TOTAL PRODUCTION INTERNATIONAL
LIVE EVENT DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

ONE WEEKEND IN HYDE PARK

August 2008

With Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday celebrations and Hard Rock Calling's line-up of rock legends on offer in June, Mark Cunningham resisted the charms of Glastonbury to spend three days in Central London's musical oasis...

A host of top African artists joined Queen Paul Rodgers, Amy Winehouse, Annie Lennox, Simple Minds, Joan Baez, Leona Lewis, the Sugababes, Razorlight, Jamelia, Josh Groban, Zucchero, Andrea Corr, the surprise show-stopper Eddy Grant and host Will Smith on a 'who's who' bill in London's Hyde Park on June 27 to celebrate the life and work of the great Dr. Nelson Mandela, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former President of South Africa who turned 90 years of age three weeks later.

Sponsored by Mercedes-Benz and Bahrain-based telecoms operator, Zain, The 46664 Concert Honouring Nelson Mandela at 90 — to give the event's awkward official title — was a fund-raiser for Mandela's 46664 AIDS campaign which spreads awareness about the impact of AIDS, especially in Africa, and promotes effective HIV prevention measures throughout the world.

The event came exactly 20 years after the now-legendary Wembley Stadium tribute, whose theme 'Free Nelson Mandela' by The Special A.K.A. was reprised as the Hyde Park finale, with a full cast curtain call fronted by Winehouse and featuring its writer, Jerry Dammers.

Twenty years later, the song served as a reminder of the great man's battle against apartheid, his unjust 27-year imprisonment and eventual release in February 1990.

Looking frail as he approached the podium to address the crowd (appropriately, there were 46,664 tickets sold), the world's most-loved and respected nonagenarian ('Madiba' to his fellow Africans) delivered the message he has been presenting in the current 46664 campaign — "It's in our hands". The time has come, he said, emotionally, to hand over the 46664 mantle to each of us to carry forward on his behalf.

The event was graced with cameo presentations by Peter Gabriel, Quincy Jones and F1 ace Lewis Hamilton. Musically, there were some truly incredible moments. Amy Winehouse defied her recent health and personal issues to wow the audience with 'Rehab' and 'Valerie'; Eddy Grant returned from virtual obscurity with maximum vigour and his 'I Don't Wanna Dance' kept the crowd singing long after he left the stage.

Leona Lewis gave us her modern day classic 'Bleeding Love', Simple Minds and the Soweto Gospel Choir took us back to the '80s with 'Mandela Day', and others from the African contingent — including Kenya's Suzanna Owiyo, Johnny Clegg, Sipho Mabuze, Loyiso and Sudanese child soldier-turned-rapper Emmanuel Jal — injected a further dose of sunshine into what was already a balmy Hyde Park, in between occasional overcast spells.

If there was one moment that unified the audience, however, it was Queen Paul Rodgers' feverish reading of the singer's iconic 'All Right Row'. And it was.

During the following week, I saw a re-run of ITV's 46664 broadcast and, quite frankly, with their amateurish segueing between brainless studio cackle and the live action, they shouldn't have been allowed to get anywhere near the event. Live MC June Sarpong may have the looks and charisma, however, her historical researchers need to go back to school (clearly, Mr. Mandela's 70th birthday was not 10 years ago).

Sarpong's comment about Mandela being "the greatest man

who walked the Earth" might indeed echo feelings shared by the likes of Bono and The Edge, whose musical birthday greeting appeared on screen, but a few religious extremists might have been a little put out.

No matter... the remainder of this gorgeously sunny late June weekend was left in the capable hands of a two-day event previously known as Hyde Park Calling. Now rebranded as Hard Rock Calling, thanks to the intervention of the famed Café chain sponsor, one imagines, its two stages brought together yet another stellar bill of artists, from the Saturday's Eric Clapton, Sheryl Crow, John Mayer, Jason Mraz, Eddi Reader and The Charlatans, to Sunday's Starsailor, The Bangles, The Stranglers, KT Tunstall and, in their final scheduled UK performance, The Police.

Sting and co.'s finale set of 'Roxanne', 'King Of Pain' and 'So Lonely' was the perfect way to end a sublime, long weekend. If the freshly-bearded frontman truly listens to his fans, then the first Police studio album in 25 years may be in the pipeline, rather than a solo collection of Peruvian nose flute sonatas. However, the smart money suggests that the reunion really is over.

CHILLIN' IN JP'S BAR

For John Probyn, production director for Live Nation UK, the promoter behind the entire Hyde Park event infrastructure, it was another successful (and, for the most part, unusually rain-free) run of shows that was followed within a week by a Jack Johnson concert and the O2 Wireless festival.

Before all of these happened, Probyn's team assisted Robbie Williams Productions create a luxurious 'ballroom' environment for a gala dinner on June 25 to honour Nelson Mandela, in the tent that later became Hard Rock's Stage Two.

The 500 guests, including Gordon Brown and Bill Clinton, raised £3 million for Mandela's charities, and within 36 hours the tent was restored to gig format, ready for the Saturday/Sunday action.

My first attempt to have an on-the-record chat with Probyn, an hour before 46664 kicked off, was foiled when he said: "Sorry, I haven't the time right now... I've got to sort out the Prime Minister." This comment was obviously misconstrued by your TPi correspondent, as Mr. Brown reportedly left the Mandela show in one piece.

Our interview finally took place on the afternoon of Hard Rock Calling's first day, in the relaxed surroundings of JP's Bar, Probyn's exclusive backstage oasis, decked out by Graeme Dixon of GLD to resemble a Soho strip joint, circa '76... minus the strippers!

"Hard Rock Calling has developed into more of a mainstream artist event, whereas Wireless is more of a festival environment, almost as if it's Glastonbury in the middle of London," explained Probyn. "Based on the ticket sales, I'd say that people are really beginning to get that now. The 46664 gig always seemed like a mad idea but the saving grace for us was having Robbie Williams Productions (RWP) looking after all of the artist side of things, which left us to deal with the melee of stroppy VIPs!

"It was almost like a mini-Live 8 yesterday; everyone wanted to be here because of Nelson Mandela so there were huge numbers of people backstage. Our job is all about managing people's expectations and we had to juggle a few balls in order to do that. Hard Rock Calling is a Live Nation event, but 46664 was a good example of another company — namely, RWP — coming in to use our production while we manage the site."

With the exception of some cosmetic and logistical alterations, all of these events shared core production elements and suppliers, especially in the staging, sound, lighting and video departments. Probyn's list of preferred suppliers has become more settled in recent years.

They currently include Britannia Row Productions (sound), PRG Europe (lighting), Creative Technology and XL Video

(video screens, cameras and control), Stageco (staging), Templine (power), Eat To The Beat (catering), Mojo Barriers (crowd barriers), Search (portacabins), Eve Trakway (trackway), Showsec (security), Arena (seating), Tempsite (water), Stage Miracles and Rock City (crew).

"We're doing eight shows here this summer, plus the Mandela gala dinner, and there's no way we could do all that without a high degree of supplier continuity and their experience of the site — they really are the 'Home Guard'," explained Probyn, who appointed Neil McDonald as his technical production manager and was supported as usual by his festival manager, Hannah Blake.

He continued: "Half the site hasn't needed marking out this year because everybody knows precisely where things go. We were ready to open a day early which has never happened before, but that's the experience showing through.

"Even the Metropolitan Police appreciate that we, as a team, have great respect for the park and do things by the book. So I'm not going to entertain any competitive pitching from rival suppliers, especially those who haven't worked in Hyde Park before, because it would be completely counter-productive."

The familiar face of Steve Jones was to be seen darting around the site on a golf buggy all weekend. "I wouldn't dare do an event here without Steve as stage manager!" said Probyn.

"With a show like 46664, there's all the potential for it to start over-running and in Hyde Park, that can cause a serious nightmare because the local transportation system and road closures are all geared around the time the event is scheduled to finish.

"Ever since we went through the midnight hell of Live 8 in 2005, Steve has been doubly fastidious about time-keeping and we really depend on him now — in fact, we finished one minute early last night."

RULE BRITANNIA

"I love working in Hyde Park," smiled Britannia Row director Bryan Grant, against the distant soundtrack of Leona Lewis. "It's not far from home and I've only ever seen mud get half an inch thick here, so I can always wear loafers and that works for me!

"There's a great atmosphere, especially when the sun's bright like today, and Probyn runs a very good show, with the right balance of seriousness and humour, it must be said."

The only real problem Brit Row tends to encounter in Hyde Park is the occasional unforgiving gust of wind. "A south-westerly wind can push the sound directly on to Park Lane and we have serious restrictions on noise levels outside of the park," said Grant.

"Westminster City Council and Vanguardia set up a number of listening posts all around the offsite perimeter of Hyde Park feeding back information at regular intervals. It's one of the reasons we rearrange the jigsaw each year to see how we can both improve the sound quality and minimise external spillage."

For 46664 and Hard Rock Calling it was the turn of L-Acoustics's V-DOSC to take the main hang role with 14 cabinets flown at each side of the stage. Nine V-DOSC boxes were on the outer hang pointing into the park, and at the extreme opposite side, a cluster of six Turbosound Aspect cabinets (two wide, three deep) covered the smaller area pointing out of the park.

The system was augmented by ARCS infills and dV-DOSCs on top of the SB-218 subs. Brit Row installed an additional centre hang of six dV-DOSC for the Hard Rock weekender.

Starting with four delay towers for 46664, these were halved for Hard Rock, with each containing Electro-Voice X-Line arrays driven by EV P3000 amps and processed through an IRIS system on a NetMax network. A Yamaha DME-24 was in control of the system's front end, sending to the NetMax to drive the Dolby Lake controllers.

On stage, Turbosound TFM-350/450 monitor wedges were out in force, supported by ARCS sidefills and 218 subs. Turbosound also starred on Stage Two at Hard Rock Calling with its Dolby Lake-driven Aspect system (12 TA890Hs, 16 TA890Ls, six TSW-218 subs and four TQ-440 infills) and monitors, all fielded by Brit Row.

Turbo's Dom Harter was also present to lend a hand as the Hard Rock Stage Two system tech, working with Gavin Temapny (FOH), Fabrice Quinn (mons) and stage techs Paul Gardiner, Stephen Hughes and James Covill. Midas Heritage 3000s were at both FOH and monitor position on Stage Two.

Grant informed TPi that the FOH engineers at 46664 voted for two Midas Heritage 3000 desks and a DiGiCo D5 Live, thus providing for both analogue and digital tastes — this arrangement was mirrored in monitor world, along with a Heritage 'sidecar', where Alan Bradshaw and 'Grubby' Callis presided, with Rod Clarkson taking charge of the D5.

So no sign of an XL8 then? "No," declared Grant, whose company is one of the seven members of M7 Audio, the rental operation established in 2006 to deliver Midas' digital console into engineers' hands. "On a televised gig like 46664, you don't want to bring a new console in that a lot of engineers wouldn't be familiar with because there's never enough time to get used to it. You go for the comfort factor."

By and large, the 46664 consoles stayed in place for Hard Rock Calling, although as Brit Row crew chief John Gibbon pointed out: "Extra consoles tend to arrive with touring bands' engineers to suit their taste and particular artist. What we are doing on 46664 that's a little unusual in my experience is to use fader automation on the Heritage 3000s to such an extent on a live one-off show.

"Due to the rehearsal time at Music Bank, we're automating around 50 different scenes, in a similar way to how you would on a theatre show"

Sennheiser supplied 20 channels of in-ear monitoring and 28 channels of wireless microphones, comprising EW300 G2 IEMs, SKM 5200/EM 3532 and SKM 935/EM 550 radio mic/receiver systems, evolution series and Neumann wired mics.

The manufacturer again played an 'invaluable role" according to Gibbon. "Sennheiser have really upped their game since Live 8, three years ago, and Dave Hawker's assistance on the RF management side has literally transformed the way we operate. Dave [who was assisted at Hyde Park by Kieran Walsh and Tony Scaife] has developed a new RF amplifier which compensates for things like cable signal loss, and the different is very noticeable."

Joining Hawker as part of the Sennheiser team were Mark Saunders and Sam Davison. Artists using Sennheiser mics as their preferred models were Annie Lennox, Leona Lewis and Josh Groban (all on SKM 5200/KK 105), Amy Winehouse (SKM 935), and presenters Will Smith and Geri Halliwell who both used SKM 5200s.

On the subject of wireless systems, Gibbon informed us that two officials from the frequency management company JFMG attended the 46664 event to gain a practical understanding of how Brit Row uses the technology. "I think it was good for them to see how it's all done," commented Gibbon. "They certainly went away with a new perspective."

The Brit Row crew also included system techs Chris Morrison, Nico Royan and Chris Coxhead who mixed presenters. Meanwhile, one of the company's newest recruits is Josh Lloyd who assisted 46664's main FOH engineer, Trip Khalaf, from rehearsals at Music Bank all the way through to the show itself.

Being of tender age, one might have expected Lloyd to have buckled under the veteran Queen mixer's demands and trademark wit. In fact, he amazed everyone with his remarkable insight and quick response to everything that was thrown his way.

Knocking back a well-deserved mojito in JP's Bar after 46664, Khalaf was in high spirits after another triumph.

"You've got to concentrate on delivering the musical hooks to the audience in a completely non-ambiguous way," said Khalaf, as he offered a little insight into his mix style. "It's what the audience will take home with them."

Lloyd deflected any praise of himself in favour of delivering his own tribute to Pete McGlynn, the event's head of stage audio, who was aided on by Nick Maddren and Owain Hughes.

"Pete has this incredible knack of bringing order to complete chaos on a stage, and I can't think of another person who can do it like he does," said Lloyd. "His mind is always one step ahead of everyone else's in the way he does patching and linechecks, and pre-empts everything with 100% accuracy. Pete also deals with artists in a unique, charismatic way — I don't know how he gets away with a lot of it!"

Gibbon added: "Apart from his cutting wit, Pete has an amazing audio knowledge which is helped by his skills as a monitor engineer."

THE NEW BREED

The baton is gradually being passed from the industry's elder statesmen to a new, up-and-coming generation who are inheriting a much different industry. Although some of the 'old gits' (Bryan Grant's words, not mine!) are still defiantly resisting retirement, Brit Row is currently preparing for the next chapter by 'grooming' five young, potential audio professionals as part of a newly-established apprenticeship scheme.

Some of these upstarts worked through the 46664 and Hard Rock events, as well as the later Jack Johnson and O2 Wireless shows, and as Grant observed, they are coming into a very different industry to the one entered nearly 40 years ago.

"It has to be different because it's a lot more complex," he said. "The equipment is so much more sophisticated and back in the old days we were just happy if it made a noise! We also have to behave ourselves these days, which is a shame really! But the great thing is, the passion's still there and that's what counts.

"I'm looking for the right attitude in kids because aptitude is something they can learn as they progress, and what makes me feel good about the 'next' generation is that they care. We've got guys in their early 20s working for us now, like Josh Lloyd, and they know how serious it is, and they really impress me. I hear from other people that our young crews do things well and with good grace. I'm proud of that."

SEEING RED

The inimitable Derrick Zieba handled general audio project management including broadcast liaison. Red TX, the live music recording facility launched earlier this year, was operating from its backstage OB truck to record all three of the weekend's shows in both stereo and 5.1 surround sound, and deliver live-to-air broadcast feeds to the Visions OB truck.

In charge was former Fleetwood Mobiles director Tim Summerhayes who handled the mix on the truck's resident Studer Vista 8 digital console, assisted by engineers Ollie Nesham and Matt Wood.

As Summerhayes explained during the afternoon of 46664, what was expected to be a straightforward job for Mandela's show ended up being complicated by artists' requests.

"Queen's long-standing keyboard player, Spike Edney, was invited to assemble a house band and the original plan was that they would back the majority of performers," he said. "Then it became apparent that a lot of these guests wanted to bring their own musicians and backing singers, and when we knew that Queen Paul Rodgers and Razorlight were playing fully live as well, it became a totally different gig for us."

Realising that he couldn't handle this mammoth job alone, Summerhayes brought in Floating Earth as a second unit, equipped with an SSL C200 digital desk, along with Paul Nickson as a second engineer.

"Ollie and Matt have co-ordinated a lot of the line lists, and Matt also looks after the stage patching in liaison with the PA

crew. These are divided in blocks between our truck and Floating Earth's," Summerhayes told us.

"After doing the live mix for Razorlight, Paul will sub-mix the individual artist requirements — such as choir, special drum kits and guitars — which come to me as a series of three stereo groups for me to blend in with the artist and Spike's band."

At this point, the interview was abruptly terminated by a knock on the door. Will Smith and his wife Jada walked in with a special request to have a backing track edited for his later performance. After handshakes and pleasantries were exchanged, TPi wisely decided its presence in the truck was surplus to requirements!

In summary, for the Mandela concert, Red TX received 80 incoming channels, while Floating Earth took 56. For Hard Rock Calling, Red TX worked alone and Summerhayes worked with a maximum of 72 channels.

SETTING LIMITS

The 46664 show was one of the highlights of a summer-long procession of major events for sound control and acoustics consultants Vanguardia, whose teams, headed by John Staunton and Jim Griffiths, act as the liaison between promoters and local authorities over the control of environmental noise in event licensing compliance.

Vanguardia deploys its own in-house-designed software and hardware package, providing a robust, cost effective wireless multi-point remote noise level monitoring system. "It's designed specifically for this industry using a combination of fairly standard hardware plus our own software," said Staunton.

The company's laptop display gives the FOH engineer a large, clear readout of four vital pieces of information: real time sound level, the current changing LEQ, the last minute's LEQ and the last 15 minutes' LEQ.

"But," added Staunton, "it's just a tool and we treat it as such, which means we're still responsible for interacting with the engineer and we decide if any action needs to be taken — very much relying on the personal contact that we've built up over the past 25 years.

"The technology allows us to just flick a switch and monitor the levels at each stage, and at any sound control points that the local authority has set, so we can help the engineer and the promoter achieve the maximum sound levels yet still stay within the set limits."

VIDEO WORLD

Creative Technology was contracted by Robbie Williams Productions to recreate Baz Halpin's design for 46664 Arctic in Tromsø, Norway in 2005. This involved 42 panels of Unitek 25mm pixel pitch screens (each 0.813m x 1.22m) arranged in an abstract format and fed with Catalyst media server content under Blue Leach's direction.

The remaining screens were all Mitsubishi (10mm) OD10s. They were configured as three 6.4m x 3.84m upstage screens, again all fed with Catalyst content and mixed with live camera images; a left/right wing I-Mag screen (7.86m x 5.76m), each with a 0.96m bottom 'ticker' bar for birthday and goodwill SMS messages; plus a 6.4m x 3.84m I-Mag screen flown behind the FOH tower.

After the Mandela show, the video system saw the Unitek panels and 'tickers' removed, leaving the remainder in place for Hard Rock Calling. While Mark Haney directed the cut for Eric Clapton with the same upstage trio of screens used for 46664, these screens were changed to a single 10.24m x 5.76m 'letterbox' surface for the Sunday appearance of The Police, to match director Kevin Williams' touring design.

Over the weekend, and indeed all the way through to O2 Wireless, CT interfaced with XL Video, who provided the High Definition LDK-8000 camera system and control package including a Kayak HD vision mixer.

Chris Saunders, XL's crew chief, said: "We were originally

interfacing with David Mallet's broadcast unit for 46664 so we simply left the same camera system in place for HRC, and we're now interfacing with Live Nation TV's cameras. We have four of our own cameras — two in the pit, one on stage and one at FOH — and we take a further six feeds from the [NEP Visions] broadcast truck, all in HD."

XL also looked after the various requests of incoming touring bands' directors, such as different camera positions, and ensuring there were no camera clashes with the broadcast crew. "46664 was a far more complicated job," said Saunders. "We had a lot of media servers kicking around, including our own, and there were the expected HD 'glue' issues. You can't run HD down normal copper cable over any great distance so there have been lots of fibre optics everywhere.

"We've also installed a bunch of video monitors in the various sponsored hospitality areas as well as an LED B10 screen in the on-site Hard Rock Cafe."

Stuart Young headed the CT crew which included Neil Waller, Marek Kowalewski, Mike Brown and Pete Ewens. He said: "We've worked with XL Video and Chris Saunders on these events for many years, going back to the annual Party In The Park shows. Hyde Park probably sees us and XL work together closer than at any other event. John Probyn likes the partnership and we interface very well. Long may it continue!"

LIGHTING

Rich Gorrod was PRG Europe's crew chief for the full stretch, heading a crew of 13 which was slimmed down to five by the Saturday. Recently made a 'Knight of Illumination' by Clay Paky, Baz Halpin designed the 46664 rig — which included 101 JTE Pixelline LED battens — and after making an agreement with Eric Clapton and The Police's people, most of the kit was retained for the Saturday and Sunday, with Pete Barnes in charge of the re-design.

"We moved a number of floor wash lights up into the roof to fill the space left by the Unitek video panels," said Gorrod. "The Pixellines were run off a media server for 46664, but for Clapton [LD Dave Maxwell] and The Police [LD Danny Nolan], we've run them all through the desk via DMX, splitting them down on to one universe"

On the Saturday, a Wholehog II controlled moving lights, a PixelMAD ran the Pixellines, Ian Reith manned the Catalyst that fed the screens through a Hog 1000, and Gordon Torrington cued audience and key lighting on a grandMA. For Clapton, Dave Maxwell used a Martin Maxxyz console and visited PRG's Greenford premises earlier in the week to programme (with ESP) an updated version of the guitar hero's American touring production.

Generally-speaking, the lighting rig for the three days consisted of Martin MAC 2000 washes, Vari*Lite VL3000 spots and Atomic strobes with scrollers, a front truss containing Clay Paky Alpha Spots on it, and VL3500 washes on the delay towers for the audience. In terms of control, the Molefays, audience blinders, bars of six PARs and other conventionals were 'merged' so that any operator could have access to them at any time.

Another 'Knight of Illumination', Al Gurdon was TV lighting director on 46664. "I do a lot of projects with Al, and he often works with David Mallet on TV shoots," said Gorrod, "so there's a fairly established way of doing things between everyone. The design went through several incarnations before we arrived at the final result."

STAGING & SEATING

Stageco supplied all of the staging, delay towers, camera platforms, video support and mix risers for the complete run of Hyde Park shows for the second consecutive year, having been awarded the contract by Live Nation in 2007. The main stage was the company's standard four-tower (or four-poster) system which had a span of 25m and occupied 10 trailers in transit.

Stefaan Vandenbosch, Stageco's crew chief, arrived on-site

on June 22 to load-in, five days ahead of the 46664 show, and one day after his team loaded out the same stage from The Police's show in Belfast. "We built this stage in a day and a half," said Vandenbosch, whose six staff worked in collaboration with stage hands, scaffolders and fork lift drivers from Showstars.

"The roof is carrying 15 tonnes of equipment. There's a lot of gear up there and at some points, we're up to 98% capacity, so this has taken a lot of planning between our people and the other suppliers' crew chiefs."

Adjacent to the stage at 46664, Arena Seating installed a bespoke, three-tiered platform, comprising a disabled viewing area with access ramps on level one, sponsors and VIP guest seating on level two, and VVIP seating at the top level, complete with a roof, to host Nelson Mandela, PM Gordon Brown and guests.

Arena was also asked to install a lift at the rear of the grandstand, making it easy for the guests to access the structure with minimal effort. Arena's main seating block remained in place for Hard Rock Calling.

SECURITY

Simon Battersby, who took over as Showsec's head of security for Live Nation's Hyde Park events last summer, explained that his team numbered over 400 staff for 46664 as a result of extended VIP security requirements. For the "less stressful" Hard Rock Calling, the number was reduced by 100.

Speaking on the day after 46664, Battersby commented: "The complexities associated with extra vehicle movements, media and dignitaries at the Mandela show demanded a larger Showsec presence, with more emphasis on gate searches.

"We also had a more complex pass system, because of the additional levels of access imposed on the event. With this type of show where there are so many different departments with different requirements, it's often difficult to design a simple pass structure, so we did experience a little confusion here and there, especially as certain needs changed throughout the day. The accreditation office have contingencies in place for all these eventualities, and I think they did a great job.

"On the whole, it's been a great success for us and there were no real issues. We have a very good team here and it's a team that grows stronger by the year. Steve Reynolds, our London area manager, is effectively my deputy and he takes the reins on many aspects of the security operation.

"Over the course of a weekend like this, we find that by day two, each member of staff starts to take ownership of his or her part of the site, and that's something I encourage.

"We have associates here from our training Academy who are helping with a number of aspects of the event, such as access issues for disabled visitors and running a more succinct instant reporting system database."

Led by Jim Gaffney, Mojo Barriers UK provided 550m of its aluminium crowd barrier at 46664 for front-of-stage, Golden Circle, mix tower and other site applications. Overnight, the Mojo team rose to the challenge of re-configuring its barrier system for Hard Rock, removing the Golden Circle perimeter, and building new FOH and front-of-stage barriers, as well as installing one for the second stage.

"Jim and Mojo have been fantastic," said site manager Craig Becker who, with the help of site co-ordinator Toby Short and assistant Lisa Hall, ensured that all contractors respected Royal Park rules and regs.

"We've had lots of changing to size of camera platforms and FOH areas and they coped with it all brilliantly. I never have to worry about it when Jim's doing it."

CATERING

Despite heavy competition, Eat To The Beat remains the only catering company to have scooped a TPi Award, and on the evidence of its crew's work over the course of our sunny weekend in Hyde Park, this run of success may well be far

from over.

Loading into the park two weeks before 46664, ETTB's crew — which totalled 112 at peak times — were responsible for feeding all working personnel (including yours truly, thank you very much!) and 400 artists, as well as keeping the dressing rooms and green room fully stocked.

Sister company Upbeat Event Design (formerly Chevalier) supplied food and beverages in the 'VVIP' Saddlespan marquee for Nelson Mandela and around 480 guests, with a running buffet and seafood station, complete with the appearance of a stunning ice carving of a marlin. For Hard Rock Calling, this marquee was transformed overnight into a hospitality venue for Live Nation's guests.

John Probyn's core Hyde Park team also included his PA, Fiona Pirie ("thanks to Fiona, I've not had to read my e-mail for a week!"), health & safety manager Paul Cook, sponsor manager Ian 'La' Greenway, environmental manager Andrew Howarth and accreditation manager Rachel Roberts.

Another invaluable member was Sally Bancroft who recently assumed management of disabled visitors' issues and developed a new plan to take greater care of specific needs.

"I think this is the first year I can say I've been 100% happy with the way things have gone," Probyn reflected. "We have a wonderfully professional team who have responded positively to every request and challenge. I'd say it couldn't get better than this, but I'm pretty sure it will... it's just the way we are!"

TPi

Photography by
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