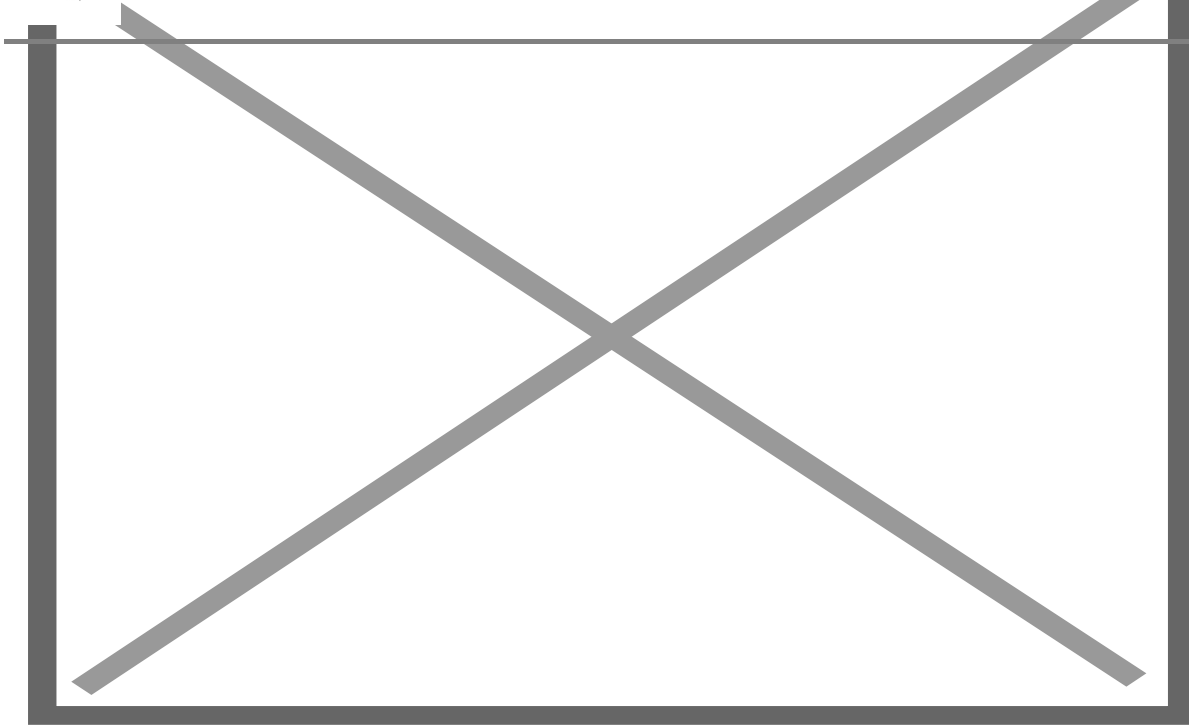




Alistair Kilbee

Alistair Kilbee, Managing Director of Gearhouse Splitbeam, is proving over and over again that South Africa has what it takes to offer a technical solution for international Broadway production; the latest being Jersey Boys. This multi-award winning musical is currently running at the Teatro at Montecasino, Johannesburg before opening at the Artscape, Cape Town, on 19 June 2013.

"I work extensively for Showtime Management productions, the SA Producer for Jersey Boys, on most of their productions," said Kilbee. "Showtime started talking about Jersey Boys three years ago... keep in mind that shows of this scale are always a couple of years in the making."



Kilbee kicked off

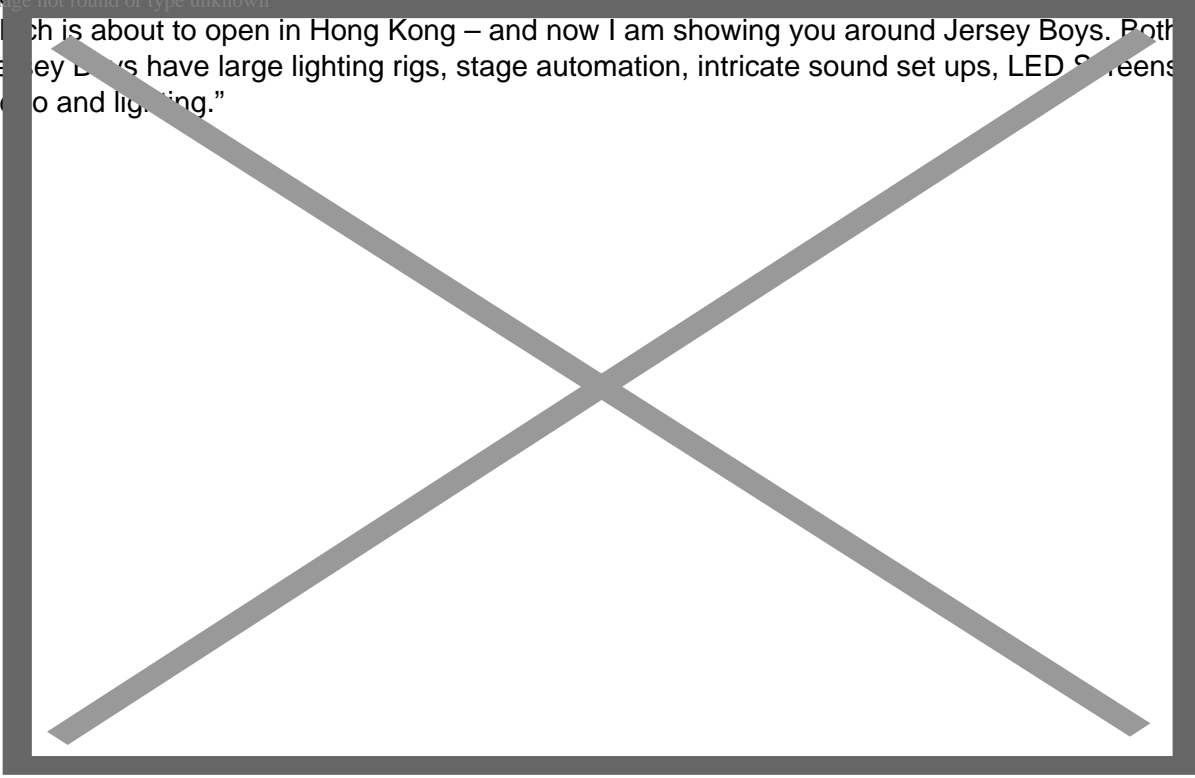


ews.

Gearhouse Splitbeam was awarded the contract to supply lighting equipment for the production. The entire cast, musicians and crew are all South African but the sound, LED, stage automation and rigging packages were all

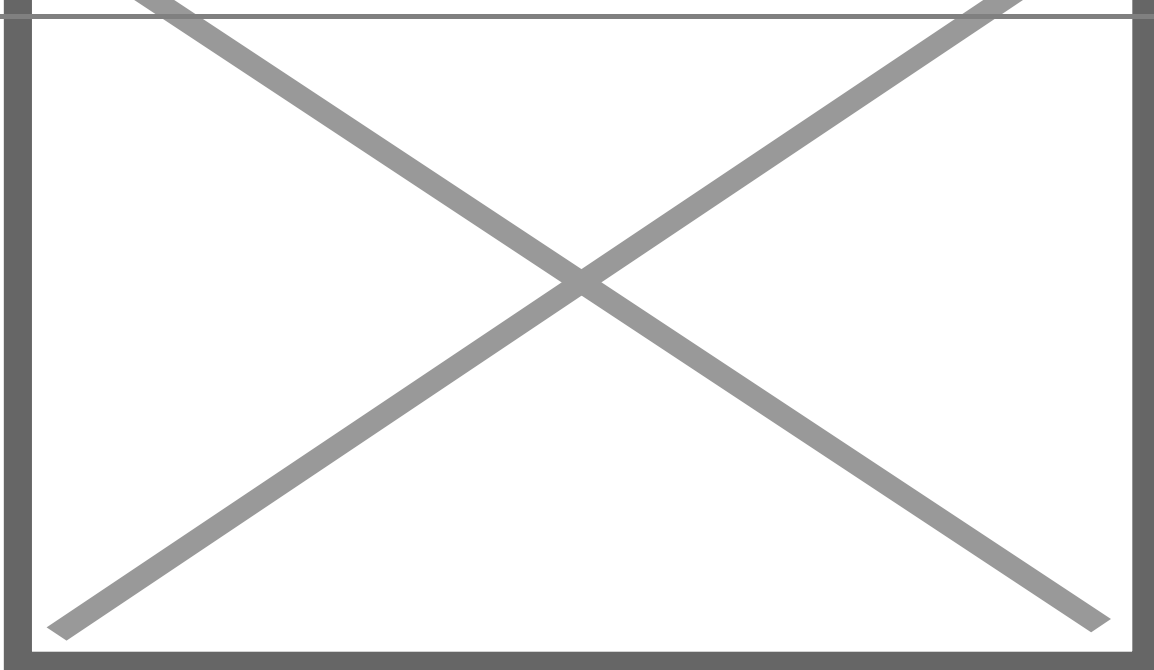
brought in from the USA. The show gear is transported in twelve 40 foot High Cube sea containers.

We met up with Alistair Kilbee at the Teatro at Montecasino for a backstage tour. A consuming passion for theatre ensures that Kilbee is as comfortable putting on a show of this calibre in South Africa as he would be running it anywhere in the world. He is also always busy, "Working across multiple shows can be very complex. You need to be able to shift headspace quickly. This morning I was answering questions on Dirty Dancing – which is about to open in Hong Kong – and now I am showing you around Jersey Boys. Both Dirty Dancing and Jersey Boys have large lighting rigs, stage automation, intricate sound set ups, LED Screens and interfaced video and lighting."



Clients

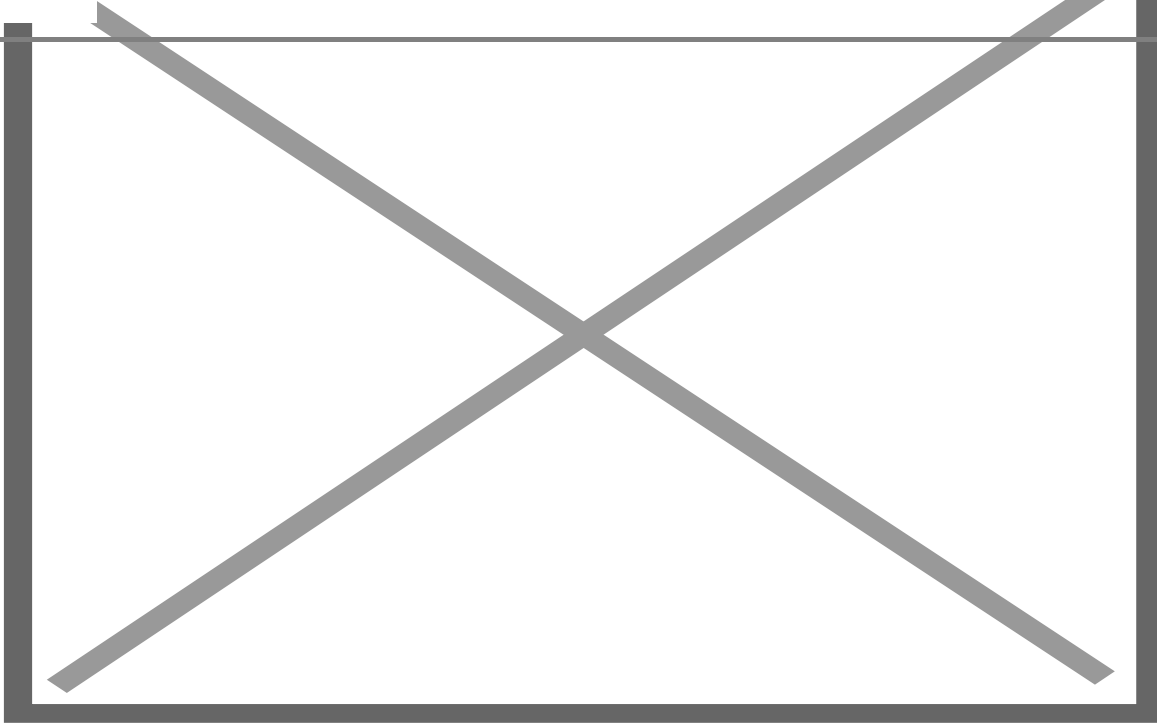
coming to South Africa can expect to receive the same service from Kilbee as they would anywhere else on the globe. "The Americans find it a little strange, however, because in the States my job would be split across several people. Whereas they would have a Technical Director as well as Designers, Production Electricians, Head Carpenters and so on, each dealing with a specific aspect; I am heavily involved in all departments so the client can talk to me about the full technical aspects of the production including the automation, LED/AV, sound and lighting elements," said Kilbee.



This could be

overwhelming for most, but it's exactly this complexity that drives Kilbee. "It's like playing with a three dimensional puzzle and we get to put the pieces together to form the final picture."

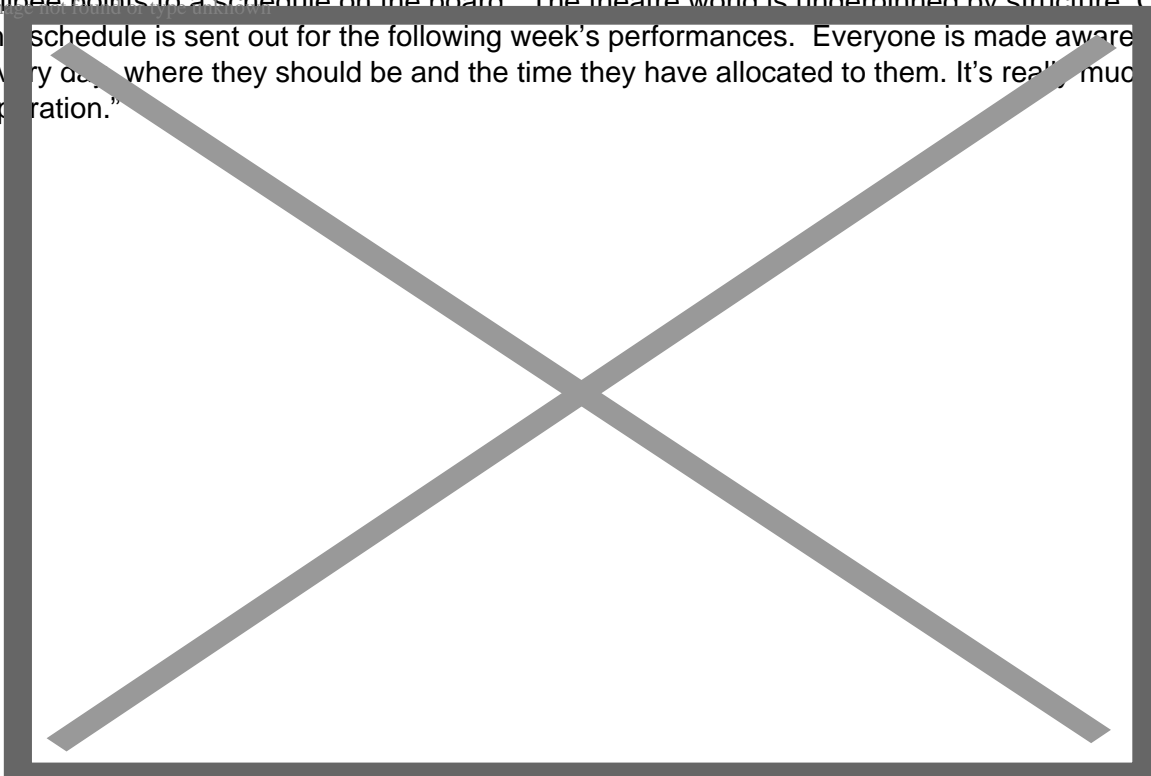
Kilbee's intention was to become a lighting specialist, rather than an all-rounder; but his diverse experience has made him one of a kind in the South African market. Every international show which comes to SA has stage automation and he may well be one of the few who fully understands the full impact of musical stage automation. As productions have become increasingly bigger and more challenging, he has had to keep up with technological advancements and keep his knowledge current.



A crew of forty

have been handpicked by Kilbee to work on Jersey Boys, including Head of Lighting at Splitbeam, Clement Makama and Moving Light Technicians Simon Mashebane and Solly Thaane. “The team are all very professional; mostly freelancers, who have worked with me before and who have toured extensively.” he said. “All forty crew members work at each performance, in a very controlled environment. The show is extremely intense with scenery changes every fifteen to twenty seconds.”

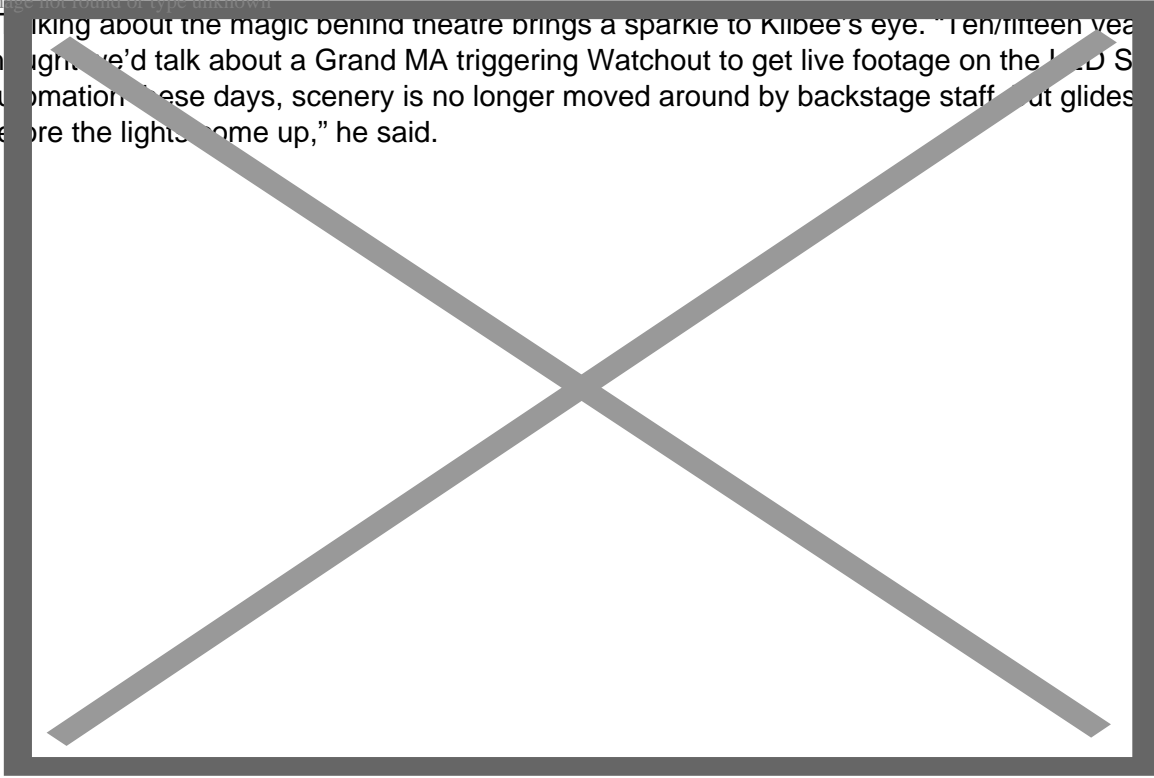
Kilbee points to a schedule on the board. “The theatre world is undermined by structure. On Sunday afternoons the schedule is sent out for the following week’s performances. Everyone is made aware of what is happening every day, where they should be and the time they have allocated to them. It’s really much like a military operation.”



Behind the

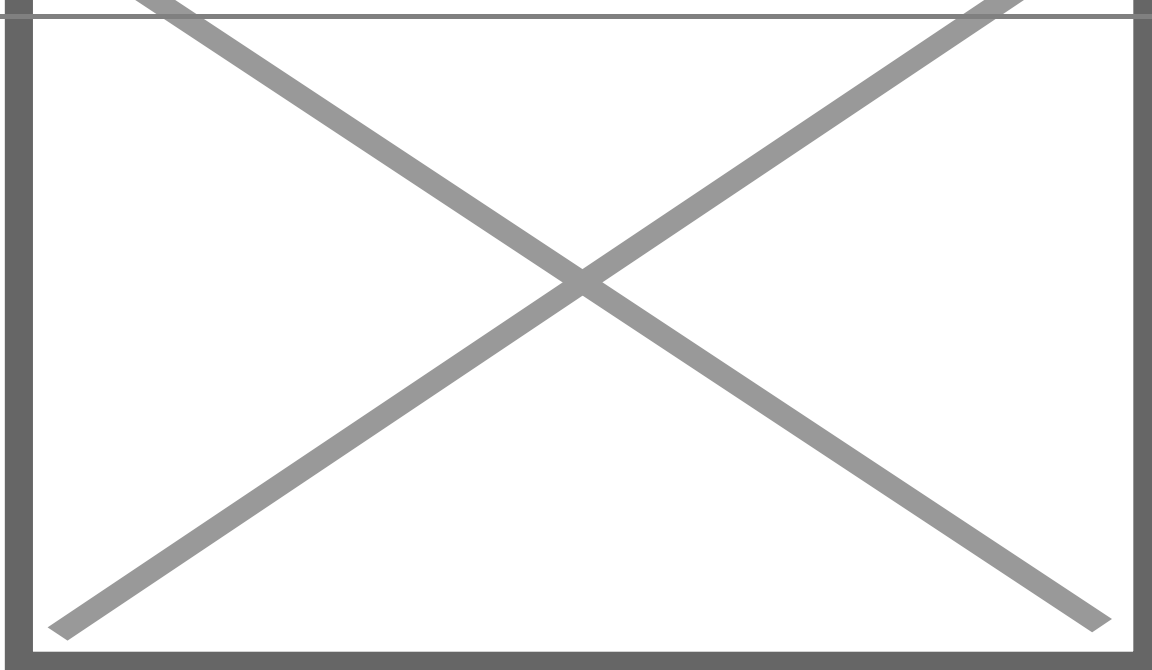
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"Talking about the magic behind theatre brings a sparkle to Kilbee's eye. "Ten/fifteen years ago we never thought we'd talk about a Grand MA triggering Watchout to get live footage on the LED Screens. And with stage automation these days, scenery is no longer moved around by backstage staff but glides perfectly into position before the lights come up," he said.



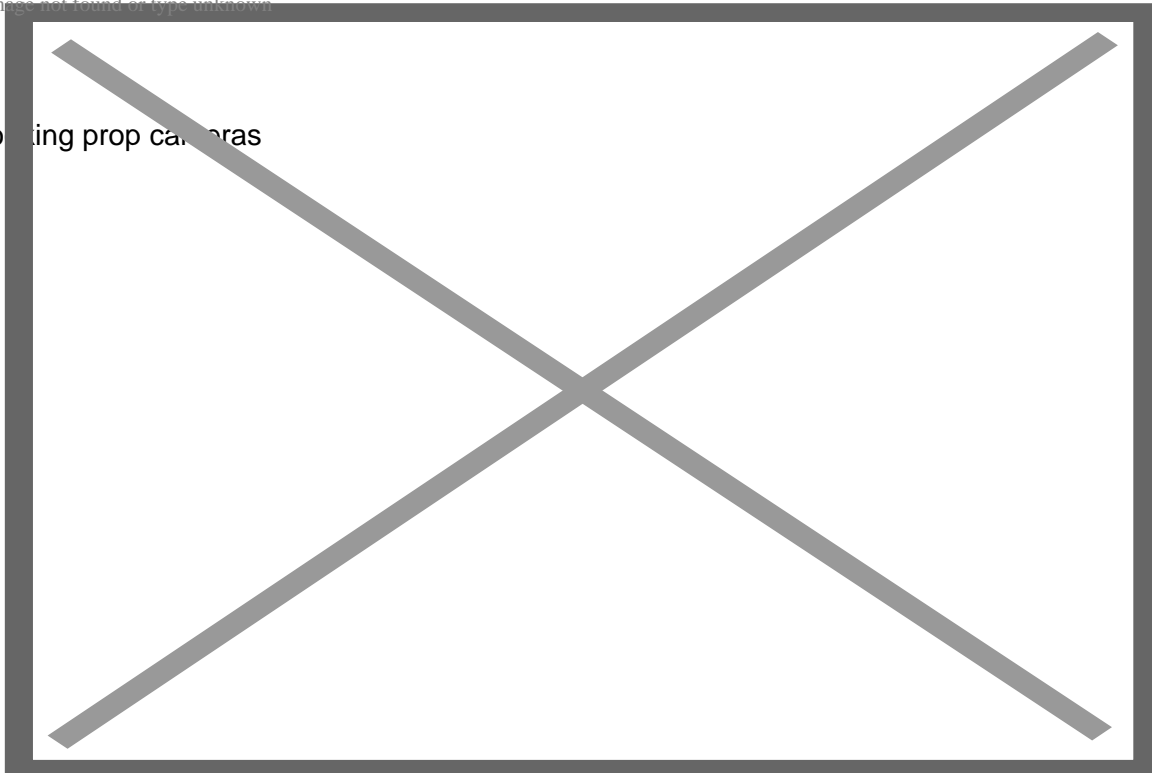
On Jersey Boys,

a downstage track is used to guide various props including a self-propelled rotating drum kit into position. Two vintage "prop" video cameras are used on the production. Inside each camera prop is a complicated camera system which is able to zoom and focus as well as remotely send the live video feed to Watchout where the image is period-aged before being relayed to screen.



The vintage

looking prop cameras



Inside the “vintage

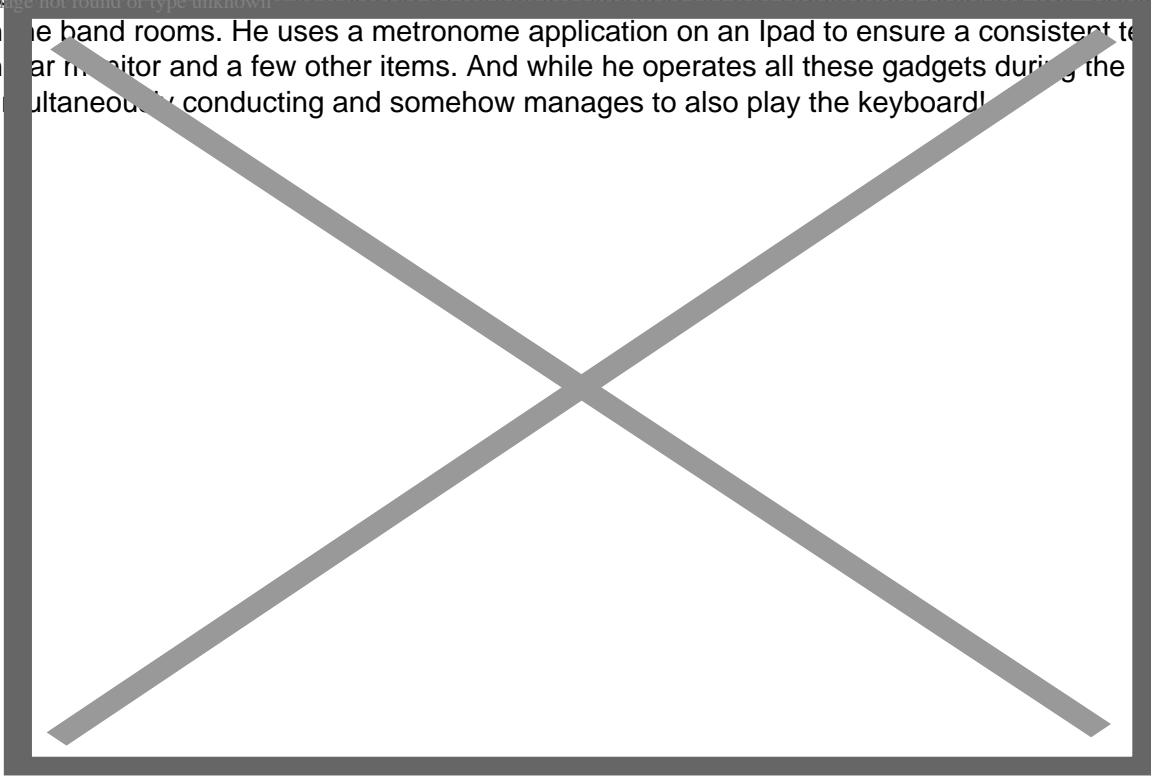
camera props”, a modern camera for live video feed. Jersey Boys includes a Stadium wall comprised of 96 Source Four Pars, 25 x DataFlash, 30+ Egg strobes. Each Source 4 Par uses different sized doughnuts from City Theatrical to simulate the perspective of a stadium.

The stage manager's control position is also well-equipped with coloured TV's, infrared TV's, overhead camera

TV, side camera TV and conductor camera TV to see what is happening at all times.

Band members perform both on and off the stage during the performance and have two band rooms, where they play from when not on stage. "This is common international theatre practice, albeit decidedly unglamorous," explained Kilbee. "In fact, on Broadway and the West End, the band sometimes performs 3 or 4 floors away from the stage and sometimes even from a separate building."

Each musician has a conductor monitor as well as an in-ear monitor with 16 channels of Audio. The conductor is allocated a very small corner of the room he shares with the band. His gadgets include a mic to talk to the band, a camera to see the show, camera to zoom in and out on the actors and a camera focussed on him into which he conducts. His image is relayed to monitors situated on the auditorium balcony rail, backstage, side stage and in the band rooms. He uses a metronome application on an Ipad to ensure a consistent tempo, comms system, in-ear monitor and a few other items. And while he operates all these gadgets during the show, he is simultaneously conducting and somehow manages to also play the keyboard!



"What I realize,

more and more, is that we work in a different world in the theatre," said Kilbee. "It's not like rock and roll with quick set ups. We may be slower and more considered when putting up a rig, but we do have very high standards and things have to be right."

Seeing everything backstage may possibly be even more exciting than watching the show itself. "We need to get more young people to see this stuff," says Kilbee. "We must find a way to pass on the passion and introduce a whole new world to the next generation of theatre techs".

Jersey Boys- Lighting

80 ETC Source 4 Profiles (various degrees)

15 ETC Source 4 Par – VN5P

- 10 Mini 10 @ 500watts, 240v Complete
- 22 L&E Broadcyc Unit 3 Cell @ 650w, 240v
- 12 PAR-40 Strips – 6#0# 3 Circuit @ 300w, 240v
- 29 Philips Vari-Lite VL2500 Spot
- 22 Philips Vari-Lite VL2500 Wash
- 5 AVOLITE ART 2000 Dimmer
- 2 48 Way Power Distro
- 1 Softcue Light system

Control

- 1 GrandMA NPU
- 1 GrandMA 2 Lite

- 1 GrandMA PC Wing

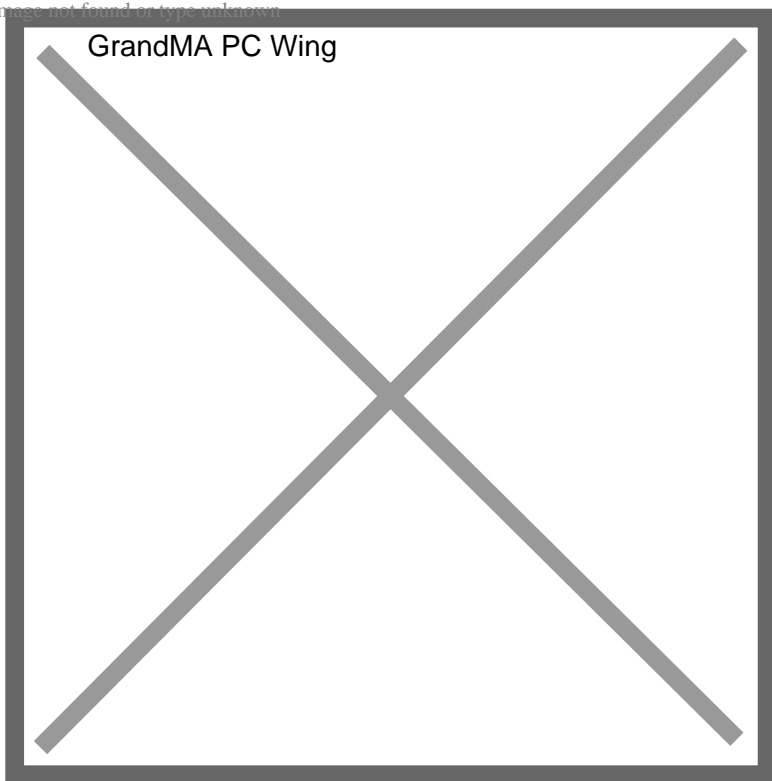




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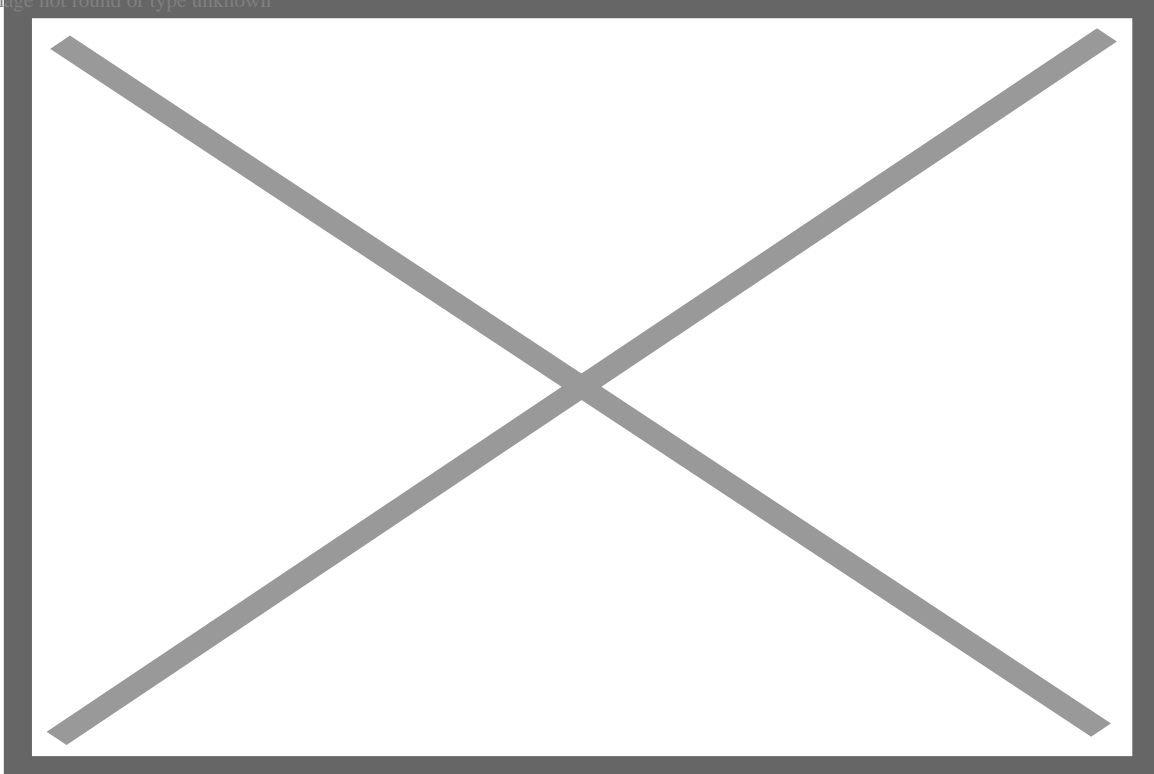


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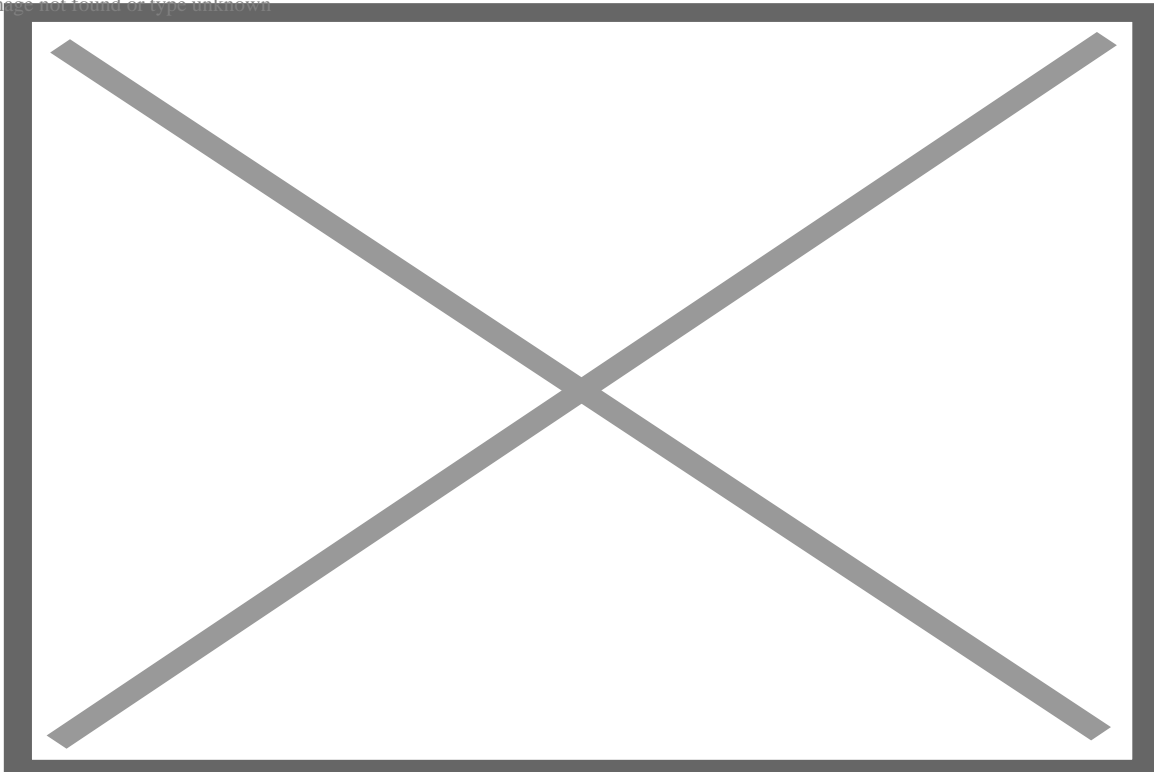


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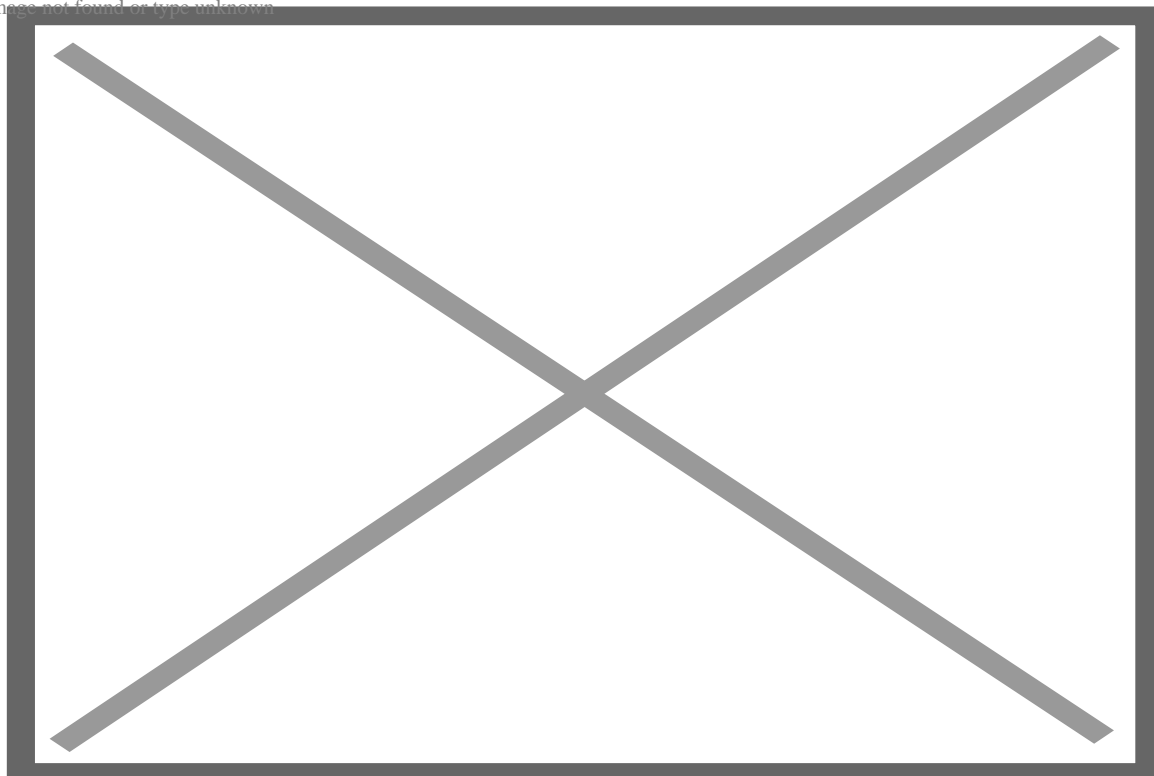


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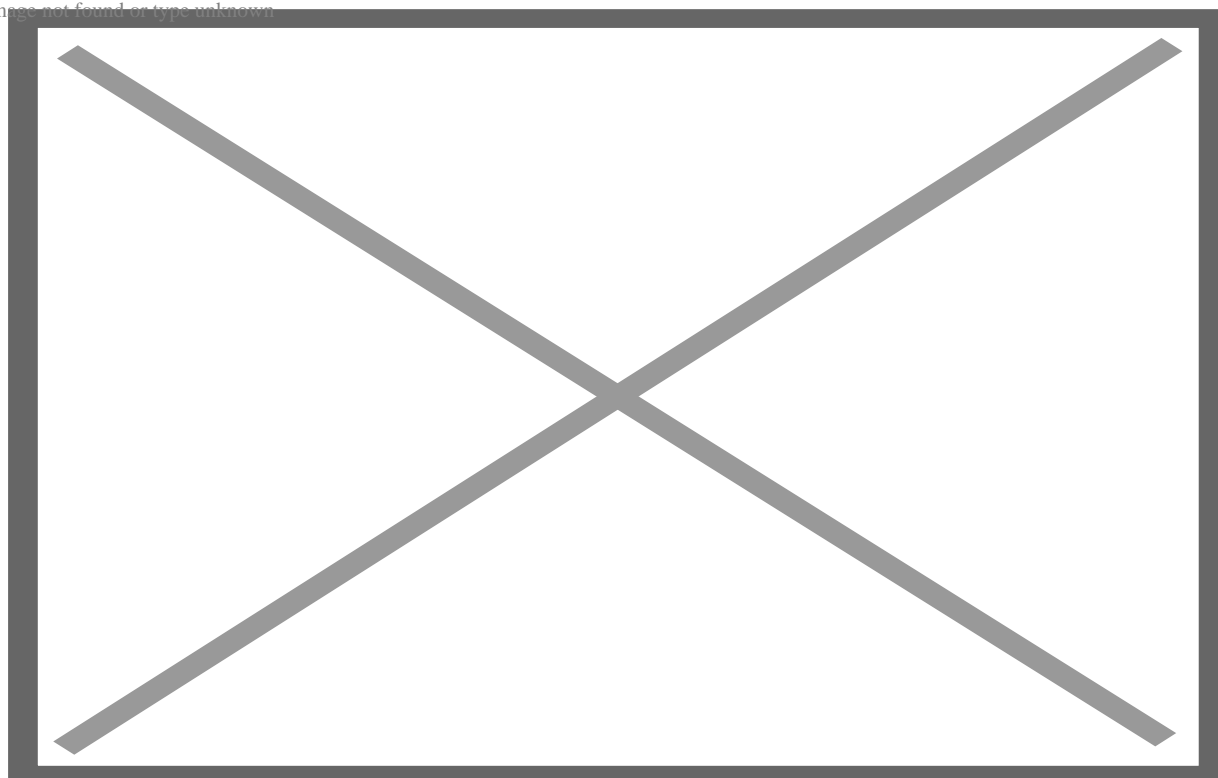


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