



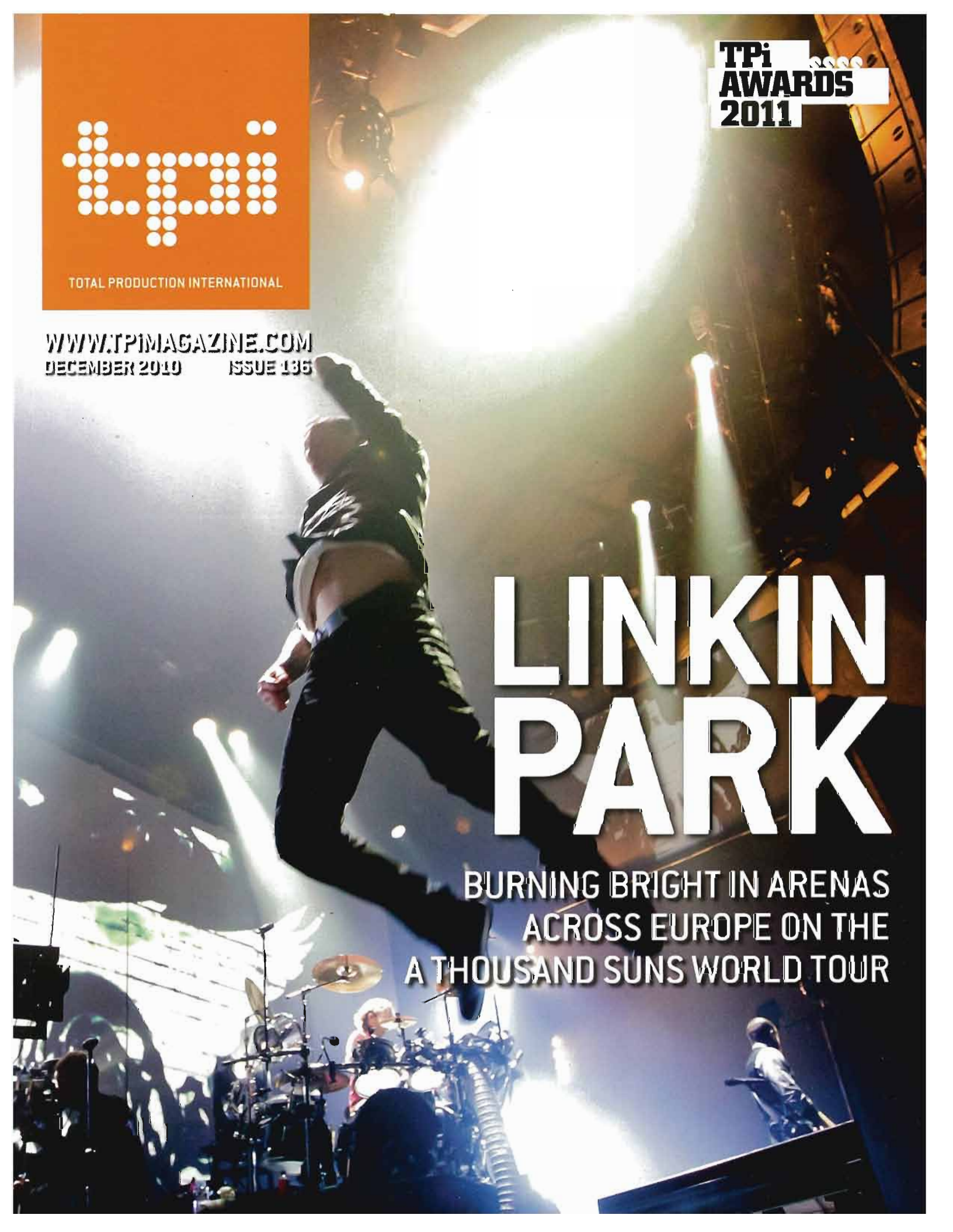
TOTAL PRODUCTION INTERNATIONAL

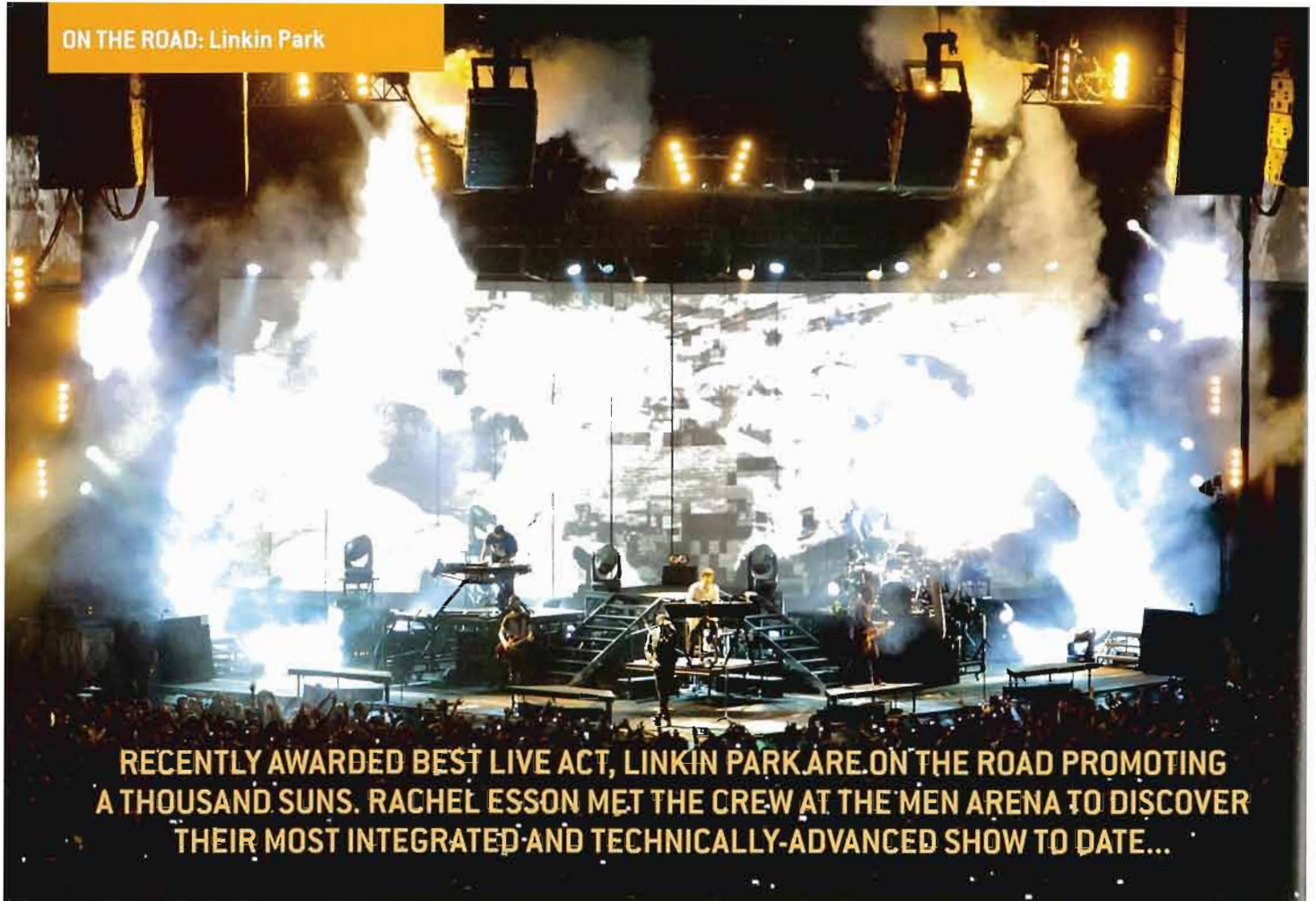
**TPI AWARDS
2011**

WWW.TPIMAGAZINE.COM
DECEMBER 2010 ISSUE 136

LINKIN PARK

BURNING BRIGHT IN ARENAS
ACROSS EUROPE ON THE
A THOUSAND SUNS WORLD TOUR





RECENTLY AWARDED BEST LIVE ACT, LINKIN PARK ARE ON THE ROAD PROMOTING A THOUSAND SUNS. RACHEL ESSON MET THE CREW AT THE MEN ARENA TO DISCOVER THEIR MOST INTEGRATED AND TECHNICALLY-ADVANCED SHOW TO DATE...

A SUNNY WALK THROUGH LINKIN PARK



It was little surprise when three days after I caught Linkin Park's current tour at Manchester's MEN Arena, in support of their fourth studio album *A Thousand Suns*, the band picked up 'Best Live Act' at the 2010 *European Music Awards*. They're a band that effortlessly own the stage, are continually developing their sound and push the envelope even further with each new production.

Evident from the audience demographic at the MEN Arena on November 4, Linkin Park have held on to a loyal following, originally whipped up in the hysteria of their debut album *Hybrid Theory*, as well as attracting new fans through the darker, politically-infused side of rock that defines their latest album.

With 50 million albums sold worldwide over the last decade, and their most ambitious live production to date, the recent award is a timely recognition. And rightly so that the U.S. band not only thanked their entire production crew on the night, but also invited them on stage to accept the award.

It's a tight-knit team that have in the most part served the band since its beginnings and was one of the most friendly and laid-back crews I have met for a long time. This is down in no small part to the influence of production manager Jim Digby (Collaborative Endeavor Group) and the Zen of the backstage production office (by Hugo Rempel) and dressing rooms (by Anna Stonner).

It was in one such dressing room, on a sofa surrounded by plants, mood lighting and exotic decor, that we caught some time with Jim Digby ahead of the Manchester show, part of the European leg before it heads to the North American stint on January 20.

"This is the most interesting production we've been able to put together for Linkin Park," he announced. "It's been in the planning stages since January and we tried to be as far ahead as we could. We started executing the details in August with some band rehearsal and pre-construction for the set in the Paramount Movie Studio in L.A."

Digby, whose CV includes Genesis, Phil Collins, Marilyn Manson and Bon Jovi, chanced upon Linkin

Park when they made the progression from a support act to an arena act and has become part of the growing success of the band.

"What keeps the Linkin Park machine moving so well is that the band have afforded me and the management team to keep everybody together. The way the show works is that we have a unique model that requires creativity at the budget end for building an interesting show — we don't have a blank cheque book like U2 or the Stones," said Digby, who works alongside tour manager Bob Quandt.

Even without the bells and whistles of the live show, the stage set looked impressive and imposing. Reaching further forward into the crowd than I had ever seen at the MEN, the angular stage came to a point like the tip of a diamond, with space to perform at the front of each side. Mirroring this shape onstage are two huge projection screens made up of square rotating panels that are black on one side and white on the other for projection.

Stephen Pollard and A.J. Pen were responsible for the set design, the latter also being the LD for the tour.

Accurate Staging has been Linkin Park's set company throughout their career. Said Digby: "The reason we use them is a combination of the relationship we have with them and the budgets that we have, they have a great team. The nature of Linkin Park is that some of the details don't come until late in the game and Joe [Gallagher, project manager] can stop the press and adjust if necessary." Stage manager is Ethan Merfy.

COLLABORATE TO CREATE

One might think a band with six members — Chester Bennington, Rob Bourdon, Brad Delson, David Farrell, Joe Hahn and Mike Shinoda, who are all interested in making a contribution to the show — could pose collaborative challenges for the production team. However, Digby said the band divides up responsibilities amongst themselves, so whilst there are six partners, some are more engaged than others.

Backstage in a dressing room-cum-editing suite, we met FOH engineer Ken 'Pooch' Van Druten, who spends each day beaver away to mix the previous night's show on a Pro Tools rig for web release. He also agreed with Digby: "What I really respect is that there are six guys but they don't come at you all at once. Sound-wise, Mike and Brad come in here and chat about how it should sound so I have a lot of interaction with them."

Pooch's presence on the tour, along with the Adamson sound systems, are the result of a minor shake-up around five years ago. His first gig with the band was in a small club in Germany promoting their *Minutes To Midnight* album, where an Adamson Y-10 rig was installed with T21 subs.

It was not only the first time the band had heard an Adamson PA, but also the first time they got to hear themselves at FOH on virtual soundcheck using Pooch's new Avid (formerly Digidesign) Venue Profile system.



"This is the most interesting production we've been able to put together for Linkin Park..." **Jim Digby**

"We all credited the Adamson PA for it sounding so good, so from that point on the band demanded that it be Adamson," remembered Pooch, who prior to his career in live music was an established recording engineer.

Linkin Park have toured with an Adamson PA ever since, incorporating the *Minutes To Midnight* and *Project Revolution* world tours.

French Adamson partner MPM Audio supplied the product for the European leg of *A Thousand Suns*, bringing a "great team" with them, which consisted of crew chief/systems engineer Julien Poirot, and technicians Fabien Aubert, Bertrand Champedonde and Vincent Preau. For the U.S. leg the supplier will be Audio Analyst.

Said Digby: "We've found over the years that the best-sounding Linkin Park in a live performance is through the Adamson box. The

clarity and the punch factor of the Adamson box for me surpasses anything else we've used."

Pooch agreed: "Mainly it's the Y-18s and the T21s that make Adamson suitable to Linkin Park's sound. Most other line array boxes have a 15" or a 12" driver whereas these are 18" drivers that are made out of Kevlar. There is a lot of information in Linkin Park's music that is low-mid to sub and a lot of impact sub information, and Adamson gives it a big push."

Added Pooch: "I think there are four or five top PAs, obviously Adamson, then d&b, JBL VerTec V4 and the Clair i-5, but for Linkin Park no PA is better than Adamson. I've heard the prototype of Adamson's new Energia line array and I have to say I'm very excited for it to come to market, it's very impressive and could just knock all the others off that list."

The main left and right hangs each consisted



“I’ve heard the prototype of Adamson’s new Energia line array and I have to say I’m very excited for it to come to market...” Ken ‘Pooch’ Van Druten

of 16 Y-18s, with an underhang of four Y10s. On the outer side of the main hangs were eight T21 Subs per side, with four T21 Subs supporting on the ground. Further out and further upstage to achieve the 270° dispersion were 16 Y-10s each side with a curved wave of SpekTrix pointing down on the people who reach right up to the stage. There were also further SpekTrix and four SpekTrix Ws as rear and front fills. All Adamson speakers were powered by Lab.gruppen amplifiers.

“Everyone looks at the rig and says there’s loads of PA, but that’s because we are absolutely concerned about coverage and there is no excuse to have a dead spot somewhere,” commented Pooch, who has previously worked with Mötley Crüe, Kid Rock, Kiss and Whitney Houston.

FOR THE RECORD

At FOH, Pooch was mixing the show on the Venue Profile system he’s been using consistently for a long time, running 86 inputs. With a more electronic sound to their new music, they ran six tracks of instrument playback — ones that they couldn’t physically play on stage, although all the guitars and vocals were live.

“The main reason I’m using Venue is that this band are very Pro Tools orientated; they all have Pro Tools studios at home to make records and use plugins, which makes it simple for me as I can call up the recording engineer and get him

to send me his presets and plug-ins used to make the sounds,” said Pooch.

Linkin Park have a long history as Waves plug-in users, for example, the vocal effect on the hit single ‘The Catalyst’, was created using Waves’ MetaFlanger plug-in.

Because Pooch edits the previous night’s gig from 8am-4pm each day he relies heavily on systems engineer Chris ‘Cookie’ Hoff, of Audio Analyst, to measure the PA. “Four years ago the band started to release every single show. They didn’t want it to just be a board mix, but a record quality bootleg that they could sell on the website. It was a great success on the last tour; something like 35% of ticket goers were downloading,” said Pooch.

Pro Tools technician Dylan Ely has another Pro Tools rig in a dressing room to do some editing prior to Pooch, then he acts as a master engineer.

The sound team on tour also included monitor engineer Kevin ‘Tater’ McCarthy and his assistant Paul ‘Pablo Blanco’ White and systems engineer Chris ‘Cookie’ Hoff.

Tater’s monitor system on stage comprised 14 Adamson M12 monitors, with SX18 cabinets as side fills. Most of the wedges were solely for one guitarist who doesn’t wear in ears and moves around the stage a lot, so Tater had the challenge of chasing him around the stage, made more difficult by the fact that monitor world was

behind the stage so he was using a spy camera system.

For control he used a Yamaha PM5D-EX system, which consisted of a PM5D-RH and a DSP5D, to give hmi a total of 96 inputs. In addition he had an Apogee Big Ben word clock and a Waves Sound Grid System. Tater: “I have mainly only used Yamaha since going to digital desks; reliability would be the biggest reason.”

Linkin Park have an endorsement with Audio-Technica, meaning all the wired mics on stage came from the brand. “We use 4050s and 4047s on the guitars, and have for the past tours,” he explained. “We did switch the rack and floor tom microphones this year from the ATM350s to the AE 3000s.”

A SIGHT TO SURPRISE

The show’s creative director for the tour visuals, Bill Boyd, along with his team from content design company Ghost Town Media, was responsible for creating all the video content for the tour, but also had a hand in stage design and parts of the promotional and marketing aspects of the tour, ensuring Linkin Park’s new album and sound was consistently married with the visuals of the live show.

The team also spent time tying on the tour visuals with other parts of the band’s video content, such as music videos, a documentary about the making of *A Thousand Suns* and promotional material for the album itself.

Ghost Town Media’s Matt Primm commented: “This cross-pollination allowed concepts from within the concert and without to co-exist and create a more cohesive visual language surrounding everything about the album and tour. Key examples of this would be the tour





Above, clockwise: Production manager Jim Digby; LD A.J. Pen; technical director Tim Solar; video director Skip Twitchell.

video assets and the music videos for 'The Catalyst' and 'Waiting For The End' specifically."

Inspiration for the tour visuals came from the album's themes of war and all that is associated with it — struggle, loss and confusion — thus the audience was challenged by busy, distorted imagery, augmented by the rotating projection canvas.

"Underlying themes of 'natural versus digital', 'post-apocalyptic warfare' and 'heavy digital interference', were all used in a way to prop up the overall idea of challenging the viewer. Many of the images, we think, are quite beautiful just as abstract images fitting the music, but each of those images comes from somewhere and if the viewer looks hard enough, something unique or hidden can be seen," said Primm.

"We have to give a lot of credit to Josh Vanover who was responsible for most of the cover art and album art for the tour; he has an amazing touch of texture and a subtle tinge towards the grotesque we immediately fell in love with.

"The other massive pull point for us was Prologue's *OFFF 2009* intro title sequence. This sequence took something that could easily be cliché or overwrought [a paramilitary theme] and made it into something elegant and beautiful. That was the one video that everything traces back to for us."

Video director Skip Twitchell, who was supported by Jordan Goodfellow, Alastair

Macdiarmid and Jay Strasser, began providing video support through Nocturne Productions on the *Minutes To Midnight* tour in 2008 and has been working with them ever since.

"The band had no interest in doing traditional I-Mag as we know it. It's not about necessarily trying to show the audience the drummer playing or the guitarist playing, although there's a component of that, but it's more about seeing a flash of this and a bit of that; it's more subliminal than your normal presentation. The goal is a cohesive show," said Twitchell.

With high definition imagery and a filmic quality as priorities, the video was based around projection rather than LED technology. The projection on to the chevron-shaped wall upstage was handled by four Christie Roadster S+20kW projectors, whilst three 12kW Barco projectors fed images for the band's pre-show appeal for charity Music For Relief on to a temporary screen that was removed before the band came on stage, and the two side screens for people in the front seats.

Twitchell mixed footage from the 16 cameras (three broadcast, two overhead domes, nine lipsticks and two thermals) with the video, providing HD content through a multi-disc playback system.

"This is the third project I've done recently where none of the content has ever touched tape; it's all been edited in a digital manner, passed through the digital domain, loaded on to,



EFM CELEBRATES 10th BIRTHDAY ON THE ROAD WITH LINKIN PARK

International logistics specialist EFM has been celebrating its 10th anniversary whilst touring with Linkin Park, rounding off a successful year in which it also won Favourite Freight Company at the *TPI Awards 2010*.

Production manager Jim Digby and EFM's U.S. manager Steve Botting started working on the logistics for the band's *A Thousand Suns* tour in January 2010, well in



advance of the first show on October 20.

To maximise logistical and economic efficiency they looked at the proposed dates and show offers with the band's booking agent Michael Arfin. Based on venue avails and territories they all came up with a logistics plan that made the most sensible routing to cover as many territories possible.

Jim Digby said: "EFM provide this strategic input in a way no other logistics and freight management company does.

"This partnership between Linkin Park and EFM is an extension of the band's management family and without it I'm confident we'd still be looking for our gear, they are truly our partner in touring."

Linkin Park have three sets of equipment on the move, weighing in between 13,401kg and 15,000kg, and there is a very complex set of movements between the U.S., European, Middle East and Australasian concerts to accommodate the shows, culminating in the U.S.

EFM's 10th anniversary year has been an incredibly busy one. The expertise of the music industry specialist has enabled extensive world tours by Guns N' Roses and Rammstein, while also nurturing rising talent such as Scouting For Girls and

Mumford and Sons, for whom it was freighting within 24 hours of opening their new Sydney office.

The sports division has been very active, with the smooth delivery of the Vancouver *Winter Olympics*, the *FIFA World Cup* and the logistically-complex *XIX Commonwealth Games* in Delhi.

The year has also seen worldwide EFM expansion on all fronts. Adding to London, Germany, Dubai, Los

Angeles and New York offices, the company further improved international capabilities when it opened the new Australia office in August, with Qatar also opening by the end of the year. This strength in the Middle East reflects the breadth of events that trust EFM, such as this autumn's *Avante Garde* commemorating Oman's 40th anniversary, and the prestigious *Tribeca Film Festival*, located in Doha, Qatar.

Mike Llewellyn, group managing director, commented: "Although my personal area of expertise is and will continue to be music, I set out 10 years ago to offer a specialised freight service to all the areas of live events production.

Being involved in major sporting and corporate events has introduced EFM to differing issues, and equally inspired new solutions, which has broadened the depth of expertise and knowledge of a fantastic team.

"We have expanded with new offices to support our network through an economically and at times politically turbulent decade, but the commitment remains to provide our clients with a service that allows them to focus on their event and not where their equipment is."

www.efm-worldwide.com



and then played back from, a hard drive. It's a grand combination of HD and low-tech," he said.

A basic timeline coming from the stage generated a web of triggers via MIDI and SMPTE timecode meaning lights, sound and video all lead the show at different points. Joe Hahn also scratched some of the clips live during the show.

"I made a lot of use of quartz composer technology that's in the root of an Apple system where you can make things very reactive very quickly; the trick is to not have a lag and a delay," said Twitchell.

FOH LIGHTING INNOVATION

Lighting designer A.J. Pen devised a package for the show working closely with supplier Christie Lites, which Digby described as "an anchor point for developing the tour in the U.S." For the European leg, lighting was supplied by Neg Earth, of which Digby said: "They provide great people and the quality of the gear is right where it should be."

Neg Earth sent crew chief Steve Arch and technicians Tim Philips, Antti Saari and Hayden 'Goat' Corp on the tour to assist A.J. and technical co-ordinator Tim Solar.

At the FOH control area for lighting was a rather unorthodox set up (pictured below) that

represented Pen's desire to bridge the gap between musicians and lighting control; programming using musical gear. It's the result of some innovative thinking by Pen and lighting programmer Seth Robinson in a bid to create custom designed, velocity sensitive hardware.

"I've been trying out ideas that I've been working on for several years for lighting control and looking at different ways of doing things because I haven't been totally satisfied with what consoles can do, in terms of their approach to certain things and the programming processes," said Pen.

"I wanted to record all my MIDI events in a programme like Ableton Live and play them back that way rather than write chases and complicate cue lists. I knew I was going to timecode the show, which I've never done with Linkin Park before, and they are very Pro Tools-orientated so that information is always there.

"About 80-90% of the cues that you see are triggered from the Ableton timeline, they're MIDI events that are translated into MIDI show control, using the MIDifaders programme that Seth wrote using MAX, and that's passed on to the console.

"Cue lists have been programmed to be mapped to certain control pads so I can control

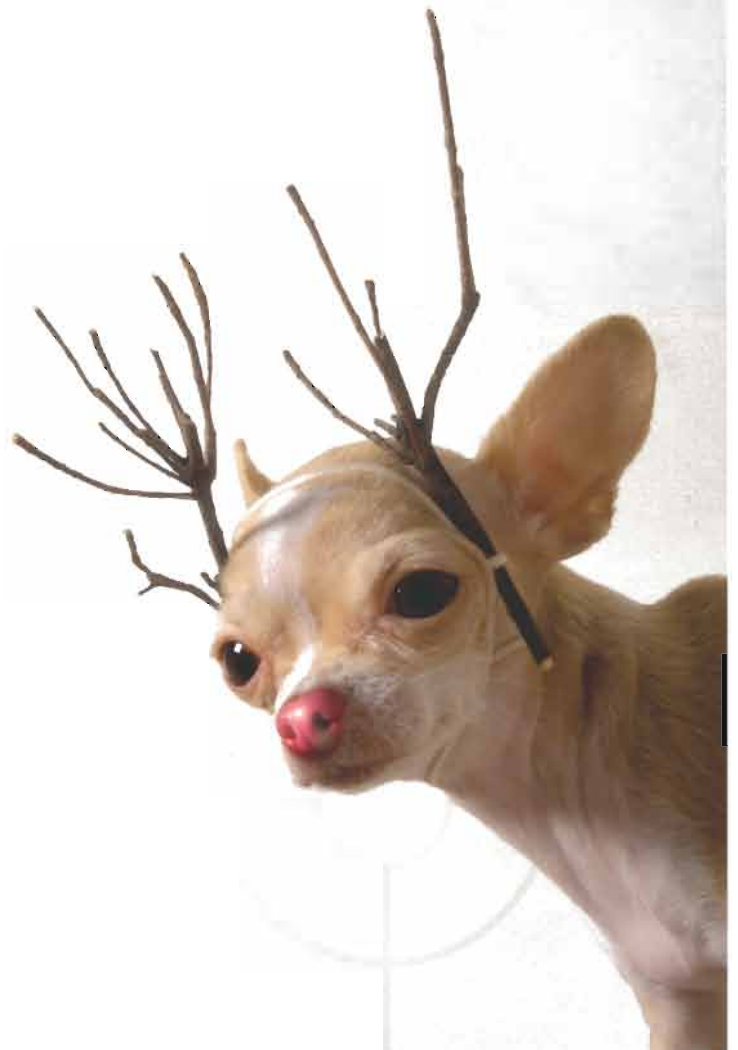


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Clockwise from top left: Beat The Street buses backstage at the MEN Arena; the band perform on risers made by Accurate Staging; Nocturne Productions flight case; Popcorn cooks up a treat.



“The light that I’m in love with is the VLX, the Source Four of the wash light...” A.J. Pen

the lights with velocity sensitive information. This programme translates between MIDI notes and control messages which these control surfaces and the programme speaks, and turns it into MIDI show control, which the console speaks.”

Having used Wholehog consoles and the grandMA in the past, Pen recently switched to Robinson’s console of choice, the Martin M1, because he likes that it targets a certain price point.

“There are so many wonderful control surfaces built for the recording industry that are much cheaper, for example I have right motorised faders on this Behringer BCF2000 fader board for just \$200,” he said.

Pen also used an M-Audio Axiom 25 and Novation LaunchPad at FOH, hitting the pads harder to create a more dramatic lighting effect. “The beauty of this is you can choose your hardware,” explained Pen.

Rigged on HUD truss, by riggers Steven Shaw and Yose Lawson, were 45 Vari*Lite VLXs, 12 Vari*Lite VL3500 Wash FXs (six used as followspots), 15 Martin MAC III Profiles, Thomas 4-lite molefay strips and 24 Atomic 3kW strobes.

“The light that I’m absolutely in love with right now is the VLX, which is the Source 4 of the wash light,” commented Pen.

“Vari*Lite has come up with a fixture by which all other fixtures I think should be judged from this point forward. The usability and finesse of this fixture is incredible, it has a crazy, whacky punch but the consistency of the colour and the tone of it it draws no power. It’s very light and doesn’t look like any other light, it’s a perfect wash light.

“I also love the MAC III because it has beautiful optics; it will go 60° wide which is just perfect and it goes ridiculously narrow so it’s really flexible.

“And I’m really glad that Martin keep putting the animation wheel in and that some companies like Robe have also done that because it gives you two options for kinetic movement.”

When the projection panels rotate to leave a gap, Pen blasts through the holes with the VLXs and MAC IIIs, highlighted by smoke from the four Jem ZR-33 smoke machines.

Beat The Street and Transam Trucking have been with the band for their entire journey and are Digby’s preferred choices of transport supplier. For this tour they supplied four buses and 10 trucks respectively.

Said Digby: “Their shorthand is good and the quality of their drivers is good. For me anybody can put buses and trucks on the road, but it’s the people that make a difference and you need to have good relationships with the people you’re doing the deal with and good drivers out there on the road.

“Quite frankly it’s the lead driver [Mick Anderson] that makes me go back to Transam, and the drivers and the buses are the reason I keep going back to Beat The Street.

“Popcorn has been doing the catering for all of the UK dates, whilst for central Europe we used German company Rossow Catering and they were fantastic.”

Booking agent for Europe was X-Ray Touring; Entertainment Travel managed the band’s travel, whilst the crew travel agent was Protravel Entertainment. NPB Companies provided security

for the tour, EFM carried out all its freight requirements (see boxout), Access Pass & Design supplied passes, radio communications was provided by AAA Communications and tour rigging was by Rigging Machine.

Digby said the tour had been “selling out very well”, with Germany completing selling out six dates. “It’s a new musical direction for the band which keeps the audience that have been with you for so long interested in what you’re doing. Hardcore Linkin Park fans listening to this album probably didn’t take to it as well as they have the others in the past, but that was also true of *Minutes To Midnight* and they came along eventually.”

A packed MEN crowd didn’t seem to be taking time out to muse over the comparisons of old and new. A sea of heads jumped up and down in unison with the band who sweated it out during crowd-pleasers ‘In The End’ and ‘Numb’, and blistering new tune ‘The Catalyst’.

With the heat turned up on stage, I retreated to the production office before I left, where Digby’s “mellow operation” was calming down. The inviting Zen of the backstage area didn’t make it any easier to enter the cold Manchester rain outside. “In the office it’s 72° and sunny all the time,” smiled Digby.

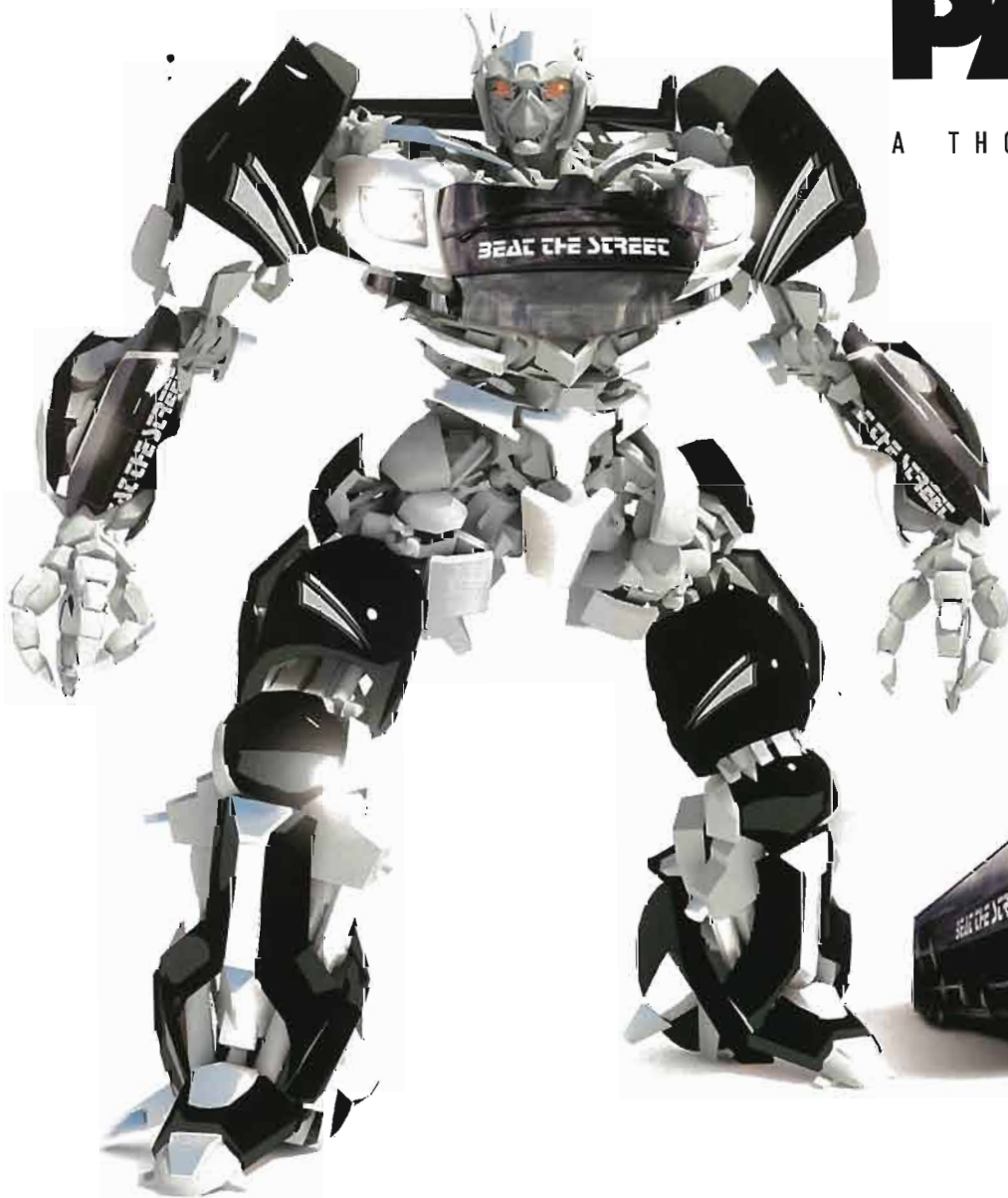
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*Photography: Tim Solar & Rachel Esson
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