

First in Africa with Prolyte Verto truss... in black of course!



Marcel Bezuidenhout, owner of Cape Town-based Audio Engineering

Marcel Bezuidenhout, owner of Cape Town-based Audio Engineering, has been flying under the radar, since forming his company in 1998. He has retained most of his clients and steadily built sound relationships and a fine collection of professional equipment. But being the first in South Africa to take ownership of a black Prolyte Verto truss system and four Prolyft Aetos two-ton chain hoists is something to shout about!

"I do fly under the radar and I've never advertised," he laughs. "But, I want to change that. We do many international shows which people don't know about, such as the two world tours with the Mandela Trilogy, which is a musical tribute to the life of Nelson Mandela. Equipment wise, I like to adopt things that are very specific and quite cool." Marcel was one of the first in the country to own DiGiCo, Waves Audio and Quest.

Prolyte Investment

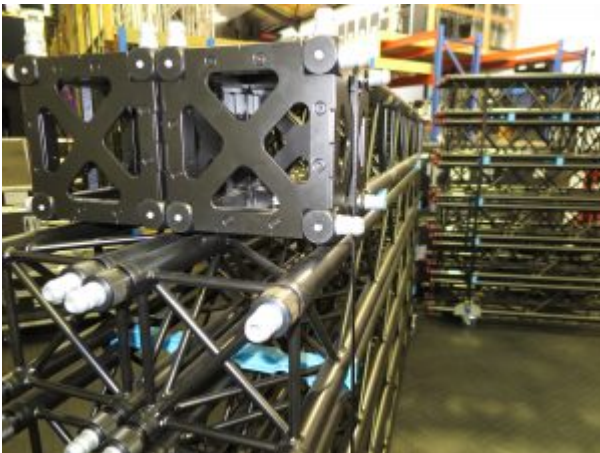
When Paul Hatfield from Prolyte visited the country earlier this year, he and Robert Izzett of DWR (Prolyte distributors in Africa) popped in at the Audio Engineering warehouse. "We chatted and Paul asked if I would be coming to Frankfurt," Marcel recalls. "When I attended Prolight and Sound a few months later, we met again. I was shown the Verto, which I had seen the year before, and it looked great!" Prolyte were running a special deal on their stand. Anyone who ordered Verto at the exhibition could have the trussing powder coated in black, free of charge.



Duncan Riley of DWR with Marcel Bezuidenhout

"I had wanted black truss for a long time and I thought this was the moment to make the leap," said Marcel. "Also, the fact that it was Verto!"

While the Audio Engineering team have not yet used the new Verto on a gig, they are amazed at how it works and are contemplating more stock in future. "It's not just the look of it, but the actual connection mechanism that is revolutionary," Marcel commented. "It's a huge jump. The speed to get the system up is impressive, and there is no noise."



The only challenge, for now, is cross-pollination from other rental companies. "For this reason I ordered the Verto only in black... this will be a complete system." He currently has 8 x 3s, 8 x 2s, and 8 x 1, s, 8 x halves, four corners and dollies. "Once others in our industry start adopting Verto I'll go with the standard silver Verto trussing."

Owning three different trussing brands, Audio Engineering are currently selling off old stock and only keeping their existing Prolyte pieces. They also have Prolyte decks comprising of 18 Perspex and 60 wooden units. Brand new to their retinue are four Prolyft Aetos two ton hoists and chain motors. "The recommendation came from Denzil Smith from MGG Productions," Marcel explains. "We were together at the Prolyte stand at Frankfurt. I had recently bought a Meyer PA system, which is some of the heavier speakers on the market, and I wanted something to lift them. I chatted to Denzil who said that out of all his motor stock, Prolyte were his most reliable hoists."



Summer concerts at Kirstenbosch

From November, the Prolyfts will work hard at the Kirstenbosch Summer Concert Series, which out of interest is another testimony of the long-standing relationship Marcel has enjoyed with his clients.

“The Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens will host a series of live local and international music performances every Sunday, including the English rock band, James, as one of the line-ups,” Marcel explains. “This will be my twentieth season, and it’s very interesting, I started in 1998 with four 15-inch two-way speakers (two aside) with subs. I’ve now grown it to this megawatt PA system with lighting, structures, screens and projection. The festival has grown to an average of 4 500 to 5 000 people per show and the clients have become family! I saw the curator’s son grow up. He was a toddler when we met, and I’ve seen him go to high school, become head boy and go to university. They’ve also seen me, at the start of my business career, having my own son, who is now fourteen years old.”

Marcel’s story

Marcel enjoyed a colourful career. Rooted in a love for the arts he was a drama student at the University of Cape Town before deciding to join Joe Gore, owner of Soundworks Music Store, on a full time bases, selling equipment and eventually running the hiring department. At night Marcel “moonlit” with Frank Mallows, the then headmaster of Beau Soleil Music School who also had an orchestra. “We did around 85 weddings a year,” Marcel fondly recalls. Marcel would hire gear to mix the shows, and soon decided to take some cash, along with a loan from Joe Gore, to purchase a Yamaha Pro Digital Desk, newly launched at the time, and which cost R16 000.

In closing, Marcel tenderly recalls his first theatre encounter. “My dad worked at the Nico Malan Theatre, now the Artscape, when I was three years old. We lived in the theatre building in an apartment on the top floor, which today is the home of The Cape Philharmonic Orchestra offices. There are old photos from my birthday parties which were held in the corridor, upstairs, in the theatre complex,” he said. “My first memories were backstage, and I remember this clearly. It was the production Annie, and I stood in the wings with my dad. He took me on stage, I think they had a matinee performance, and I could see, from behind, how the actors manipulated a cutout car, sat on wooden planks, and pushed the car along the stage with their feet. Obviously, from the audience perspective, it looked like they were all driving a car. But as a small child, the curtain had been lifted, and I saw the magic of theatre from the other side.”