

LIVE SOUND

SOUND BITES

Touring musicals a boost for live sound

UK - Annie Get Your Gun, the traditional musical and lyrics by Irving Berlin, embarked on a five-city tour in August to culminate in a major run at a West End theatre later this year.

Sound design for the production is by Rick Clarke, founder of The Sound Department, with equipment and back-up services supplied by Theatre Projects Sound & Vision.

Theatre Projects Sound & Vision manager Fiona Thomas said that such ventures can only be good news in these tight times. "Despite the recession one area of the business that's developing is the touring musical, which is good news for our industry," she said.

"Through our relationships with the likes of Rick Clarke and Annie's producer Ronnie Lee we can do good business, saving productions front-end money by drawing on past investments and fostering new areas of sound

treatment and control. That's an aspect we're concentrating on heavily, including Mac-based MIDI control systems," she said.

The show is the latest in a series on which Clarke has worked with Theatre Projects, including South Pacific, King & I and The Sound of Music.

The sound has to produce a "dynamic and rumbustious" libretto featuring four saxes, two trumpets, two trombones, a flute, four violins, one viola, one cello, one bass and a drumkit, all massed in the pit. "It's quite loud in there," affirmed Clarke.

The main 'distributed image' sound system uses a Yamaha PM3000 FOH desk with Community RS220s for the PA. Amplifiers on the show, also supplied by Theatre Projects, are mostly Australian Monitor, supplemented by Crown. Operators are Andy Collins, assisted by Matt Dando.

The acoustic balancing act is quite delicate. Clarke prefers to strike a natural balance between vocal and band levels without using vocal monitors, a task made rather more difficult by the regular flurries of loud gunshots. The latter, and other sound effects are samples, triggered from a Revox CD player and a Philip Rees DPDSP EPROM, both types cued by Steinberg's Cubase sequencer (running on an Apple Powerbook 140 laptop) and an Outboard Electronics Programmable Matrix.

Said Clarke: "With SFX stored in this way, the operator can fire them in a split second at the push of a button - there's absolutely no delay." This set-up also caters for virtually all the show's ancillary MIDI cues including the TC Electronics equaliser control software, while the Matrix feeds the effects to the house and onstage speakers, allowing

effects to come "from all around the auditorium.

"I try to keep the stage quiet enough for the singers not to need monitors, but loud enough to hear their cues", revealed Clarke. "Also, I don't want stage levels to affect the stereo imaging. That's a major reason for using the Community RS220s. Because it's a high-Q device I can get lots of level across the room but angle it so it doesn't deafen people in the front rows: sometimes we don't even need delay systems. And I can move the dynamics about without moving the stereo image."

The requirements of touring a musical mean that compromises must be built in to the sound design to allow for a two-day installation and set-up. "Normally we have Sunday and Monday to get a system in," he said, "with the first performance being the Tuesday matinée. So we have to make the design a median between all the venues on the tour, as well as taking extra equipment to allow for the largest venue. In a long run in one place, certain things would be done differently, such as the set-up of the instruments and racks."

Mike Lethby

Funktion One gears up for project push

UK - Funktion One, the specialist audio consultancy set up six months ago by Turbosound founders Tony Andrews and John Newsham, has been working on a number of new projects, some of which are due to appear on the market this autumn.

Perhaps the most exciting prospect is offered by a breakthrough the team has made in loading techniques. According to Andrews, "The development allows the 'in-your-face' effect of our previous efforts to be heard over a much wider dispersion field."

The Flashlight TFS system, one of the team's last projects for Turbosound before they left to form the breakaway partnership, has now been sold in the form of complete systems to various countries including Russia, where local PA company Orion bought a rig for a rock festival in Red Square, also used in the Red Square Invites classical festival.

In late June Funktion One played the first of a planned series of "experimental music events", including one at Glastonbury Festival, involving a



Andrews: "doing what we set out to do"

quadraphonic sound field with musicians, DJs and mixing hardware concentrated at a central platform. "One of the most exciting areas was to see how big a quadraphonic environment we could create," explained Andrews.

Commented Tony Andrews: "After six months we're doing exactly what we set out to do, which was to get involved in a wide range of challenging, inter-related subjects and projects."

Mike Lethby

Canon steps into the pro audio fray

UK - Canon Audio, set up in the UK by the Japanese electronics giant, is moving into the pro audio market with a background speaker system designed to take on market leaders Bose and JBL.

A year after launching its first product, the WS50 'wide stereo imaging' Hi-Fi speaker, the completely British development team has now targeted the shop/club/pub/ restaurant installation market.

This area is an important part of the sound reinforcement business, estimated in, total to be worth £10 million in the UK alone, in which products like the JBL Control 1 and Bose's new Freespace have been battling. The V-100 is Canon's response to what it sees as a 'stagnation of new ideas' in background speaker development.

Canon's speaker fires the mid/high frequencies upwards onto a curved 'mirror' which creates a controlled sound field 90 degrees horizontal by 70 degrees vertical. The V-100 is designed as a compact corner mounting cabinet with a



Szeliga: "powerful concept"

curved front. Two units can be bracketed together to cover 180 degrees and four to create a small 360 degrees central cluster. The principle behind this design is to create a general sound field.

MD Andy Szeliga said that the £180 V-100 will be followed by the V200 foreground system in the New Year, and that the R&D team is currently working on a sub-bass system and a further large system both due for release later in 1993. A companion V-Amp will also be introduced.

"The basic concept we have developed is tremendously powerful," he said.

Szeliga said the amplifier had been developed in response to the divide between Hi-Fi units of relatively low power and professional units with few features. Set to sell for £299, V-Amp will include microphone inputs with automatic gain ride for paging.

Tim Frost

BANGKOK'S YUOHAN shopping mall has been equipped with a Celestion SR sound system to run alongside a video wall by Thailand distributor Thada Research.

THE FIRST CADAC Concert mixing console will be installed in the Lyttleton Theatre of the Royal National Theatre, London later this year. Cadac: +44 (0)582 404202.

AUDIX IS TO INSTALL A VT660 speech management system as part of the PA and voice alarm system at Westminster House, London - a building that is being refurbished for use by MPs, support staff and parliamentary committees. Audix: +44 (0)799 40888.

VILLA AUDIO HAS supplied and installed a Shermann GX-Commando 2 system into the live music and disco venue of Essex University in Colchester. Villa Audio: +44 (0)245 361694.

BELUGA NIGHTCLUB in London has installed 12 Tannoy CPA5 loudspeakers for background music and mid/high sound on the dance floor.

ABERDEEN'S KINGS College Conference Centre has installed a Philips ICS600 Delegate system with each delegate desk housing a gooseneck mic and directional loudspeaker. An induction loop has also been fitted. Philips: +44 (0)223 245191.

SOUNDCRAFT supplied a total of 85 consoles for the Barcelona Olympics - 65 Deltas, 4 Series 8000s and 11 Spirit Lives. Soundcraft: +44 (0)707 665000.

AUDIO AMSTERDAM supplied a 10-box 850 Series and 4 BH800s EAW system for the Valley's Rock Festival held in the Ardeche region of France.

GERMAN MUSIC Sound's EAW KF850/KF600 systems were used for the Jazz Fest Salfelden, Chick Corea European tour, ZDF Europa Jazz Night 92 and Moerser Jazz Tage