

# FOH

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## FRONT OF HOUSE

PEOPLE. PRODUCTION. GEAR. GIGS.

NOVEMBER 2008 Vol. 7 No. 2

### Parnelli Awards Honor Stars of Live Audio



LINDA EVANS

LAS VEGAS — The best and brightest in the live audio industry came together Oct. 24 for the 8th Annual Parnelli Awards held at the Rio Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas to pay tribute to the companies and people nominated by *FOH* readers for their outstanding work this year. The night honored Roy and Gene Clair of CLAIR, recipients of the Parnelli Audio Innovator Award; and Dennis Sheehan, longtime tour manager for U2, who received the Parnelli Lifetime Achievement Award. Alice Cooper served as master of ceremonies for the evening. Above are the winners Dave Shadoan, Ken "Pooch" Van Druten and Kevin "Tater" McCarthy. For a re-cap of the night's winners, turn to page 24.

### Metallica Kicks Off In-the-Round Arena Tour

TAYLOR, Mich. — In support of *Death Magnetic* album released earlier this year, Metallica is now rocking arenas across North America in an in-the-round production with bone-rattling sound reinforcement. Longtime collaborator Thunder Audio of Taylor, Mich., is once again tapped to provide audio support on this tour, with a system of close to 200 self-powered loudspeakers from Meyer Sound.

*continued on page 6*

### FCC Puts Screws to Live Event Audio Industry

Commentary by Bill Evans

WASHINGTON — *FOH* has been at the forefront of the white space battle with the FCC for almost two years. As this issue of *FOH* went to press, we received word that the Federal Communications Commission followed the money and voted to allow technology companies like Google, Microsoft, Dell and Motorola to produce consumer devices that will use radio frequency (RF) spectrum now being used by wireless microphone systems. The decision comes despite objections from FCC engineers and the 100% failure rate of prototype devices in "real world" tests.

They did throw the industry a bone or two. According to *USA Today*, use of these yet-to-be-produced wireless consumer devices will be prohibited near television broadcast facilities or major entertainment venues. Smaller operators can request "safe-zone" treatment, but we'll see how far that goes.

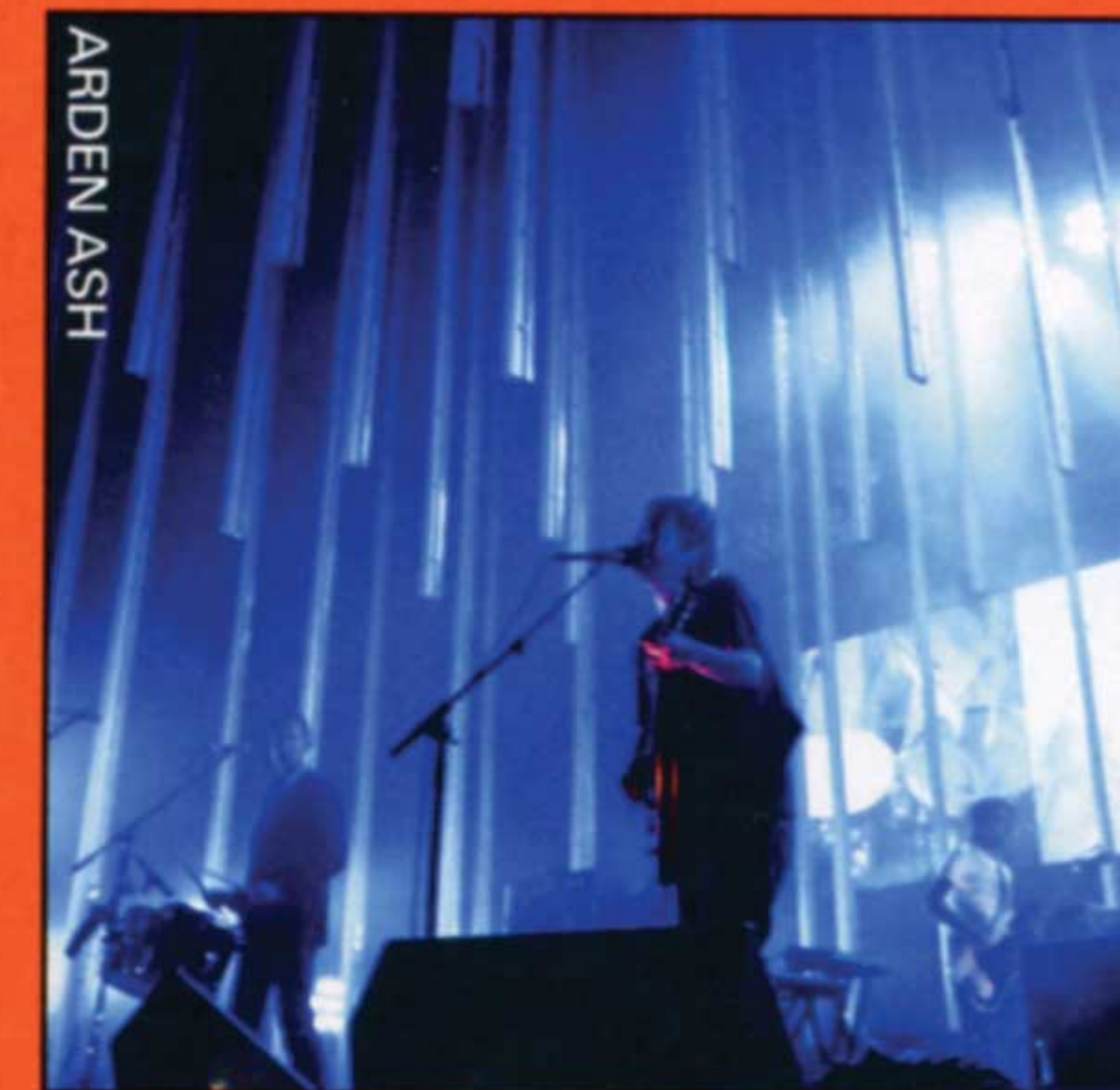
This ruling has not been unexpected. The issue has been framed inaccurately by people like FCC chief Kevin "Weasel-Boy" Martin, while phony "consumer groups" are acting as shills for Google and the telecommunications lobby have chimed in. They claim this is *continued on page 5*

### Live Audio Companies Find Strength in Numbers

WEBSTER, N.Y. and GERMANY — Company partnerships and mergers continue to make front-page news in the live audio industry. With the current economic climate, we can anticipate this trend to continue as companies find strength in numbers. Most recently, Ashly Audio Inc. has announced that they have agreed to enter an exclusive partnership with Jam Industries, the company's Canadian distributor.

"We are extremely pleased to have entered into this agreement. Both companies have been in the audio market for over 30 years *continued on page 8*

### Radiohead's Green Rainbow



How does sound go green? Recently, Radiohead took a new approach to touring that they hope will inspire others. Throughout their 2008 *In Rainbows* tour, Radiohead has been keeping an account of the carbon footprint they are creating and comparing it to past tours' footprints. This means that even in the realm of sound gear, every choice is weighed against its own the ecological impact. The equipment chosen not only had to sound good — but it also had to be "green." Turn to page 28.

#### 34 Road Tests

We review the EV DC-One speaker processor and Yamaha IM8.

#### 40 Regional Slants

Midwest Sound combines a Midwestern work ethic with cutting-edge technology.

#### 52 FOH-at-Large

Keeping busy in the current economic climate.

# PRO6

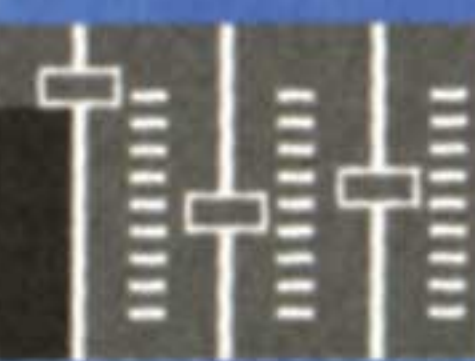
LIVE AUDIO SYSTEM

digital, with Heritage

- Daylight viewable screens
- Midas XL8 pre-amps and processing
- Midas sample-synchronised audio quality
- MidasNET: 264 in x 264 out



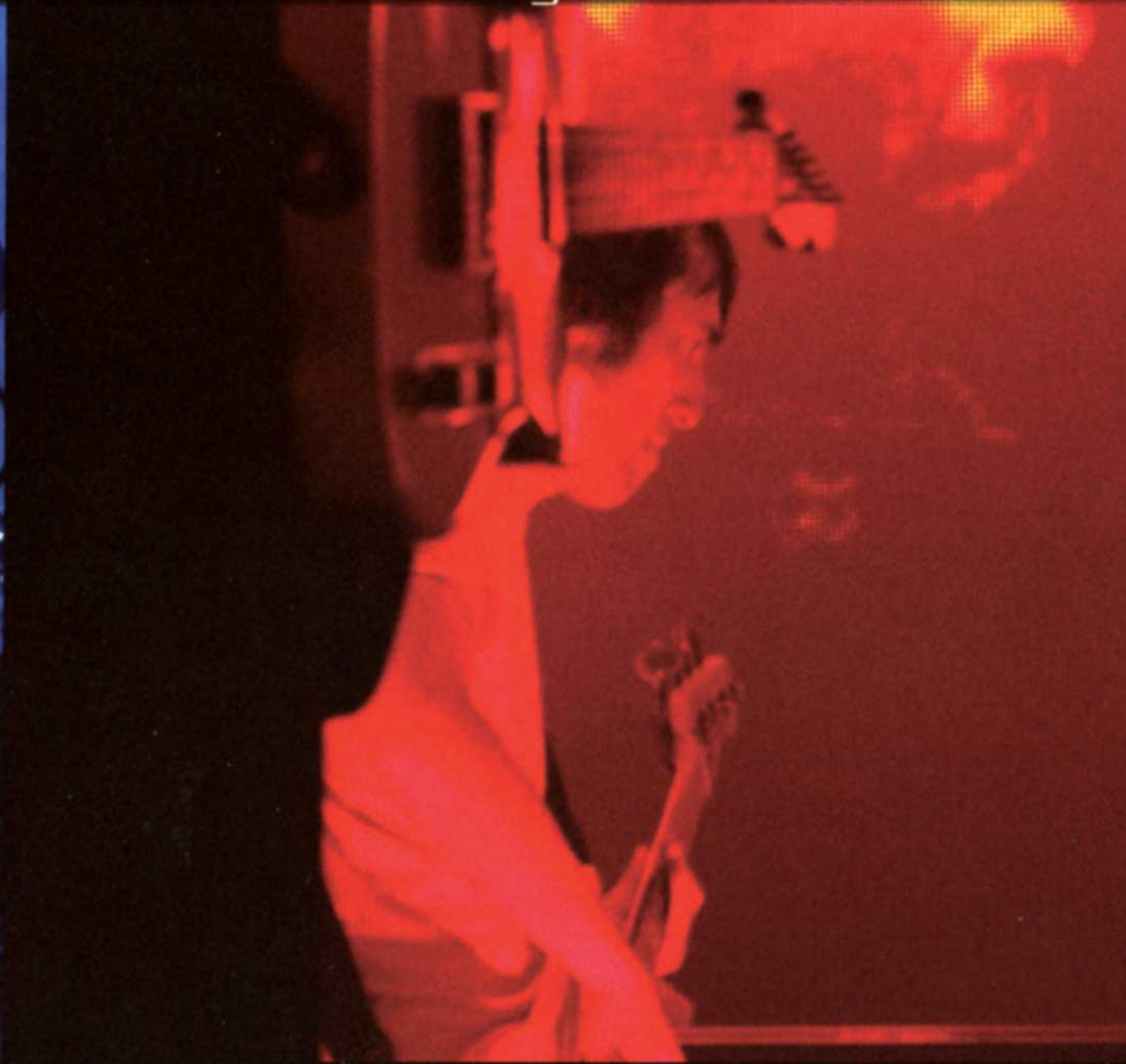
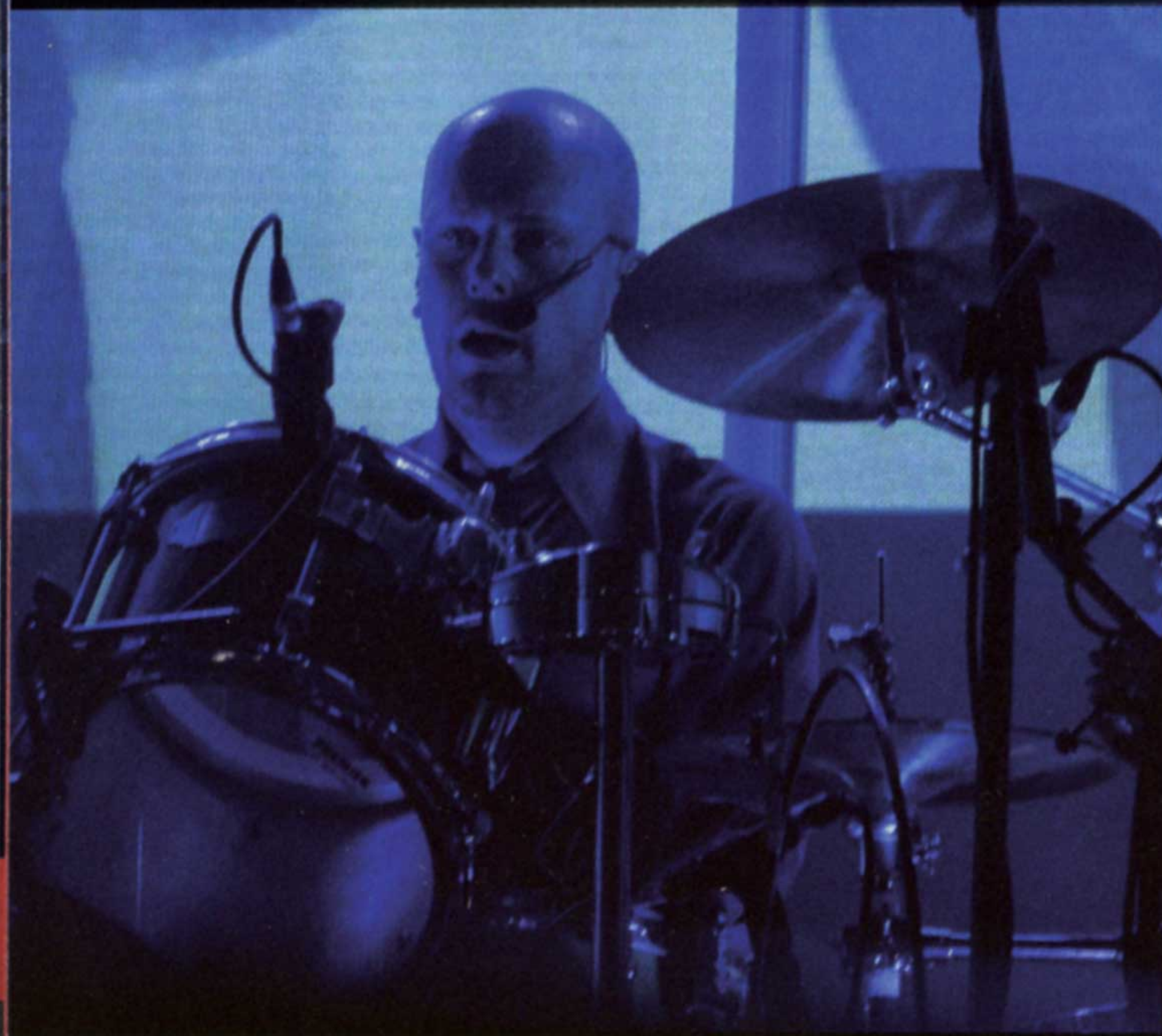
**MIDAS**  
DESIGNED FOR A PURE PERFORMANCE



# Radiohead's Green Rainbow

It's not only the squints who are going green. Audio is getting onboard as well.

Photos and Text by ArdenAsh



**H**ow does sound go green? The best it can do is by being efficient. It's still a fundamental truth that you have to move air to make sound, and moving air takes power. A lot of it. Recently, Radiohead took a new approach to touring that they hope will inspire others in the industry. Throughout their 2008 *In Rainbows* tour, Radiohead has been keeping an account of the carbon footprint they are creating and comparing it to past tours. This means that even in the realm of sound gear every choice is weighed against the ecological impact that each piece would have. The equipment chosen not only had to sound good — but it also had to be “green.”

## Going Green

FOH

Beyond minimizing the amount of gear, “green” was achieved with new hardware, including the new K1 System from

the LA-RAK, were used during the last leg of the North American *In Rainbows* tour. (System engineer Sherif el Barbari had a hand in the development of the system.)

**Even in the realm of sound gear, every choice is weighed against the ecological impact that each piece would have. The equipment chosen not only had to sound good — but it also had to be “green.”**

L-ACOUSTICS. As part of an advanced beta-test, the K1 enclosure and its related system components, the K1-SB, SB28 and

The K1 earned its place in the green zone due to its durability, venue adaptability and predictability. Unlike a rig-

ging system of V-DOSC, the K1 rigging system allows for a high degree of angular adjustment from 0 to 5 degrees between boxes and offering half-degree increments between the 0- and 3-degree positions. The system is designed to suspend 24 enclosures on one bumper. The tour was carrying 32 K1 enclosures, 16 KUDO, 16 K1-SB and 24 SB28 and 12 of the LA-RAK turnkey power-amp/signal distribution systems. In use at Chula Vista were 28 K1 (14 per side), six K1-SB per side and 18 SB28s in three cardioid clusters (left, center, right).

According to el Barbari, the size of the rig and the configuration varied according to the venue size; outdoor venues like the festival in Montreal's Parc Jean Drapeau featured the entire rig,

FOH Engineer Jim Warren at the FOH console.



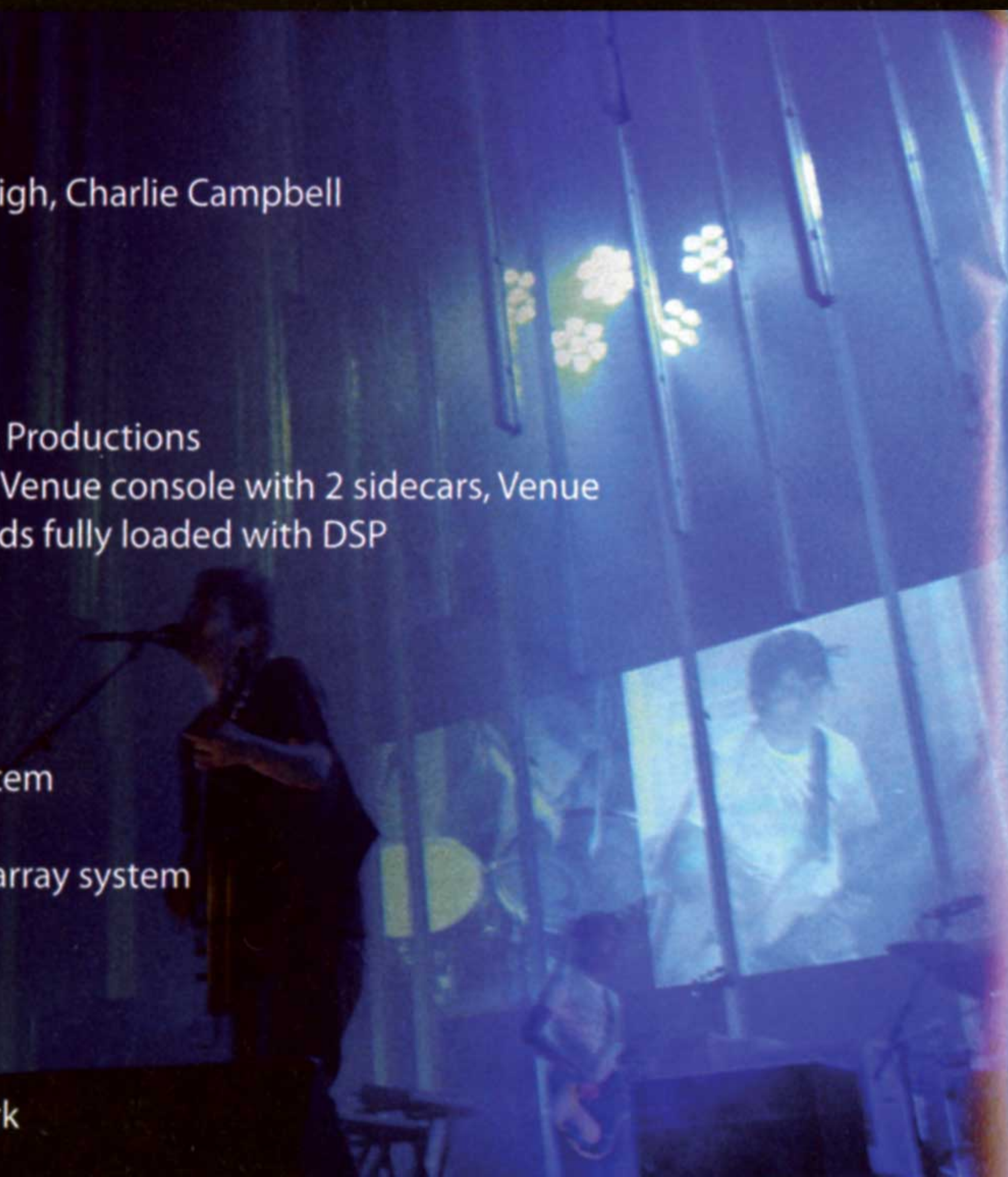
## CREW

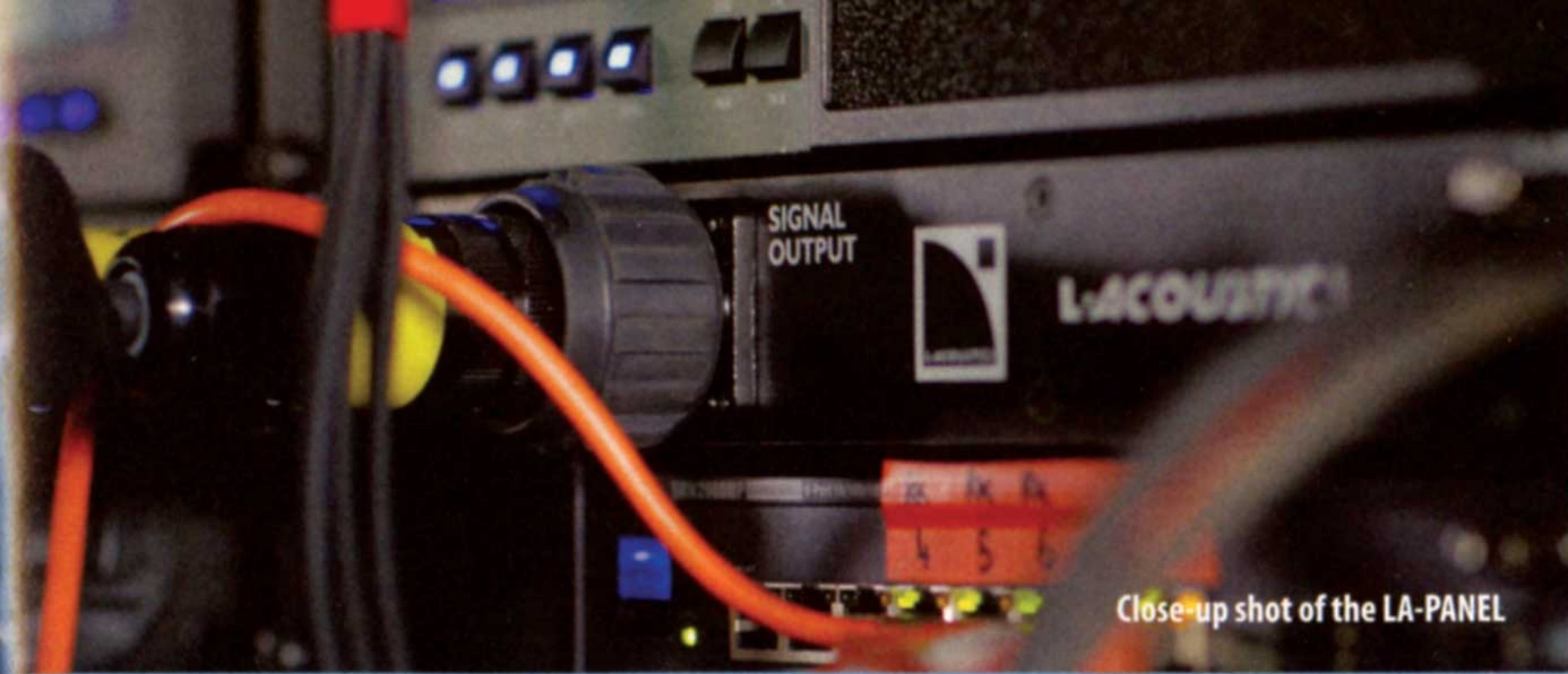
**FOH Engineer:** Jim Warren  
**Audio Designer:** Sherif el Barbari  
**Audio Techs:** Jamie Pollock, Tim Fraleigh, Charlie Campbell  
**Monitor Engineer:** Graham Lees  
**Monitor Technician:** Ross Anderson

## GEAR

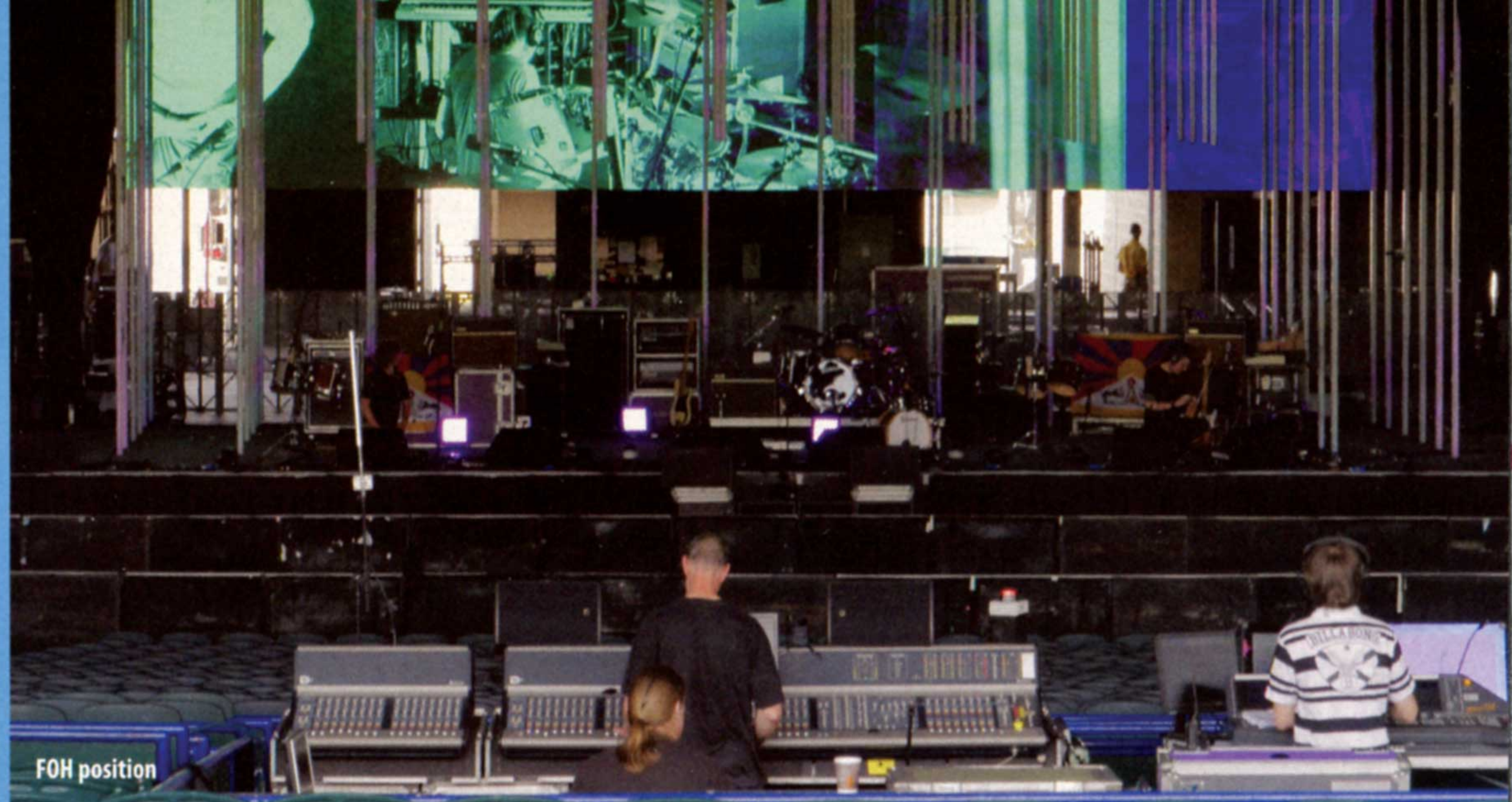
**FOH Equipment Provider:** Firehouse Productions  
96-channel (2 stage racks) Digidesign Venue console with 2 sidecars, Venue pack Pro 2 plug-in software, 2 Hdx cards fully loaded with DSP

Plugins: Waves Live Bundle  
McDSP FilterBank & CompressorBank  
Focusrite Octopre 8 way mic pre  
Digidesign ProTools HD recording system  
Dolby Lake speaker controllers  
Main PA system L-ACOUSTICS K1 line array system  
SB28 subs  
Kudo side-hangs  
dV-DOSC down-fills and lip-fills  
LA8 amplification  
L-Net amplifier remote control network

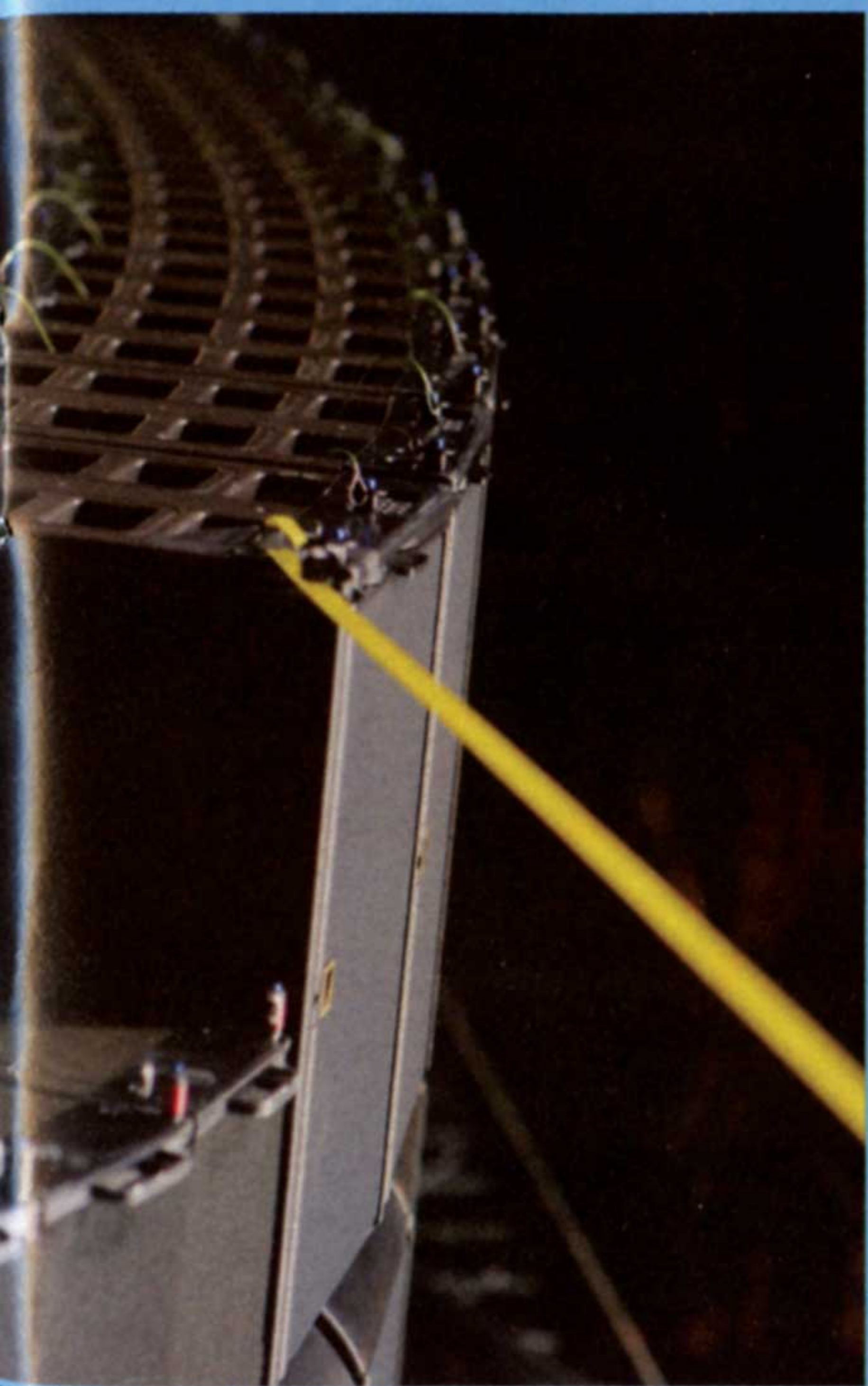




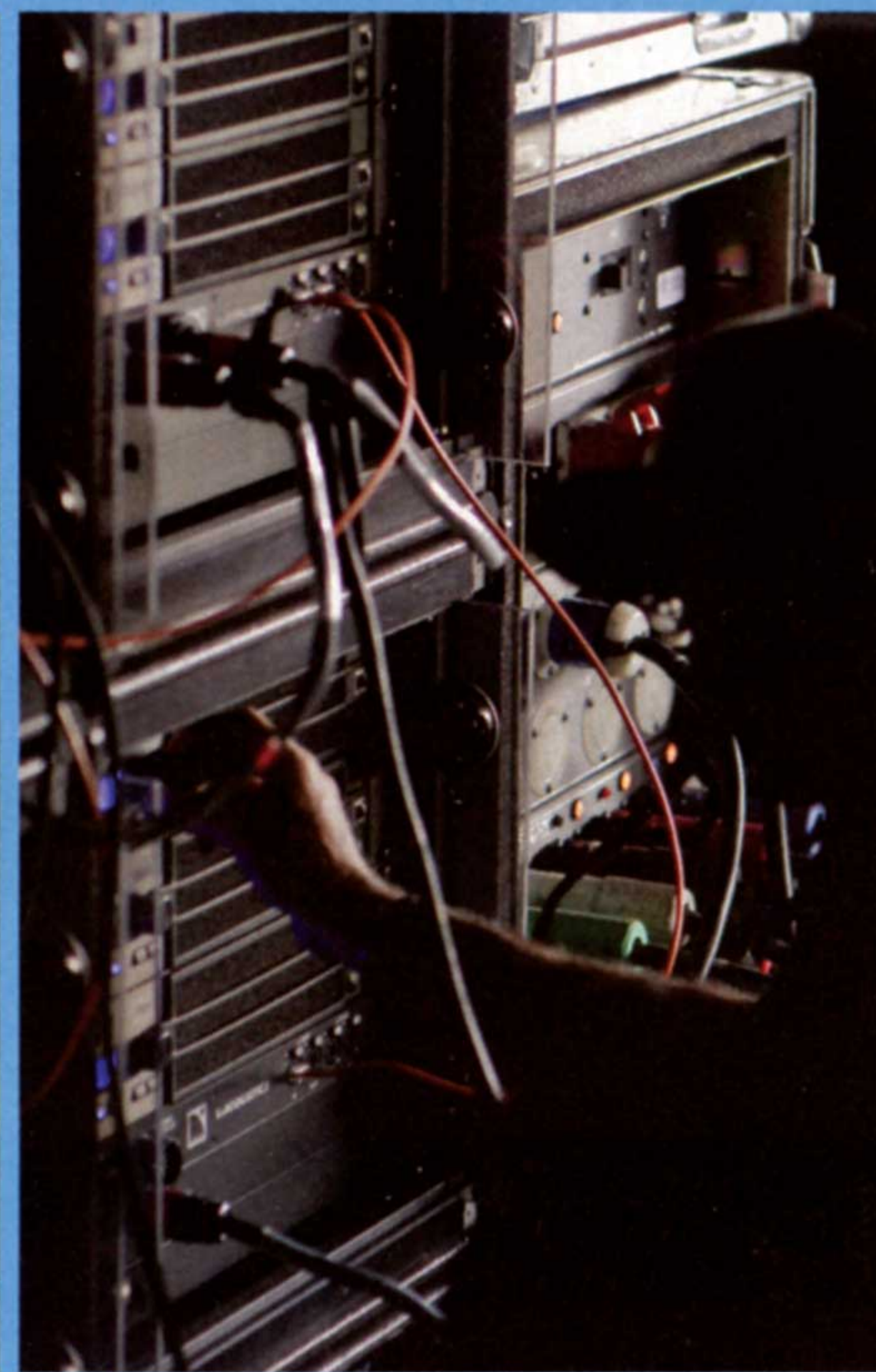
Close-up shot of the LA-PANEL



FOH position



L-ACOUSTICS line array



Sherif el Barbari adjusts the LA8



Audio Systems Technician Sherif el Barbari measures the placement of the line array.



Sound check

while indoor gigs used a slightly truncated version like the Santa Barbara Bowl show (4,500 seats), which used effectively half the equipment. In wider venues, 16 KUDO enclosures, (eight per side) were used to provide a "narrow sliver" of fill to the left and right regions on either extreme, according to el Barbari. The KUDO enclosures were set to the 50-degree horizontal configuration for this tight-fill application.

**The Driving Force**

**(FOH)**

Driving the system was industry veteran mixer Jim Warren, who kept the footprint small with a Digidesign Profile system at front-of-house. System control was provided by Dolby processors, which fed the LA-RAKs on stage. Addi-

tional control and monitoring of the system was provided via the L-ACOUSTICS Network Manager software. (LA-RAK is L-ACOUSTICS latest version of turnkey processing, power-amplification, signal and network distribution. The LA-RAK

**Beyond minimizing the amount of gear, "green" was achieved with new hardware.**

is a 9U, shock-mounted rack containing three LA8 "amplified controllers" — remember when we used to just call them amps? — an LA-PANEL signal and network distribution panel, AC power

distro and additional room for network switches.) These racks were stacked in "twos" so that a grouping of six racks per side only occupied about a three-foot-by-seven-foot parcel of the stage wing.

**The Character of Sound**

**(FOH)**

Ultimately, it's the character of sound that can make or break a show, and this is a system to which the engineers are giving high marks. Warren said, "I know

all the techs were very impressed by the rigging and also by the whole LA8 setup with the L-Net. In short, it's V-DOSC updated for the 21st century, but without losing the character of sound that was my main reason for choosing them in the first place."

And that whole "green" thing? Smaller (and fewer) amp racks and the onboard processing of the Venue system ultimately meant less audio gear on stage and less in the truck. Less in the truck means fewer trucks. The lower power consumption of the LA8 compared to fully analog amps with the same output horsepower also played a part. The result? Great show, great sound and a lower carbon footprint all around. **FOH**

