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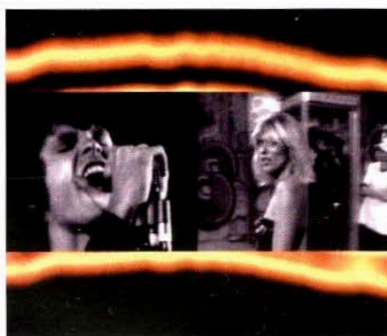
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ARTICLE ON THE RISE OF THE VJ

THE RISE OF THE VJ



THE LAST DECADE HAS SEEN THE RISE OF THE VJ AS A VALUABLE ADDITION TO ANY MAJOR CLUB NIGHT. YET, SOME CLUB DESIGNERS AND INSTALLERS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF THIS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ARTFORM. WE ASKED VJ HOLLY DAGGERS AND A SELECTION OF THE GREATEST VJS ON THE SCENE TO TELL US THE CURRENT STATE OF CLUBLAND.

What's the ideal set up for a VJ arriving at a venue?

Just give me a BNC connection and a good view of the room and screens; that's all I need, I'll provide the rest. I've probably been in every situation from performing onstage with the band to performing in another room down the hall. Obviously I can do a much better job if I can see the space! I was once hired for a club opening and they insisted I set up in the booth next to the DJ, but behind a huge tower of speakers! I had to leave the booth to see the dancefloor. That wasn't the only mistake they made that night and the club closed a few weeks later.

One of the most elaborate video displays of any club I've played is HUSH in Houston. They have a long two-story bar with eight projection screens on the ceiling. Unfortunately, in the US such a video installation is rare. This summer I did a 35 city tour and the production company had to bring in its own video screens, run extensive cables, and hang projectors in almost every venue. T

Whose gear do you use and who is doing most to help the development of VJing?

Before the days of software, VJs carried a rack of VHS tape decks and a "cheap" studio mixer. These mixers were fragile and had incomprehensible controls like the flightdeck of a DC-10 airplane. As a result many VJs were eager to switch to software. Laptops weren't as reliable as hardware and couldn't output full-resolution video, but VJs wanted portability and appreciated a dedicated interface designed for the job. Software became more and more popular as video companies continued to ignore our live-production needs. Fortunately, Edirol turned the VJ revolution back to hardware a few years ago with the V-4, a rugged, inexpensive mixer designed for VJs that is small enough to fit in a record case, has large lit buttons for performing in the dark, and an easy layout that doesn't require a preview monitor. Even die-hard software users are now running their shows through a V-4 mixer. Edirol has followed up with several VJ products including the CG-8 Visual Synthesizer, small stage cameras (since discontinued), and a new Hi-Definition mixer among other essential video gear. Edirol has recently been absorbed into parent company Roland, so we will have to see if this level of video innovation continues.

Another company is Korg which reinvented its popular midi-controller Kaos Pad into the Entrancer, a user-friendly video sampler and effects box. The Entrancer had a slow start when Korg reps didn't understand video or the VJ market, and would repeat incorrect rumors about the Entrancer's functions and

LIGHTSURGEONS

What's the ideal set up for a VJ arriving at a venue?

I guess having a bright projector or projectors and a large screen behind the DJ! Kit wise everyone nowadays has their own laptops, mixers etc.. I use pioneer DVJ's so it helps a lot if the club has these as they are a pain in the ass to lug about

What are the best venues (in terms of equipment) that you've performed in?

KO-KO's in Camden is the only club I've been in that had DVJ's (they didn't really use them for video) which was great I guess more places now will have them, though they are still fairly underground. Clubs in Japan tend to have it locked down kit wise but you can't beat a pile of bear mats propping up an old super8 projector and your granny's net curtains, believe me!

www.thelightsurgeons.co.uk

DJ ANYONE

What are the best venues (in terms of equipment) that you've performed in?

In terms of clubs, I would say, without a doubt, Womb in Tokyo. They've got a raised VJ booth next to the dancefloor, opposite the DJ booth. This way you can clearly see the video projections, right above the DJ. Equally important is to see the audience interacting with the DJ, so this is again a privilege to work where the booth is located. The booth is equipped with a V4 which is the standard mixer at the moment. So it was good to not bring my own on the flight to Tokyo, save myself some luggage space!

Whose gear do you use?

I use Edirol mixers, Korg Midi controllers, Pioneer DVD players and Dell laptops.. I really like Resolume, a software that is really scalable from a beginner's point of view, right up to highly specialised VJing. But for hi-end concert visuals I need to change and use a Hippotizer, which is a failsafe hardware/ software solution. both are well known in the scene, and many people are using such materials nowadays.

www.anyone.org.uk