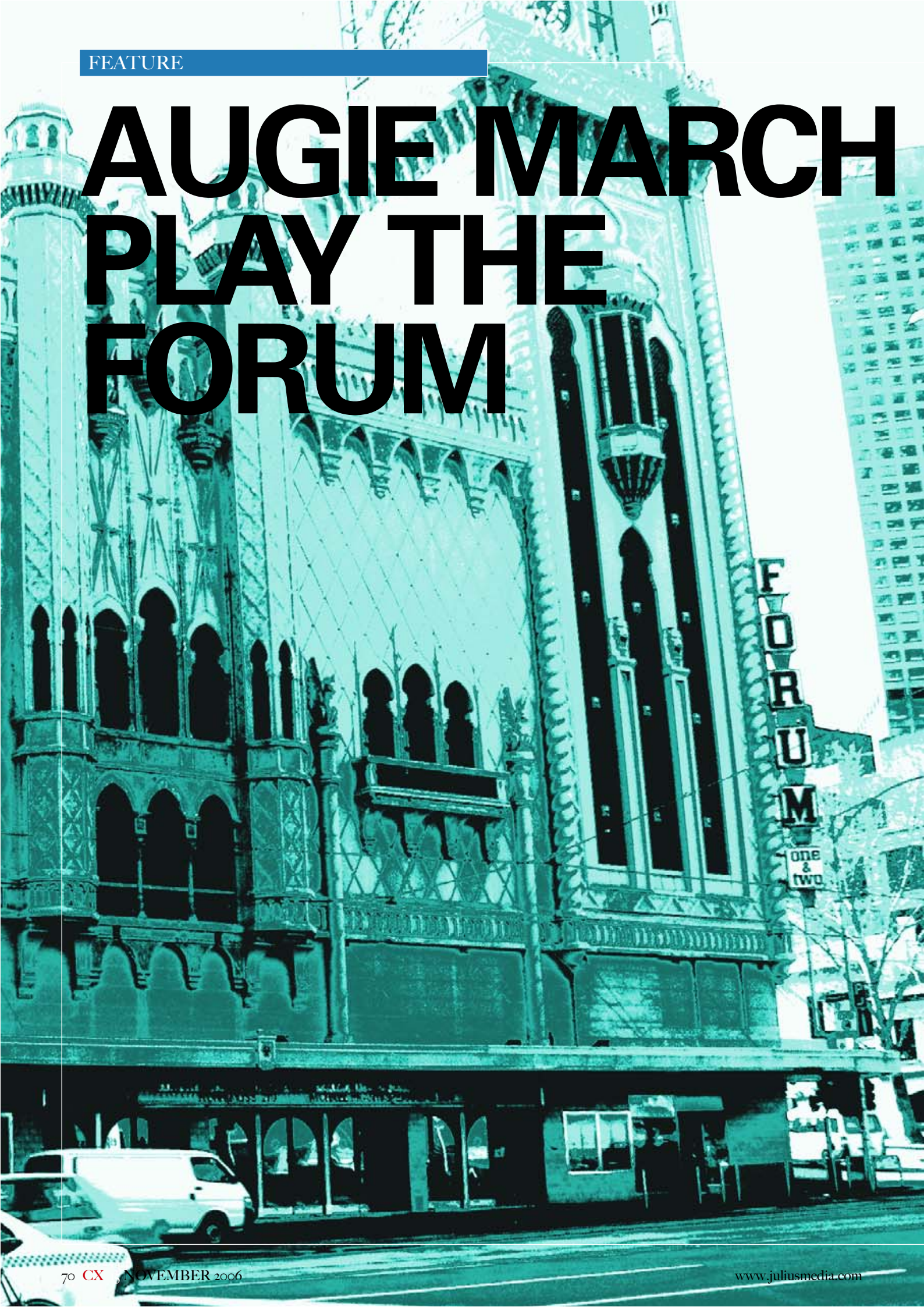


FEATURE

AUGIE MARCH PLAY THE FORUM



By ALICIA BEE

The Forum is now popular as venue for the bigger rock shows in Melbourne. The 1929 building is best seen from across the road. It has a neat outside letterboard which names the shows. Inside the foyer the blue dome roof lighting begins the experience that impresses everyone.

With a capacity of 2300, many good nights have been held here over the past years. This is the season for big name Australian acts. Jet played there earlier the same week as Augie March. Next up was Eskimo Joe..

"It's very majestic, it's actually quite pleasing to the eye. There are good sightlines, you know a lot of venues don't have good sightlines. The atmosphere of the place makes the gig. People come in awe 'cause it's The Forum and they go 'aw wow' and they look at all the plaster work, all the statues," explained Production manager and Augie March FOH engineer, Paul Martin.

"As far as sound goes, you got to really know your stuff to get a really good sound in there, its really easy to mess up because its such a big space and sound travels as its hits that top balcony and moves around," said Paul.

"Its my favorite venue in the country, because its such a beautiful space," said Stan Zylinski, stage manager for the band. "It just always creates a special feeling for the audience, but up on stage you have a real sense of occasion when you do a show here".

This was a mini tour with shows at The Tivoli, The Enmore, The Forum and The Queen's Theatre. A show at a Darwin Festival concluded the run. This Friday night show was days since their Sydney Enmore the weekend before, and the backline had been in the Show Freight warehouse waiting all week.

Stan doubled as stagehand guitar technician and he did not rest throughout the set. "They have a lot of different tunings in their setlist, so I'm busy for the whole show," explained Stan. He has done about 30 Augie March shows this year, and has worked with such bands as Magic Dirt and Bjorn Again.

The five piece band have a 5 member crew to execute the tour. Stan says the key to putting on a smooth show is to "stay calm, every problem's got a solution, and I'm not saying that I always stay calm. But that's the ideal, stay calm and nut it out. And fix it as soon as possible."

Paul Martin has been a fan of Augie March since their first EPs, and is proud to have worked with them for the past 6 years. He receives a non-notated setlist about 20 minutes before the start time, and knows the songs enough to work with their choices.



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Taylor Hyslop.



Tom Cooper.



Peter Ward.

He has done sound at The Forum about 20 times for shows like The Living End and You Am I.

He describes Augie March as 'unique', 'refreshing,' and 'intellectual'. Their style he says ranges "from pure mastery to shambolicism, if there is such a word." (There isn't)

If this seems to be too positive, you may have to listen to the band or be a fan.

"The synergy, the way they play off each other, Glen's songwriting ability is amazing, the way the guys interpret the songs is amazing, they, you know, its very emotional, you know, they never get off stage and

go, you know, another day at the office, everyone's going 'wow,'" explained Paul.

This show promoted studio single One Crowded Hour produced by Paul McKercher, a sound that Martin tries to match for a live show.

"I try and emulate the mix of the CD, with the tones I get off stage. So, if they've spent four hours getting a tone in studio I can't emulate that, I can try but its really hard to do. I do the best I can with what they give me basically," stated Paul.

"These guys have their own unique footprint in the way they do things, and they do what they do really well," said Paul.

"It's amazing how we can treat each gig like we are doing our first year of university thesis on live sound like it's the Empress of (bloody) India," commented band singer Glenn Richards of their approach to the gig.

Mid set Glenn picked up a spare microphone that was placed with lead on the floor near his main stand and questioned what it was for. Other interactions with the crew led someone to yell out "He can't get it right can he?" in defence of the sound engineer. This and other sound comments were in good humour, and contrinuted as stage banter.

All but one member of the band had dressed formally for the occasion of the venue. Even Stan had slacks and a dinner jacket for his short walks onto stage.

Johnston Audio Services supplied the system at The Forum, and also packed it away at the end of the night using some loaders from Gigpower. This meant that there was also Johnston staff alongside each of the band crew at the console and monitors.

Lighting guy Taylor Hyslop has worked with such acts as Lior, The Black Keys and Hoodoo Gurus. He also has a longstanding relationship with the Corner Hotel in Richmond 'one of the greatest rock music venues on the planet' which led to him being hired by some of the best alternative acts from Australia and around the world.

To control the entire rig (in-house and movers) Taylor used a Jands Hog 250 desk, which "is industry standard. There's not a lot you can't do with a hog."

Although The Forum have an ongoing relationship with Phaseshift, Taylor liases with them to ensure,

"everyone gets the best show for the best price. I can't speak highly enough of Steve and Laurie from Phaseshift, who are uber helpful, and true pros."

"As far as the lighting used, I firstly worked with the Forum's production crew to colour, focus and patch their in-house profile spots, frontwash and side/top cans, mostly NSP par64's," said Taylor.

Taylor's favorite color is Cyan and most of the show was a beautiful display of simple blue. "I used a lot of Lee L180 and L132 for Augie March, as well as L105 and L135 for the cool to warm contrast that works so well with their dramatic style," said Taylor.

"Onstage I floor-mounted six Martin Mac 500 intelligent scans which have a great range of movement, very powerful beams, and a wonderful array of colour, gobo and effect wheels."

"Rigging a mirrorball at the Forum would have been a nightmare, as it would have obscured the projections I was using, and it would have had to have been above centre stage, rather than in the middle of the room, so to achieve a mirrorball-like effect I used the tri-pinspot gobo on the Mac 500's, blasted through a rotating prism with a slow colour chase. Once aimed at the beautiful arches and faux balconies of the room an atmosphere was created that echoed a mirrorball effect, without the straight up cheesiness,"

Taylor says that it helps to know all functions of your equipment. He says his recent lessons are in understanding the Jands Hog. "Trying to operate complicated tools in a noisy, hectic environment is far from easy, so when you need beam two, gobo six, colour four in position twelve, straight away, you've gotta be able to do it without thinking. This is especially true when my attention is divided between the projection equipment, the lighting gear, and the action onstage." CX

AUGIE MARCH BAND

Glenn Richards - vocals, guitar

Edmondo Ammendola - bass

Adam Donovan - guitars, keys

Kiernan Box - keyboards

David Williams - drums, percussion

AUGIE MARCH CREW

Paul Martin - Production manager, FOH engineer

Stan Zylinski - Stage manager, guitar technician

Taylor Hyslop - Lighting technician

Daniel Thomas - Monitors

Tom Cooper 'Coops' - Stage Assistant

THE FORUM

Mark Allan - Technical Manager

Cookie - Head Mechanist Venues

Dave Clisby - Head Mechanist

Andrew Podolski - Head Electrician

Mark Banks - Head Security

JOHNSTON AUDIO

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Dave Allpress - Monitor riggers

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LITTLE RIVER BAND, NOT ON TOUR



BSG or LRB, the songs are mighty and the band rocked

By **JULIUS GRAFTON**

Regular readers may recall CX dipping into that most bitter of legal cases, where Little River Band sued itself and the rights to play under that name were awarded to an American version of the Australian band.

This left the three Australian founders somewhat unhappy, they have since performed under their own names – Beeb Birtles, Graeham Goble, and Glenn Shorrock. They call themselves BSG for short. They put together a smoking eight piece band, and released a live DVD. They feature the LRB 3 part harmony, and they play all the songs they wrote that were hits around the world.

Meantime in the USA the five piece LRB features one member from the bands history, American bass player Wayne Nelson. He is an employee of Stephen Housden, an Irish born lead guitar player who was also a member of LRB and who carefully purchased the rights to the name as each founding member quit. Housden did not join his men on this year's six month seasonal tour of American clubs.

They have to live with themselves when people come up and say 'I saw you guys thirty years ago.....'

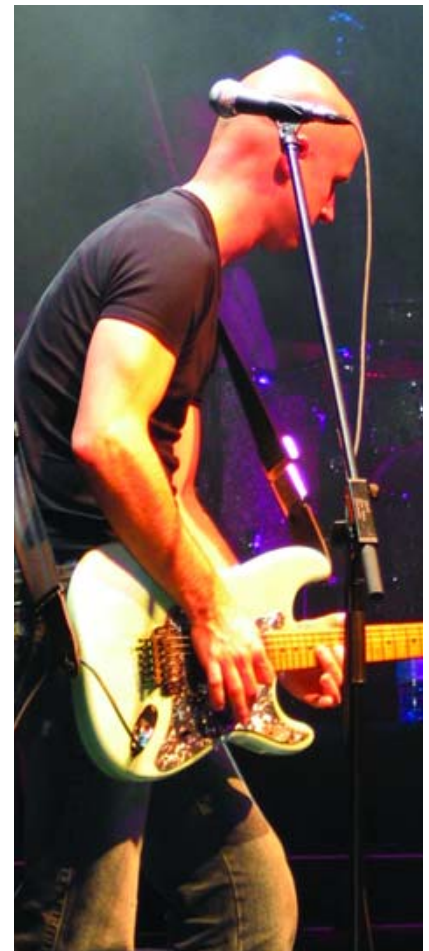
For those interested in the emotions and the politics, see the CX News website. There was considerable mail on this topic when raised, along with some blistering emails from the American band who felt somewhat upset with our coverage.

BSG recently performed some shows in Australia, joined again by long serving crew members like Chris Newman, on lights.

"I have been working for various incarnations of The Little River Band for nearly 23 years now. I did the last tour with the John Farnham fronted version (prior to John recording 'Whispering Jack'). Then with a lot of different lineups ever since, including 8 USA summer tours during the 90's, some with Glen Shorrock out front again.

"I still love the band and will never get sick of the songs. Every one a classic and a style of music and dynamics that suits my operating style.

"(Now) House lighting and sound systems are most often used as we attempt to keep costs down. Fortunately we did do a longer run two years ago with touring production which allowed me to get a complete show programmed on a Whole Hog II using mostly Martin



Simon Hosford.
Pictured above; BSG.

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Alejandro Vega.



Ern Rose.



Mark & Beeb.



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Mac 2000 Spots & Washes.

"I have been adapting that show ever since to fit.

"This run of 4 shows was initiated by a corporate show at Crown Palladium Melbourne, allowing the band to book some extra shows while Beeb Birtles was out here from his home in Nashville.

"The Crown Palladium (show 1) was always going to be tight. Due to the event time table there was no on site programming time, barely enough time to do any focus. The supplied fixtures were to be Mac 700 profiles & Mac 600 washes with a Hog 1K console.

"The Star City Sydney (show 2) house fixtures are Clay Paky Alpha Spots and Alpha Washes, with a Hog 1K console (again).

"Then the Twin Towns Showroom (show 3) was mostly analogue instruments.

"Down at the Crown Palms (show 4) those house fixtures are Clay Paky 1200 spots & 1200 Washes, with a Hog II console.

"I operate the BSG show with a page for each song containing a master cue list, usually 1 or 2 triggered lists or chases and front profiles as required. The full 32 song show is about 600 cues and I run all the band specials manually.

"The biggest drama of short tours and house systems is that there is no choice of fixtures or control systems and not quite the placement of fixtures you would prefer. Not having access to a Hog III or Grand MA or similar fixture cloning consoles meant that I had to re-program the show for the different fixtures.

"Having said that though, I think that these 3 venues are extremely well set up & run by their respective production crews who are all extremely helpful and knowledgeable.

"I firstly needed to make sure that I could save my WholeHog II console show back to a Hog 1K which I had never done before.....which thankfully did work fine once reduced to 2 data streams.

"Using Hog PC I loaded up my original show and over wrote all the pallets with information for all the new fixtures for each venue.

"It was then just the time consuming routine of copying all the cue information for every song with the new fixtures.....the hardest part

of this is just getting the fixture pallets right.

"It wasn't any real advantage to use any visualization software (WYSIWYG or similar)

"Never having used any of the Clay Paky fixtures before I just guessed at speeds for gobo rotates and rolls with a view to checking all these when actually on site. Thankfully Kait Hall at Crown Palms and the operator at Star City were both a great help with my many questions regarding fixture control channels and gobos.

"Once I had re-programmed with all the new fixtures I then saved different versions to suit each venue and got rid of the fixtures that didn't apply.....reducing memory use and file sizes.

"Happily I can say that this did work for me and apart from a few programming blunders which I fixed on the day, everything went fairly well.

"Fortunately the band sound as good as ever and deliver a great show which makes the extra work worthwhile.

CX



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SIX WAYS TO FIX YOUR MIX

Ever found yourself in a position where it just doesn't sound right? You've tried all night but it still sounds like a shambles? No matter how many adjustments you make, it still sounds like five musicians rather than one band?

By **ANDY MACKENZIE**

MICROPHONES

If you want to get good sound out of the audio system, step one is to put good sound in. This means making the right choices about mic selection and placement.

What do I want this microphone to pick up? Thinking about what you want to pick up can have a significant effect on your microphone decisions.

Yes, reduce your feedback problems. The correct decisions about mic placement with reference to things like foldback wedges can make a whole world of difference.

Do I like the sound of this mic on this instrument/singer? Never be afraid to try new things.

What is this thing, and where does the noise come out? Try as you might, sooner or later you're going to come across an unfamiliar instrument (I came across nine in one day at an event for Iranian expats) and the best way of figuring out where to put the mic is to listen to the instrument from various positions and put the mic where it sounds best.

GAIN STRUCTURE

Once you've used your magnificent mic technique to get pristine, beautiful sound into the system, wouldn't it be a shame to ruin it? Any audio signal passing through a sound system is likely to pass through about twenty amplifiers on the way and this gives plenty of opportunities to blow it. To reduce a complex topic to its simplest terms, the key point is not to put too much or too little signal into any amplifier stage – too much will result in increased harmonic distortion and clipping, while too little leads to a degradation of the system noise floor.

The key to good gain structure is something called unity gain. The term unity gain means, confusingly enough, no gain at all and refers to a situation in which the output signal has the same power as the input signal. The general idea is that the mic preamp (controlled by the input gain control) should increase the signal from the mic to a

level that will need no further amplification before the power amplifiers. Every level control from there on is designed to maintain unity gain – the output gain controls on equalizers and other processors are there to let you match the output signal level to the input.

DON'T OVERPROCESS

Modern audio technology gives us a bewildering variety of processing toys to play with, especially those of us using digital consoles with fifty zillion on-board processors including parametric EQs, gates, compressors, plug-ins and so on. The temptation is to use processors where we can, rather than where we should.

The problem with using too much processing is...that it sounds like too much processing.

TURN IT DOWN

Lots of things are too loud. Aircraft over my house, 8x10 bass rigs in small pubs, and a great deal of the audio I hear perpetrated in venues. Consider the restrictions placed on industrial employers with regard to SPL exposure. Using the formula suggested by Workcover NSW, we find that the safe exposure level for one hour (a fairly short gig) is 94dB without hearing protection.

Even before this level, your perception of sound begins progressively shutting down, leading to a perceived loss of sound quality. Mixing more quietly with accuracy and clarity gives a better result for all concerned, and may enable us to carry on conversations in thirty years time.

Obviously, this means convincing the band to turn down as well.

BE CONSISTENT

Make sure that your mix works as a whole, not as a pile of 'great sounds' stacked on one another. If you use four different vocal mics for four different singers, not only will your monitor EQ be a horror show, your vocal tone will be inconsistent from one singer to the next.

Sort out each sound as part of the mix, not as a sound on its own. This

is one of the problems with soundchecks – the engineer sets up each sound in isolation, then mixes them together and voila! garbage. If it's meant to be listened to on its own, then soundcheck it on its own.

If you are using effects, aim for the minimum number of effects. The purpose of these digital magic boxes is to create the illusion of different spaces and it is worthwhile to remember that under normal circumstances it is traditional for all the members of a band to perform together in one space. While different effects may work on different sources, too many can make the mix seem cluttered and incoherent.


LISTEN...

...all the time. To everything. Listen to what the band ask for, listen to the house tech, listen to something suitable in the truck on the way to the gig, listen to a wide variety of music at home. As the FOH engineer, you are the one who decides what the audience get to hear, so you should be doing everything you can to make sure you get it right.

...critically. Don't process signals in isolation, process them in the context of the mix. You might have set up the best kick drum/piano/bassoon/Hershebian elbow flute sound in the entire history of audio engineering, but if it doesn't fit into the rest of the mix it may as well be the worst sound ever.

...to lots of different music, and try to understand what the performers are looking for. You may have preferences for your recreational listening, and that's all to the good – but if you're going to mix it you need to know what it should sound like.

...to the people who know. Sure it's possible, but it's fairly unlikely that you will know the band's songs better than they do. Similarly, you would hope the house tech or system tech has a good working knowledge of the gear you're using.

...to your instincts. The reason you're on the gig in the first place is that someone, somewhere, has confidence in your ability to do it right. 

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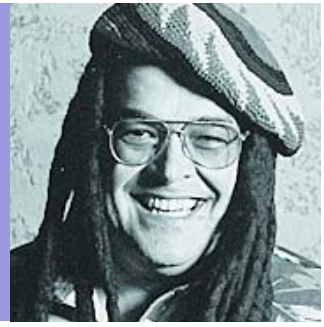
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Roadcases on the cheap



By **DUNCAN FRY**

I've got a regular gig with the Fabulous Harris Tweed Band, some friends who work the yacht clubs/aging baby boomers 50th (and 60th – oh the horror) birthday parties circuit.

They have their own PA system comprising various leftover bits and pieces from other systems, the overriding concern of the whole deal being economy.

Anyway, I got a call from the drummer the other day.

"We've decided to upgrade the system," he announced grandly.

Dreams of me at the controls of a state-of-the-art system flittered through my head, only to pop like bursting bubbles with his next comment.

"Yeah, we need some cases to put everything in. Have you got anything we can use?"

My heart sank. "OK, what's the budget?" I asked.

"Budget?" He laughed, "Get real!"

So I assumed that a new set of Anvil ATA approved cases was out of the question. What he said was true though; they did need a minimalist drive/effects rack, and cases for the leads and the multicore.

Even in a previous lifetime, when I was doing system rentals full-time, I never like spending too much on cases. You had to have them to protect the equipment, but they were an unquantifiable cost as far as the renters were concerned, something that you couldn't charge for but were expected to supply. Call me an old tightarse if you will, but I was a lot happier when the cost of the case wasn't more than what was inside!

I built my leads case on the milk crate system – an outer case that would hold the multicore in the bottom, and four milk crates on top of it full of mic leads. It fitted my needs perfectly, and the crates also doubled as drum riser supports when necessary!



The Fry-conomatic Road Case Mk1. Note cloth custom colour black hingeing.



The Fry-conomatic features bended aluminium racks fixed to the plastic case with state-of-the-art pop rivets.

So, what to do for the Tweed's system? I didn't have the luxury (?) of an eight tonne truck to load it into, so it had to be car friendly sized, able to be handled by one person, and super economical. I could knock something together from scratch, but even with

a minimal amount of latches and corners the cost was going to be substantial.

And it's not like the stuff was going to be bounced around in the back of a truck from here to Woop Woop and back. The hardest work it was going

to see was sitting in the boot of a car occasionally trundling around the bayside suburbs.

When the going gets tough, the tough go to Blokeworld, those enormous hardware barns populated by the haunted faces of men who know in their hearts that the seemingly simple household chore they have undertaken is going to take the best part of four weekends. There, walking those hallowed aisles, I felt sure that the spirit of Mr Miyagi would inspire me to succeed.

And then I found the answer to everything I needed. A stack of those clear plastic tubs that you see everywhere – from the smallest Chinese import shop to the hallowed aisles of Blokeworld. Hmm - just about the right size, as far as I could tell.

But were they 19 inches wide? I went down to the tape measure section to borrow one to check out. Bingo! 20 inches - it was perfect. Light, enough room for a compressor, an EQ, a reverb and a cassette deck or CD player. Plus it came with a clip-on lid, handles, even four cursory wheels, and the price was exactly in my budget range - \$8.95! Less than the cost of a single recessed road case latch.

I counted off my requirements on my fingers; effects rack, leads case, multicore case, and even a small one for microphones. Happy at last, I took them back to work (after remembering to return the tape measure to its correct department!) and started setting them up for their new life.

The leads case, mic case and multicore case needed no changing – I just filled them up, clipped the lids on, and that was it. For safety I stuck a couple of lengths of gaffer tape on each lid as a secondary latch – better safe than sorry!

The effects rack needed a bit more work. The first job was to bend up some aluminium for the front sides, to add some strength and so I could mount the stuff inside, then pop rivet it in place, using a staggered line of rivets to reduce the risk of the plastic cracking between them.

I then screwed in the cassette deck, a compressor, and an EQ. Worked like a charm.

A test run with it revealed a couple of limitations. The bottom of the plastic tub was now the back of the rack, but there was nowhere for the power leads to go. Out with the Stanley knife, and thanks to the ribs in the plastic there was the perfect small door area to cut out. A bit of gaffer tape for a hinge on one side, and as a latch on the other, and we had power to the people. I also discovered at the first gig that there was very limited access to the ins and out of everything, so all the equipment had to have its leads attached before being screwed in!

The cassette deck I found quite by accident. As frequent readers will know, I'm a sucker for Council non-burnable roadside rubbish collections, and was during one of these that I found a complete Akai stereo system by the side of the road. Someone had beaten me to the CD player (if there was one), but the amp, tuner and cassette deck were still there. In a flash they were shoved into the back of my little Suzuki rice burner, to be examined once I got to work.

It didn't look good - nothing worked at all, or even lit up the meters. Lifting the lid revealed the source of the problem, though. Someone had wrapped all the blown fuses with cigarette pack silver foil, unfortunately with the tissue paper side outwards! I replaced them with real fuses and click – everything worked just fine.

Sometimes a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Like to pass on your own econo PA tips? Email me on dunk@dunkworld.com

CX



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CX PRODUCTION DIRECTORY

Due to the collapse of our RAID array and the non backup of email .pst files, we LOST all Production Company Listings for the proposed feature in this issue. We will run the feature in the January issue, and ask production suppliers to re-submit the electronic form. To get the form: go to www.juliusmedia.com and in the CX Magazine area, look at the bottom left for the Downloads link. In there is the .pdf form, called Production Dir 2006 form.Ink.pdf

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The Showcorp Group is a special events production company located on Sydney's north shore. We specialise in project management and technical support for product launches, conferences, exhibitions, concerts, themed events and installations.

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For more information on the positions please contact:
Michael "shackles" Kent Ph: (02) 9921 5347 Fax: (02) 9921 5334
 Check out our website www.playbillvenues.com.au

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DIRECTOR OF AUDIO

Due to the continuing strong growth in Audio sales at CMI Music & Audio, the need for a Director of Audio has become apparent. CMI Music & Audio are inviting suitable applicants to apply for this new and challenging position.

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All applications should be forwarded in strict confidence to Peter Trojkovic at peter@cmi.com.au.

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