PERFORMANCE SPOTLIGHT

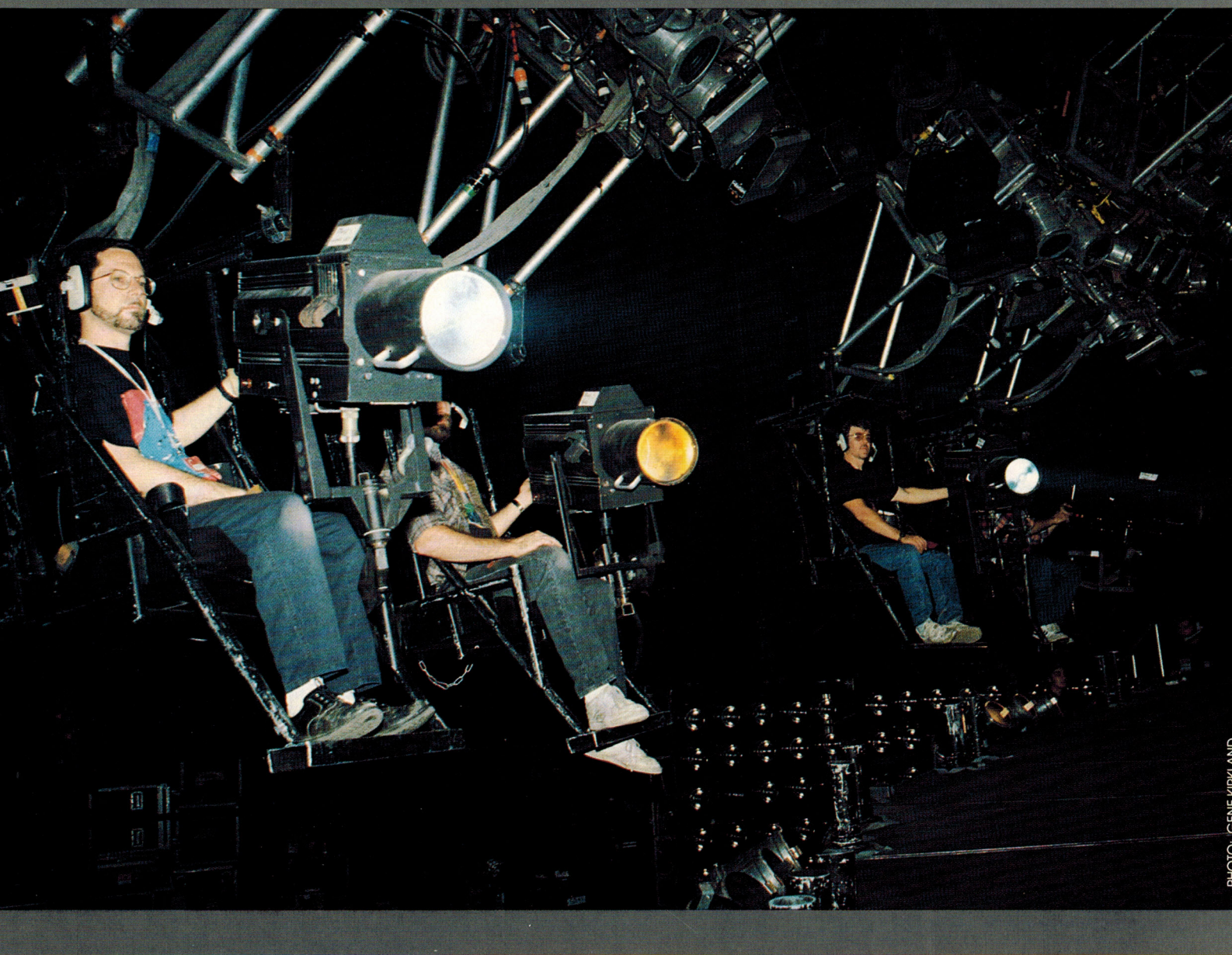
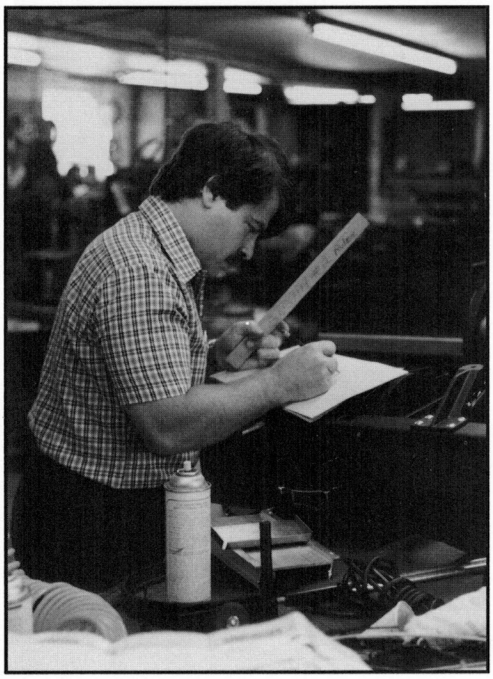


PHOTO: CHUCK KIRKLAND

Lycian Puts The Spotlight On Customer Service



Lycian Stage Lighting president Richard Logothetis drafts a modification for a spotlight prior to testing.

Putting Experience To The Test

Contributing to the quality of Lycian follow spotlights is the breadth of knowledge president Richard Logothetis brings from years of experience designing, building and operating followspots.

"As far back as grade school, I've been involved with followspots," Logothetis says. "This familiarity gives me a basis from which to design. I know where my hands want to go, what it's like to operate a light and stand by it for three hours or more, what feels comfortable, what the operator needs to do."

Logothetis' fascination with followspots has led him to become a collector, and his collection dates back to the vertical arc spots used in the vaudeville days of the 1920s. Lycian Stage Lighting is currently developing a museum to display Logothetis' collection, which he says has almost every spotlight created as the technology has developed through the years.

"We have followspots from the '20s up to today," Logothetis says. "Some of the innovations created today have equipment that you can find in spots 30 or 40 years old that no one can remember the name of anymore. And now, when a followspot comes out using the old spot's technology, everyone marvels at the *new* lights out on the market."

Logothetis' experience in operations has provided an innate understanding of every facet of the spotlight.

"Our earliest followspots were individually built, custom designed carbon arc units. These were being designed and built while we were operating also as a production house, supplying sound and lighting equipment for sports and entertainment events in the Northeast, off-Broadway and touring-type shows, national tours, ballet and small operas. By the late '60s we had expanded into rock n' roll. As we grew we became technical suppliers of major festivals. We did the work for Howard Stein at the New York Academy of Music and all of the John Scher shows at Roosevelt Stadium."

Growing With The Industry

With roots in show production and custom follow spot design, Lycian Stage Lighting naturally grew into manufacturing. Engineering background, technical supply, production experience and a practical understanding of what a performer needs and what a good light can do helped the focus of Lycian State Lighting turn to manufacturing in 1976.

Since that time, Logothetis has come to assemble a competent research, design and engineering team to manufacture lighting with the operator as well as the performer in mind.

"The first unit that we started manufacturing was a Marc 350 followspot," Logothetis recalls. "The short-throw version of that unit, the SuperArc 350 model 1262, quickly became a very popular truss-mounted followspot. In the '70s, most shows would not carry onstage followspots. In those days, a big tour would go out with maybe two or three Genie hoist towers, or maybe a small truss.

"Around 1980 it became the thing to have onstage followspots, and our Marc 350 quickly became very popular in that position," Logothetis recalls. "As light source technology advanced, and the industry wanted the most up-to-date equipment, we were able to supply the industry with the SuperArc HTI 400 long and short throw units which became even more popular."

The availability of the HMI 1200 lamp enabled Lycian Stage Lighting to expand their line further with the 1271 Starklite.

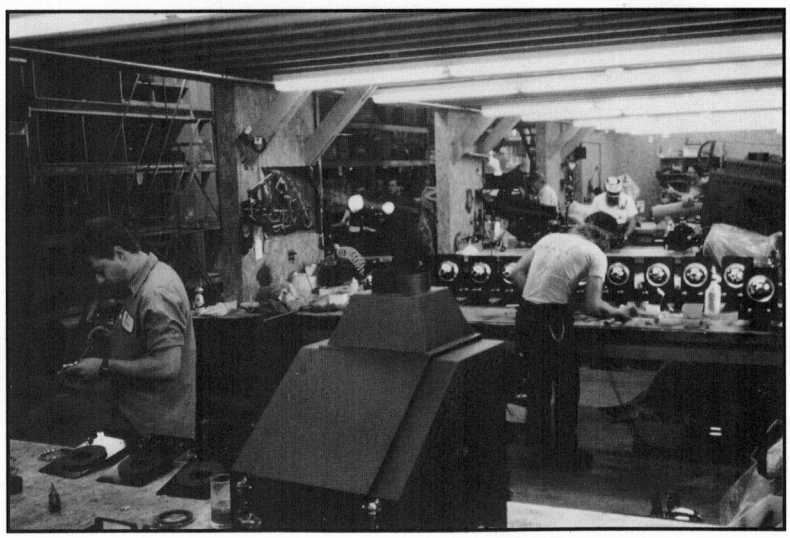
"The development of the Starklite has been a fascinating process. I was in the audience of the Bob Dylan/Tom Petty tour at the Brendan Byrne Arena in the New Jersey Meadowlands. This was a large tour in a large facility. They were using our SuperArc 400s which looked very good on the show. But watching the performance, I could see the potential of using a followspot that could deliver tremendous punch — that could cut through all the other array of light on the show.

"Back home on the drawing board was the 1271 unit, originally designed as an overhead accent spotlight on opera bridges," Logothetis says. "It was extremely powerful, yet the physical unit was small and its interchangeable lenses offered a unit that was incredibly flexible. Our sales department, headed by Lou Farina, presented these features to lighting designers and production supply companies which were very receptive to this type of unit. And now it is becoming the accepted world standard truss-mounted followspot."

Truss-Mounted Versatility

The 1271 Starklite boasts three lens options giving diversity to light design.

"It is very versatile," Logothetis says. "It is very small for use on truss mounts. It can be used with the wide angle lens, which we call a soft lens, which is extremely good for Broadway shows. There they may want a very wide angle with a softer light — more of a moving accent type followspot.



Engineers complete final assembly on the 1271 model Starklite followspot.

"The typical rock n' roll tour will use the medium lens, the most popular lens on the 1271," Logothetis continues. "It gives a wide beam in a fairly small fixture, and gives the punch that these shows need."

Logothetis says Rolling Stones' "Steel Wheels" tour used seven of the units on stage.

"They would use the medium lens in most positions. Then they had two units way up on top of the towers shooting straight down, using the longer lens where they really need punch and a longer throw," Logothetis says. "The unit is very rugged, the mechanics are robust and the optic design doesn't demand absolute fine tuning for a great light."

Aside from its ultra-flat light and variable lens system, the 1271 model has an automatic self cancelling color boom, rear operated nichrome heavy duty iris and fader, and is balanced for perfect weight distribution at variable operating angles. The unit features controls on the rear and side, avoiding top mounted controls that are difficult to operate in truss-mount operations.

Lycian Does Their Homework

Logothetis credits his company's research into the requirements for a truss-mounted spotlight in achieving the success of the 1271 model.

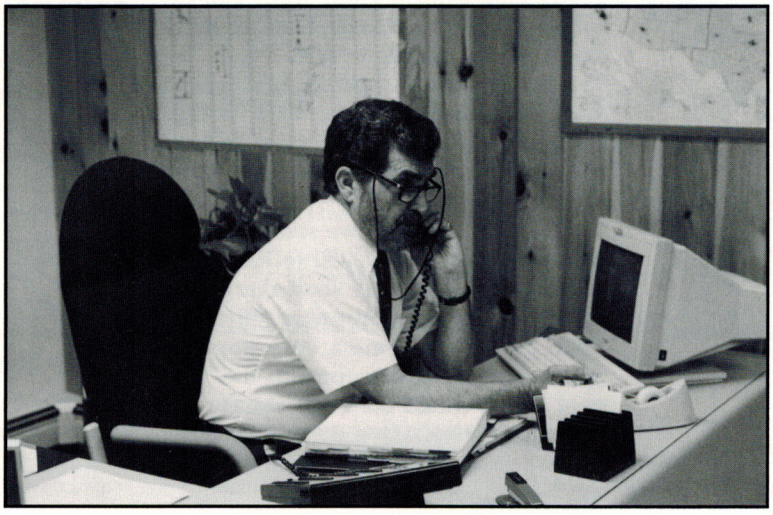
"Typically, our manufacturing of spotlights starts out with a need for a spotlight to do a certain quality of work," Logothetis says. "What we do is go from that need to what it has to look like in use on stage. Then we look at where it needs to be mounted and how it needs to be controlled. At the same time, we have to consider the most appropriate light source, asking ourselves if there is a new technology out there that might be appropriate for it, or if we should use existing technology. We mingle these considerations to come up with an optical system that uses the lamp we want to get the quality of light that we want."

Logothetis says the 1271 model is a combination of conventional and new technologies.

"The 1271 uses HMI bulbs, a standard for many years in the motion picture industry and by today's standards an older technology of bulb," Logothetis says. "It's a very popular technology, but it is something that has been around since 1973. A lot of designers like the quality of the HMI's light. It's a warm light. HTI and Xenon bulbs don't work as well at 45 degree angles, either because of difficulty in working with angles or not giving enough punch. We designed a special reflector to couple to the HMI lamp, which is a very difficult light source to couple to because it is so large. Since I was able to develop a way to couple to the light source, we were able to produce a lot of light in the spot."

Lycian Stage Lighting field tested several light sources before determining that HMI was the most suitable light source.

"I wanted a lamp that was very small, very light and reliable," Logothetis says. "HMI is a very high-efficiency light source. There were a lot of light sources we could have used. Incandescent is typically around 32 lumens per watt. Xenon is 38 to 40 lumens per watt, and HMI is around 90 to 100 lumens per watt. If you took a 2,500-watt Xenon bulb and a 2,500-watt HMI bulb, the HMI bulb would give you two to three times more light. Xenon is good for a very small point of light source if you used it for other applications, but HMI is a far more efficient lamp."



Lou Farina, Lycian Stage Lighting director of sales.

Just What The Operator Ordered

Aside from production and research fieldwork, Lycian Stage Lighting looks to the industry for suggestions on what constitutes superior equipment.

"Typically, we take our prototypes to major lighting conventions and get feedback from the operators before going into production," Logothetis says. "Sometimes they'll come up with an idea that will help make it a little better. It's always good to listen to the users of your product.

"We look at it in terms of a lighting designer's point of view. They have to depend on their instinct as to what the production may use. Given that a piece of equipment is tried out and is starting to become popular, they're now going to ask questions about the spotlight's intensity. 'Does it do what I want it to do and create the look I'm going for?' 'Is it easy to operate?' 'Am I going to get a bitching by the operators?' 'If I'm going to be on this tour for six months, is it going to fall apart in three?' Lycian spots have a track record that answers these questions with quality equipment. We try to manufacture a varied spotlight line that will offer a choice of lights that will feel comfortable to its users. You can cover the entire range of end users that way."

Customer satisfaction is the primary aim of Lycian Stage Lighting, and when the industry voices a desire for improvement in their equipment, the company aims to please.

"We build flexible followspots to give people a choice of what will best suit their needs and comfort of operation," Logothetis says. "We constantly pay attention to what the industry is saying."

Logothetis attributes sales director Lou Farina with helping project Lycian Stage Lighting into the world market.

"Lycian followspots are sold worldwide through a network of international and domestic distributors," Farina says. "Our growth in Central and South America as well as the Far East is most gratifying. I believe that we sell more followspot units than any other manufacturer. We are specialists and are always abreast of the needs of our customers."

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LYCIAN
STAGE LIGHTING

Adds Diversity To The Spotlight Industry

BY DREW WELLS

When it comes to manufacturing follow spotlights, Lycian Stage Lighting of Sugar Loaf, N.Y., knows what the industry needs.

In business since 1963, Lycian has developed a wide range of units offering the performance industry followspots that can fulfill every lighting requirement. A reliable performance record and dedication to customer service has put Lycian followspots in every show lighting application — arenas, theatres, Broadway, universities, and on most of the major mega-rock concerts on tour today.

The Lycian Stage Lighting facility — starting ground for hundreds of spotlights out on the road today.