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INSIDE STAGECO

FROM WERCHTER TO THE WORLD:
BEHIND THE SCENES OF A STAGING LEGEND

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REHEARSAL STUDIOS • PROLIGHT+ SOUND REVIEW



birds of a feather

BISCUIT TINS, TYPEWRITERS, RATCHET SPANNERS AND ELECTRIC DRILLS ALL FORM PART OF THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL LIVE AUDIO MIX OF THE GUILLEMOTS. FOH ENGINEER JONNY LUCAS TELLS TPI HOW HE MAKES IT WORK WITH AN ADAMSON SYSTEM FROM CONCERT SOUND...

Formed three years ago by Birmingham-born Fyfe Dangerfield, the Guillemots are a delightfully unconventional and exotic collective. Accompanied by Brazilian guitarist MC Lord Magrão, Canadian double bassist Aristazabal Hawkes, drummer and percussionist Greig Stewart (a.k.a. Rican Caol), and occasional sax players, the classically-trained Dangerfield's kaleidoscopic lyrics and freefalling improvisation are at the core of a curious take on

modern music.

After releasing a genius-like debut album, *Through The Windowpane*, last July, they delivered captivating support spots with Scissor Sisters, Rufus Wainwright and Snow Patrol, and guested at BBC's *Electric Proms*, late in 2006. The band then followed the January release of their infectious hit single 'Annie, Let's Not Wait' with a short UK tour, taking in such venues as Brixton Academy, Norwich UEA, Sheffield's Octagon

and Birmingham Academy.

There is no such thing as a typical Guillemots gig, although common elements seem to include the rhythmic tapping of a typewriter, the clatter of buckets and biscuit tins, deranged drum patterns, communal wailing and... birdsong. As Dangerfield explained: "You're never going to top birdsong as the ultimate pop music — all we can do is try to come close. We want to make the sort of music that reveals something new





about itself each time you listen to it, but that doesn't need to be at the expense of it being accessible."

Keeping a handle on this strange audio brew is FOH engineer Jonny Lucas who chose an Adamson system for this February's dates, supplied by Concert Sound. He explained: "I first heard the Adamson Y10 system on the Rufus Wainwright tour and I was very impressed with the clarity and precision [Wainwright's engineer] Manasse achieved. He's a fantastic engineer, but some credit had to go to the rig!"

Previously an engineer for live radio sessions, Lucas is the first to admit it's not an easy mix. "The more the band grows, the more instrumentation is involved and, of course, the potential for disaster! We always try not to limit creativity and I'm up for trying anything once. As well as the regular drums, samplers, keys, guitars, saxes and double bass, we've added glockenspiel, mandolin, theremin, bells, metal plates, electric drills and God knows what else!"

The Guillemots' system featured 20 Adamson Y10 cabinets, six T21s and eight Spektrix boxes, all driven by XTA processing and Lab.gruppen amplification, with Lucas piloting a Digidesign Venue at FOH. On stage they used Adamson M15 and Concert Sound 18" wedges, driven by Adamson M-Series processors and Lab.gruppen's, and mixed by Pete Abbott on a Yamaha PM5D. Tim Peeling was the monitor system tech and Aron Ross looked after the FOH system.

Said Lucas: "It took me a while to get used to how much you could hear with the Adamson rig. The detail in the vocals and wind instruments was almost disturbing to start with, especially in venues where I was close to the speakers.

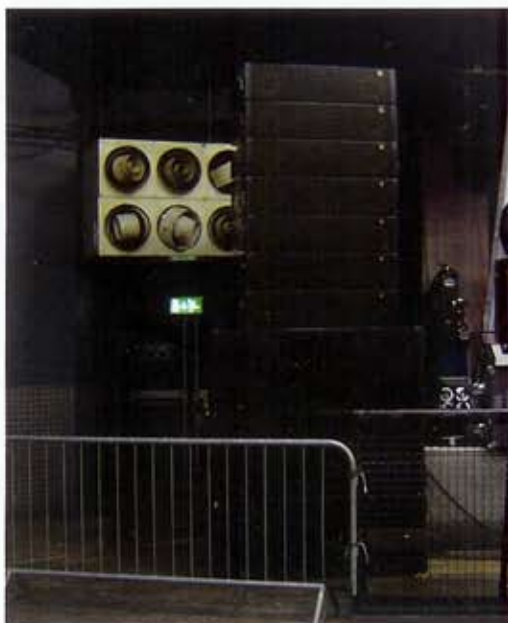
"The stereo imaging was also quite shocking at times. There's a section in the show where the drummer would stand behind the kit with a ratchet spanner and sway from side to side — you could feel where one overhead mic took over from the other and the sound cut through so well."

The experience of systems tech Aron Ross was a major bonus, said Lucas. "The rooms varied from 1,500 to 5,000 capacity, so the system needed to be as versatile as it was detailed, and I discovered that the Y10s work just as well when ground-stacked as they do when flown.

"I was a little concerned to find the Adamson subs had 21" drivers because of past trouble I've had with the slow transient responses of large subs. But the Kevlar construction seems to keep the drivers light enough to move really quickly and precisely. I don't think I've ever used a system where you can push 31Hz and actually hear it!"

The Guillemots are scheduled to make more eccentrically beautiful noise at the *AXIS Festival* in Stoke-on-Trent next month and at *August's V Festival*.
TPI

Main photo: Nils Jorgensen/Rex Features
Other photos by Aron Ross



Left and below: FOH Engineer Jonny Lucas... and the Adamson system shown in various tour locations including Brixton and Manchester Academy



Design Crew Equipment Technical Services

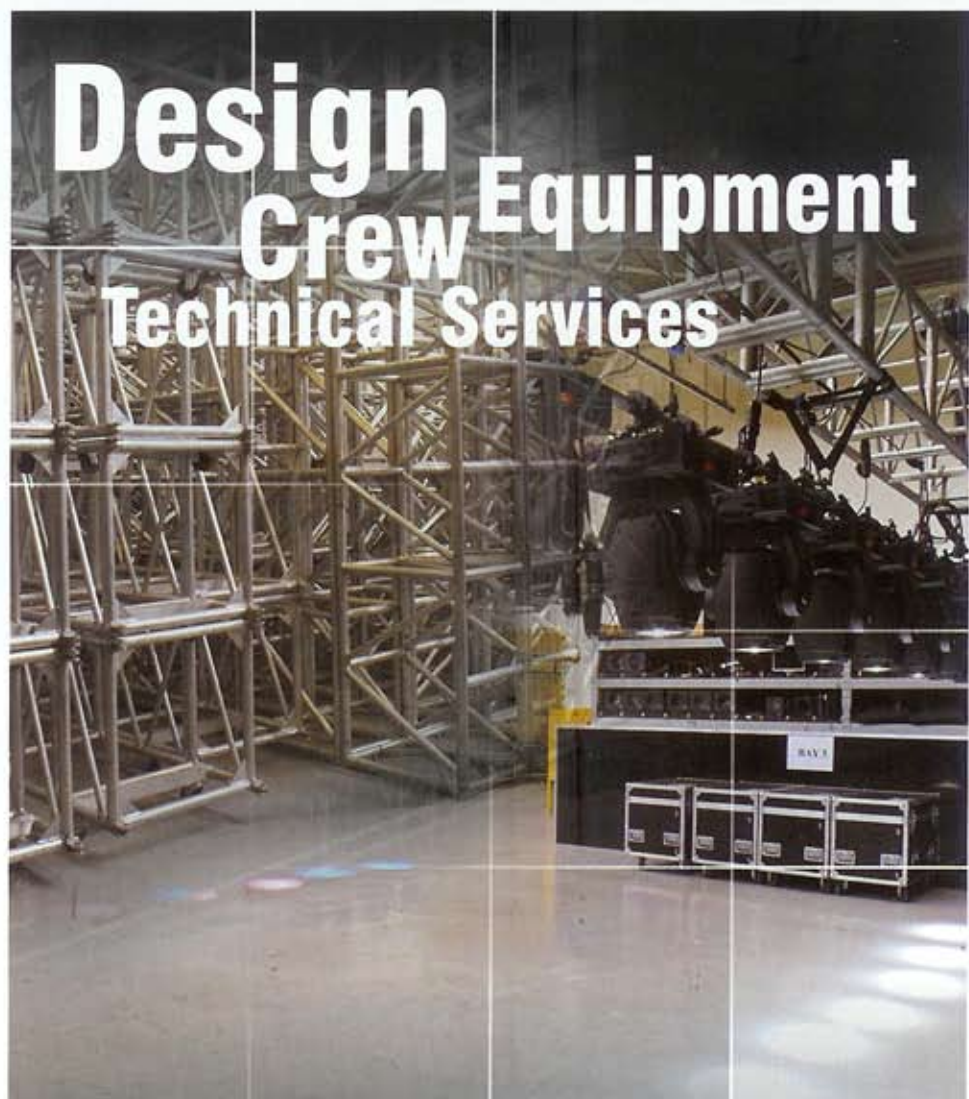


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