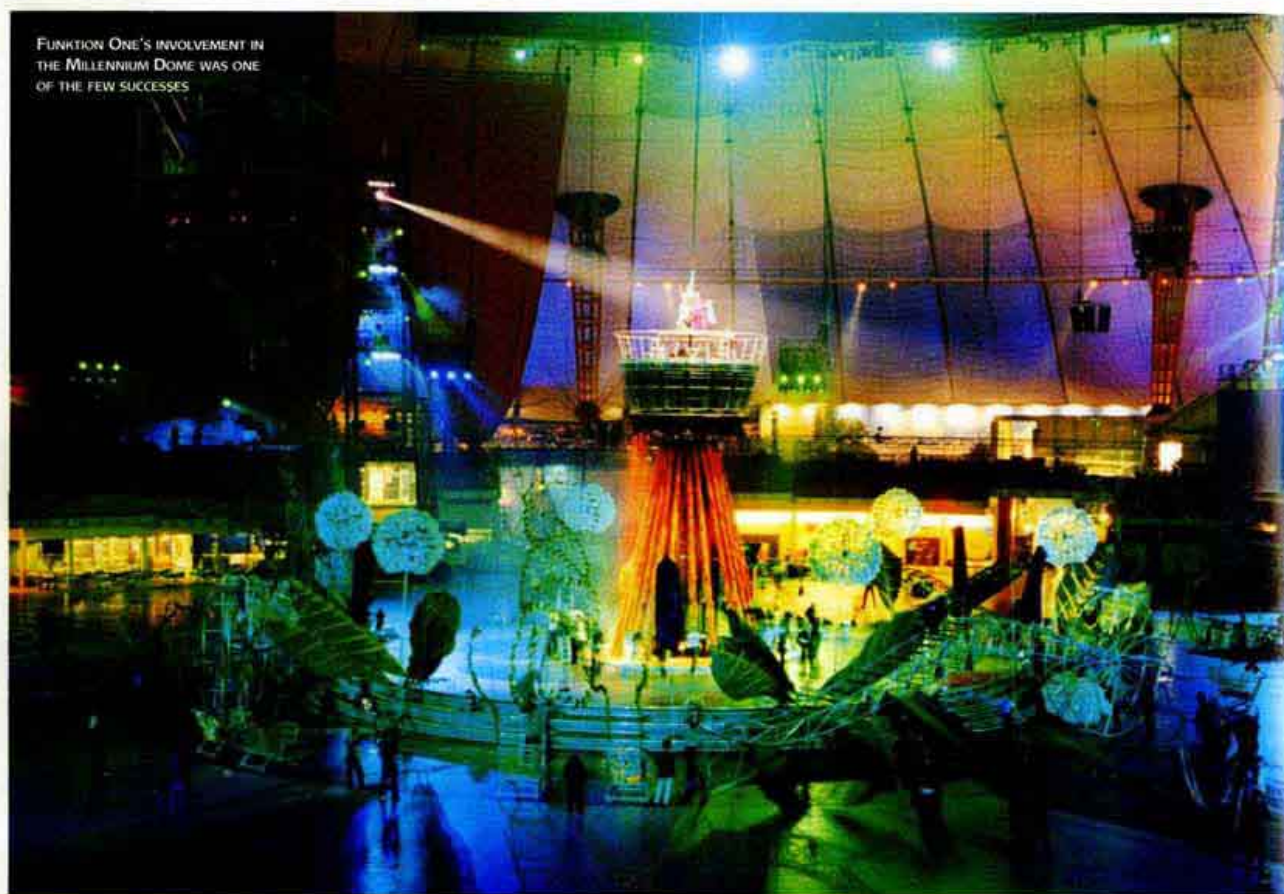


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funktion one

can you feel the force?



FUNKTION ONE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE MILLENNIUM DOME WAS ONE OF THE FEW SUCCESSSES

Walter Mirauer takes a trip to Beare Green to visit the Firm at the Farm and finds some very loud speakers...



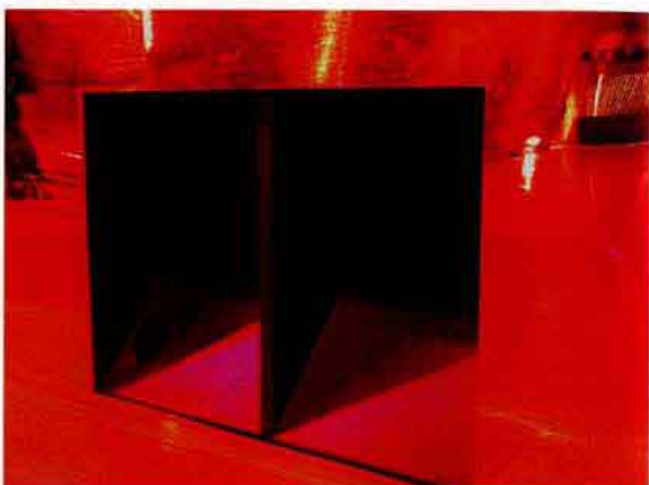
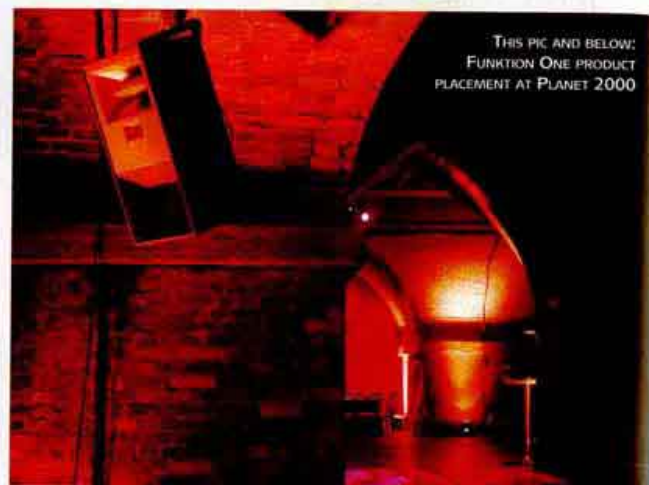
(L TO R) DAVID BRUML, JOHN NEWSHAM, TONY AND ANN ANDREWS AND TOBY HUNT OF FUNKTION ONE

DES RES

It would be hard to imagine a more tranquil, or a greener, setting in which to design and build very loud speakers than Funktion One's home, positioned where the rolling, tree-clad Surrey Downs melt into the meadows of Sussex. Tony Andrews, the company's founder, has been comfortably ensconced there for some twenty years, more than two decades which have seen great changes, both in the business and its products. It is impossible to tell the Funktion One story without reference to Turbosound, the company which Tony first created to build the new, exciting and different products he and fellow enthusiast John

Newsham felt that the concert and touring sector of the pro-audio market so desperately needed. Protected by patents, and fuelled by a buoyant marketplace, the new venture took off rapidly, requiring new investment and manpower and, inevitably acquiring a new persona along the way. This also meant adopting a different ethos along the way which was clearly a good one, good enough to sustain a company which Harman came to view with envious and acquisitive eyes before eventually abandoning it to its former management. Such is life. It's a familiar enough scenario, and perhaps the most significant thing to emerge from it is that Tony's

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design and build team at Funktion One is the same one he started out with all those years ago. The firm at the Farm, as it is known, is not here at Beare Green for either the greenery, or I suspect, the beer. Those who, like Giuseppe Verdi, cling to any kind of belief in the forces of destiny will be relieved to learn that Tony came to loud-speaker design from a training in geology, and that therefore he has simply progressed from one kind of rock to another. The design goals for Funktion One's latest range of loudspeakers, RES 2, 3, 4, 5 and, no doubt so on, may be pretty much the same as they were for Flashlight at its inception. High efficiency, low distortion, better pattern control, user friendly system architecture and ergonomics, all of these were and remain central preoccupations. The products have changed in one sense only in that they have just got better and better. Probably the worst possible expression of the protestant work ethic is that 'genius is the infinite capacity

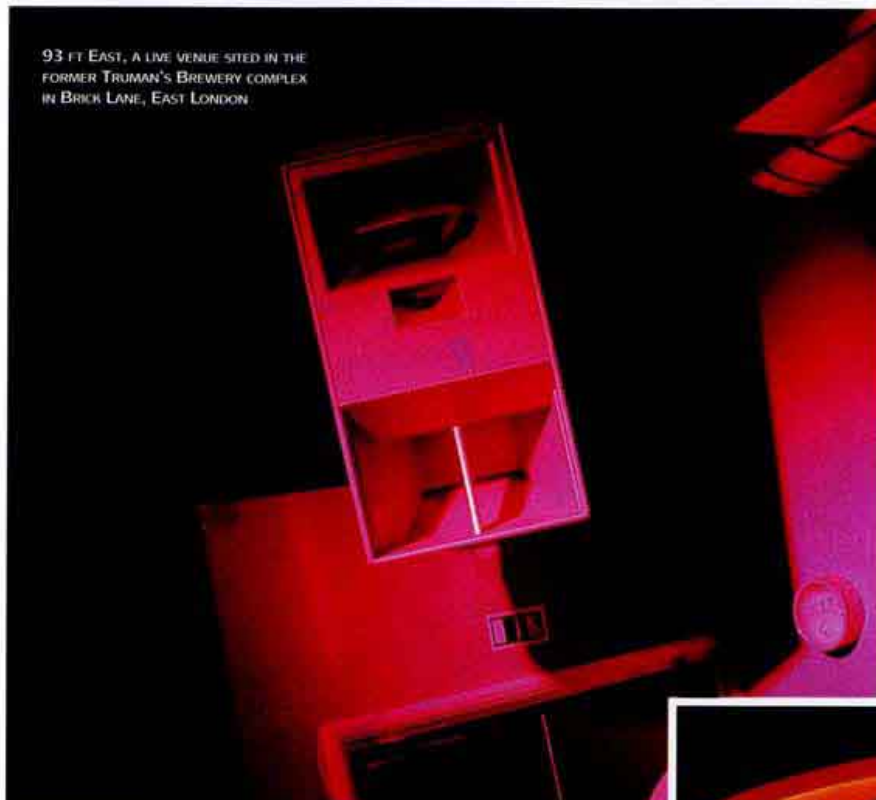
for taking pains'. This self-flagellatory doctrine has done both arts and sciences immeasurable harm in equal measure. What happened to lateral thinking, increasingly presented these days as anarchy? Would we have built aeroplanes if there had been no birds? At Funktion One, there is a solid belief that technology is the servant of art, which is the source of pleasure. Here, minds are open, not closed, hands are on, and not off, and there are wider experiences from which to learn.

Among the many milestones worthy of mention, one might single out the early Glastonbury years and the building of the Pyramid stage, the Dire Straits tour of the mid '80s which catapulted the speakers to worldwide exposure and acclaim, the launch of the first Axhead models, and more recently, Funktion One's involvement in the Millennium Dome, one of that project's few successes. The latest project for Tony and the team at Funktion One is to design and

build a new stadium sound system for Ipswich Town's football ground. It will, of course, be Premier League. As an aficionado of house music, by which he and I both mean the abandoned party stuff rather than the rap crap or the technobabble, it should surprise no one to find Tony's gear in some

pretty hardcore clubs, courtesy, in their different styles, of contractors like Kelco, and long-time mate Paul Smith's The Music Company, who specified it for First Leisure's Works in Nottingham, where the Axheads of the RES 4's slice through the organic soup that collects over the dancefloor in fine style. ☉

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93 FT EAST, A LIVE VENUE SITED IN THE FORMER TRUMAN'S BREWERY COMPLEX IN BRICK LANE, EAST LONDON

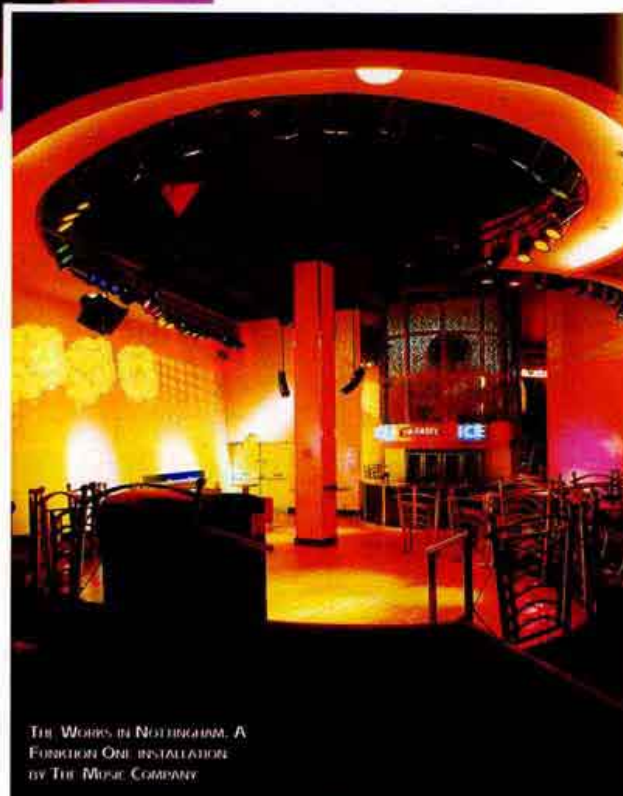


A RESOLUTION 5 CLUSTER WITH A F-218 BASS AT LONDON'S DOCKLANDS ARENA LAST NEW YEAR FOR THE EVENT FEATURING LEFTFIELD AND ORBITAL

© The success of Tony's designs has, over many years attracted both admirers and, inevitably, imitators. This is not always as flattering as the proverb would have us believe, and he admits to a sense of unease about it. This is largely because the worst case scenario about copying products is that the copy is not a good one. This dumps on the concept and the technology as a whole, leading the less astute to make the assumption that, if the execution is bad, then so is the technology behind it. Collaborations are another matter, and Funktion One already have a good one under their belt, in the shape of their liaison with Tannoy. Other efforts in this direction have proved frustrating, in the sense that, if you have already solved a problem that someone else is still grappling with, it is dispiriting to see the seed cast on the stony ground of the 'not invented here' syndrome, so beloved of large corporations. The door is however still ajar, if not flung wide open.

A PATENT SUCCESS

Developments in loudspeaker technology and in associated hardware seldom take place at the same pace, or within the same time frame. So it is that, over the years, speakers have sometimes been ahead of hardware, and vice versa. Listening to the RES 5's down at the Farm the other day, I was powerfully persuaded that the right products might, for once have arrived together, and at the right time. The extraordinary clarity of these speakers would make the perfect demonstration vehicle for the awesome capabilities of the very latest digital format, SuperAudio (SA) CD. The dramatic impact of this new technology would be lessened, or in some cases completely lost, if played through speakers which could not reproduce it fully. That would be more than a shame, it would be a tragedy. Tony Andrews is very far from being a tragic anorak, driven by a central obsession, and neither is he a hphead with a gift for posturing. Rather, he is a dedicated practitioner who is mature enough to realise



THE WORKS IN NOTTINGHAM. A FUNKTION ONE INSTALLATION BY THE MUSIC COMPANY

that, to do good work, you have to know, to feel and to experience a world beyond it. It's the stuff of progress, and that's what makes patents. It's the force behind Funktion One, and that's what makes products. ©

links: www.funktion-one.com