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TECH FOCUS: LEVITATING LIGHTS • PROFILE: NATHALIE CANDEL - AND MUCH MORE ...

# A matter of trust

Steve Moles reports on the team effort involved in staging the recent *Concert for Ukraine* at short notice . . .

**[UK]** For anyone who watched the *Concert for Ukraine* from the Resorts World Arena (RWA) broadcast live by ITV on the evening of 29 March, this was a show, at moments, almost too moving to watch. Not just the poignant VT clips of refugees and especially children, but also the performances by presenters and musicians alike. The highlight of the night was surely The Manic Street Preachers performing *If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next* - I can think of no other song more appropriate to the moment.

Yes, we might expect the rock and roll industry to rise to the occasion, but that doesn't mean it should be taken for granted. Credit where credit's due. "When we asked, everyone gave", says Paddy Hocken, who along with Chris Vaughan was approached by Livewire Pictures just 17 days prior to broadcast to manage the production. VHE assuming the role of overarching production company. "Not a huge amount happened until the 17 March when we did a site visit - then it was flat-out to the broadcast," he continues. "Actually, it went pretty smoothly on the day." They overran the *News at Ten* by just five minutes, pretty amazing under the circumstances.

Hocken and Vaughan both drew attention to the prevailing generosity of the industry when the call came, "even if they couldn't fulfil what we asked, they said yes, and then filled the gaps by themselves calling in favours and on relationships to step in." In short order, Neg Earth, Britannia Row Productions, Creative Technology, ER Productions and TAIT did the heavy lift for what the viewers saw, with All Access supporting behind the scenes by providing the rolling risers and a large storage deck. QED Productions provided control and servers for the video content.

"As we developed the show and holes emerged, people stepped in," Hocken continues. "The foundation was a meet

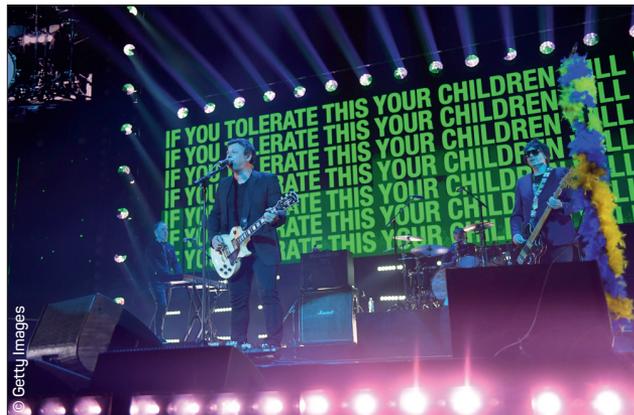


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between us and lighting designer Tim Routledge who, with his wide experience in both TV and rock and roll, had been the team's first contact. He gathered at Wakefield with Ric Lipson of Stufish and TAIT's Ben Brooks to determine the structural boundaries for a multi-performance show like this. There was a lot going on in the wider industry - gear and people availability was a concern. Fiona Evans at All Alliance wrangled all the stage hands and the runners for us at no charge; their regular van hire company likewise gave willingly. Clive Ambler at Stage Miracles provided a specialist stage crew, led by James Bartlett, for all the change-overs."

## HERCULEAN EFFORT

Getting on site meant the race against time was on. Hocken explains: "The schedule was highly compressed. We went in on Saturday as the *Planet Earth* show loaded out. Phil Broad, who led the rigging team [supplied free of charge by Sven Knight of Knight Rigging Services] was right with them putting in our points as they took theirs out. On Sunday, 20 truck loads, courtesy of Fly By Nite, arrived during the day, and in one straight shift, we had the whole production in, up and ready for programming that night. A herculean effort by everyone. OB infrastructure also



- ↑ Above, left: James Bartlett, show stage manager and Paddy Hocken, production manager
- Right: Tim Routledge, lighting and production designer
- ← Gary Bradshaw, FOH engineer, house band
- ↓ Production coordinator Lizzie Graham

came in on the Sunday; cameras moved in on Monday, and rehearsals began. Emily Woollett at RWA could not have been more helpful, the Steve Sidwell Band, who were house band throughout the night, and Snow Patrol both needed somewhere to rehearse. RWA gave us a large vacant restaurant within the arena for them to use, which just solved a load of logistical problems at a snip."

He continues: "Not everything could be offered free, of course - you can't expect caterers, in this case Bittersweet Catering, to provide 600 meals a-day for nothing, or trucks to run on fresh air. But even then things happened - M&S, who was the lead sponsor of the broadcast, provided all the bottled water, milk, sandwiches and snacks."

#### A DREAM TEAM

The experience of those running the show ensured the relatively smooth sailing of an event put

together at such short notice. Speaking of the key team members behind the production, Hocken says: "Maximus Burnham from Live Nation came in at the eleventh hour and provided the perfect interface between the venue and the artists. Kenny Underwood headed up artist liaison, and Josh Lloyd for Britannia Row was very thorough in the planning. Gary Bradshaw mixed the house band, while most artists tended to bring in their own audio control package as if they were playing the festival circuit. Neg Earth has gained a lot of experience working on TV shows with Tim Routledge over the pandemic, and that knowledge made things run all the smoother. You can say the same about Creative Technology and QED. All in all it was a killer team."

So how was it for Hocken himself? "From our end, Chris Vaughan took care of the artist and infrastructure, assisted by



production coordinators Charlie Dillamore and Lizzie Graham, while I managed the show production and interface with TV technical."

Reflecting on the spirit of camaraderie, Hocken concludes: "The key was trust - trust and experience. We knew each other well enough that everyone could be relied on to work autonomously and get the job done to the standards they always deliver.

There's a lot of justifiable pride in that - everyone should give themselves a pat on the back."

On the night, the show raised over £12m for Ukraine - well done everyone. 🙌

*Note: Steve's fee for this article has been donated to the DEC Ukraine appeal. For more information on the initiative, please visit:*

👉 [//donation.dec.org.uk](https://donation.dec.org.uk)

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