



simon
honywill

making the world
a better sounding place



about me

Sound is undoubtedly the primary human sense, and it is a source of constant frustration to me that it is so often overlooked, sidelined and compromised. I believe that the world could be a better place if people were better equipped to make sense of the sonic environment in which they live, and were prepared to think about sound in the same way they might about sight. The modern world is a noisy place, and there is little effort being made to control it. With a deeper understanding of how sound affects us, those charged with designing the buildings, venues and public spaces, the sound systems that go into them and how they can be utilised to greatest effect, would be able to enhance the daily experience of everybody at fundamental levels. To that end, if I can use the skills laid out in this CV to make a difference, my time on this earth will have been justified.

I have been in sound for over 30 years, a career that I stumbled upon by happy accident. My career in the production industry has been extremely varied, and the following pages should give an idea of some of the highlights. My work has included mixing shows at the very highest level, sound design for major festivals, corporate and theatre shows and installations, system engineering and commissioning, record production, audio project management and event production management.

More recently I have gained a Diploma in Acoustics and Noise Control at the Institute of Acoustics, and have been engaged as an acoustic consultant at a variety of venues.

I first entered the pro-audio industry with no formal qualifications, as there were none to be had at the time, a situation that has significantly influenced some of my activity since 2004 when I set up the first HNC in Live Sound at Deep Blue Sound in Plymouth. Since then, this course has become a foundation degree, with many former students now out in the industry working, something of which I am proud. Education now plays an important part in my work, and I am currently developing a series of lectures designed to bring together the social, philosophical, artistic and technical aspects of sound in an entertaining and exciting way.

I am fully familiar with most sound equipment currently in common use, as well as some that isn't. I have extensive experience with both PC and Mac computer programs including various DSP systems, ProTools, EASE acoustic design/simulation, Smart Live analysis, standard Windows office programs and various drawing packages.

My outside interests include playing guitar, listening to music, cooking and sailing. I like cars, my wife and I run a 1963 Morris Minor and an allotment, but not at the same time. I have a clean UK driving license.



about me

education

1970 - 1972

sherborne preparatory school, dorset - scholarship

1972 - 1977

allhallows school, rousdon, dorset

7 'o' levels including maths & english

2 'a' levels geology, biology

2012

diploma in acoustics and noise control, institute of acoustics, uk

status

married to sarah with two children



front of house

sound engineer...

London 2012 Paralympics Closing Ceremony

The summer of 2012 was one to remember in the UK, with the crowning glory being the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Each was marked by epic ceremonies that confirmed the UK's production industry to be the best in the world. I was fortunate enough to be asked to play my part in the 'final hurrah', a ceremony that literally burnt its way into the memory in a festival of fire. With help from Coldplay, Rihanna and Jay-Z, a cast of thousands and a fleet of vehicles that would shame a Mad Max movie, the event was a fitting close to the most vibrant celebration of sport, music and British culture ever seen. Euphoria was the overwhelming emotion allied to a sense of real pride in being a part of something truly special.



Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of The Worlds. 2009, 2010 & 2012 tours

This is a major production in anybody's book. Over 100 audio channels at FOH, a 40 piece orchestra, a 10 piece band that includes musical legends, a stellar cast of singers, surround SFX and the iconic voice of Richard Burton come together to make up perhaps one of the most challenging yet satisfying shows that I have ever been involved in. Now re-written and re-recorded, the 'New Generation' sees Liam Neeson taking over from Burton, and the whole piece being given a 21st Century sound. With some of the best technology available, the sound of this show has been acknowledged as being 'stunning' and 'awesome' by not only the audiences but by some die hard industry pros too! It has been my task to design a sound system that delivers the requisite power and fidelity, and develop methods to accurately and reliably reproduce the complex surround soundscape in some challenging sonic environments.



Following the 2012 tour, I was asked to mix the surround sound track for the concert film of Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of the War of the Worlds, released in cinemas in the US and UK in April 2013. More of this later...



front of house

sound engineer...

Katherine Jenkins – from 2010

The hugely popular singing star performs a variety of shows that reflect her abilities as a vocal artist. She works with full orchestra in a more classical style with a repertoire to match, but also with a 5 piece band and strings with supporting playback when she delivers her modern mixture of pop and light classics. The shows demand a subtle touch in order to maintain the balance between the beauty of her voice and the extremely dynamic musical material.



Children In Need Rocks The Royal Albert Hall.
December 2009

Gary Barlow put together an all-star cast for one of the best shows of this type for some time. The show demanded a sound crew par-excellence, and a close knit team supported by a massive amount of equipment put on a fantastic show. As Gary Bradshaw was busy, they asked me to do FOH. I don't mind, because he missed out on mixing Take That, Robbie Williams, Snow Patrol, Annie Lennox, Mica, Shirley Bassey, Dizzee Rascal and Sir Paul McCartney, along with Take That's band and Steve Sidwell arranging and conducting the BBC Concert Orchestra. I loved it.



front of house

sound engineer...

Jose Carreras

The legendary tenor still performs regularly around the world to huge audiences, and when he does so he insists that I go with him to ensure his sound is as he would wish. Recent concerts have included arena shows in Taiwan, Korea, Greece and Scarborough.

I consider it a privilege to be considered first choice for such an artist and gentleman.



Chris Rea

I have been mixing FOH for Chris since 1998. We have several large European and UK tours under our belts, and Chris says that he won't go on tour without me. Whether or not this is true I don't know. I think it's because he and I share a love of good food and wine, cars, guitars and a verbal spar about music, and it might just be that his shows always sound great.





project manager

/designer (audio)...

Head of Department, Glastonbury Festival,
Pyramid Stage Sound

Despite its reputation as an iconic event,
the festival is not exempt from the rules and
regulations that now attempt to minimise sound
as a nuisance to those who live nearby, something
that is increasingly commonplace at festivals everywhere.

Previous experience of working with councils and consultants at sensitive sites
elsewhere stood me in good stead when it was time to choose new audio
providers for the Pyramid Stage in 2007. With R G Jones Sound Engineering
as suppliers and a 'dream team' of fellow engineers, I have been responsible
for specifying a crew and sound system that will satisfy the demands of the
thirty-odd acts, deliver a fully involving experience for the audience and satisfy
the levels set off-site by the council and environmental noise consultants.
Oh, and deal with a whole load of mud too. Two years running in fact.

Festival Republic

So successful has been the sound at Glastonbury that in 2009, Festival Republic
asked me to look after three of their main UK events. The Festivals at Leeds
and Reading are no less challenging, with Reading being especially demanding
from an environmental aspect. Working closely with Vanguardia Consulting,
a system design was implemented that delivered more sound to more
people without upsetting the neighbours than ever before, an unprecedented
achievement. In addition to Reading and Leeds, the Latitude Festival was
also highly successful, and altogether a much more pleasant experience!



project manager

/designer (audio)...

Frankenstein's Wedding.
Live In Leeds March 2011

Open air shows in the UK are generally scheduled in the summer, when there is at least a chance of there being some decent weather. Not so with this one, and darkness and cold were essential to add to the atmosphere.

This highly innovative event was a BBC3 production that invited a live audience of around 10,000 to take part in a 'real-time' musical drama that told the story of Doctor Frankenstein, his wedding and how his creation decided that he wanted some of the action. To say that the wedding party was unusual would be understatement – blood flowed as much as the champagne.

The very gothic surroundings of Kirkstall Abbey in Leeds was the backdrop, and the sound provision had to be as innovative as the production itself, with a radio mic system that covered the entire abbey, a distributed monitor system and three separate audience PA systems. The show was an artistic triumph, and was nominated for a Royal Television Society Award for sound and a BAFTA.



BTC Pipeline 2005 - 2006

Headed by BP, an international consortium finished what has become known as 'the first great engineering project of the 21st century.' The BTC pipeline runs for nearly 1800km, almost entirely underground, from the shores of the Caspian Sea at Baku, Azerbaijan, through Georgia via Tbilisi to Ceyhan in southern Turkey on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The significance of this project, economically, environmentally and politically is huge, bringing the vast oil reserves of the Caspian to the West without having to pass through the narrow and potentially hazardous Bosphorous and Dardanelles Straits. It also means that Europe does not have to rely so heavily on Saudi oil and all its political implications.

My involvement was the planning and execution of sound facilities for events organised by BP in the cities of Baku, Tbilisi and Ceyhan. These ranged from a rock concert in a stadium to a gala evening of major artists from the three countries to formal speeches by the presidents at sensitive venues such as the archaeological museum in Tbilisi. The final event, in Ceyhan, Turkey involved building an air-conditioned, 1500 seat auditorium at the oil terminal in temperatures in excess of 30°.



project manager

/designer (audio)...

Aga Khan's Visit to Tajikistan, 1998

It was a long time ago now but was such an amazing experience that it's worth including here. The Aga Khan is the spiritual leader of the Ismaili branch of Islam, prevalent in the area of N.Afghanistan, SW China, Kyrgystan and Uzbekistan, all of which surround the relatively small ex-Soviet state that is now the independent country of Tajikistan. Every three or four years he travels to the area to visit the Ismaili people and deliver his spiritual messages and support to a country that has been ravaged by civil war, drug trafficking and left without a lack of basic infrastructure with the departure of Soviet rule from Moscow.

His visits there require the deployment of sufficient audio systems to cover audiences of thousands, some of whom have walked for weeks to hear their leader, who addresses his people at sites with stages constructed from the very earth and immense mountains which surround them.

For the Aga Khan's visit in 1998, I was fortunate enough to be responsible for the design and operation of these systems, which had to be delivered to extremely remote locations in ancient Russian Mil helicopters from a central base in the small town of Khorog on the Afghan border.

To say that the job was a challenge would be gross understatement. The difficulties to be overcome were huge in some cases – just getting electricity to power the sound system could mean diverting it from the nearest village via a series of telegraph poles erected just for the event, and rendering the village, some 1.5 miles away, without what little power they had to start with. All of this in the shadow of incredibly beautiful scenery on an epic scale, and in one case overshadowed by the threat of an unstable dam upstream of the village.

This was less a sound engineering job than an exercise in logistics, communication, patience and endurance. The fact that the Imam was heard was almost secondary. It was the trip of a lifetime, never to be forgotten and standing out amongst the trivia of the Western entertainment industry.



a c o u s t i c

consultant...

Baital Futuh Mosque, Morden, South London

The largest mosque in Western Europe is the spiritual home of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, with whom I have a seven year relationship as their primary acoustic consultant. As well as the mosque itself, the annual Jalsa Salana event, held in Hampshire has also presented some difficult audio challenges which I have been able to solve.



As can be seen from the photograph, the men's prayer hall in the mosque is a large room with a high central dome and many highly reflective surfaces. Sound is incredibly important to those who attend the mosque as the words of their leader represent their life credo, and as a client the community is extremely demanding whilst also generous and helpful. Their leader, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, is a quietly spoken gentleman, and his progressing years do not aid the situation.

Through understanding the Ahmadiyya and the rhythms of their daily life at the mosque, and working very closely with the Sami Basri volunteer team who operate the technical systems, I believe that the audio provision is as good as it will ever get.

This has been achieved through careful choice of product, applied acoustics and extremely critical system engineering. The result is crystal clear audio from a system designed to blend in with the unique surroundings (not shown in photo!)

My acoustics qualification is recent, and I have been able to put it to use in some less imposing and demanding situations, such as small venues in the South West where a combination of system engineering and acoustic design have yielded some great results. The mosque is by far the most difficult subject I am yet to encounter, but I am hoping to expand this area of my career with time. I am particularly interested in applying my skills to noise management at open-air music events, where I have had a great deal of experience.



conference

and theatre sound designer

Shaolin, Wheel Of Life

A theatre show featuring the Buddhist monks from the Shaolin Temple in China, the originators of defensive martial arts. The sound design called for the creation of "environmental soundscapes", as well as the marriage of traditional Chinese instruments with Western orchestrations. In close conjunction with the composer, the show was brought to life from scratch and went on to tour the world several times. To create the sound of the specific environments, I spent time researching at the British Library and National Sound Archive and managed to source recordings of Chinese forest wildlife and the atmospheres of Eastern temples.

The Royal Variety Performance

This bastion of British light entertainment is recorded every year at a prominent theatre in a major city in the presence of a senior member of the Royal Family, often Her Majesty the Queen herself. In my time I have designed and operated the sound system for this and other similar events in the theatre many times, although my career has moved in a different direction more recently. The sound design requires that several criteria are fulfilled:

1 – excellent coverage and clarity

2 – a dynamic system powerful enough to convey live music and subtle enough for clear speech

3 – invisible loudspeakers that do not interfere with camera shots and lighting

4 – minimal colouration of television sound

5 – flexible and easily deployed stage monitor systems

Industrial Theatre and Conferences

For a large part of my career I have been responsible for the design and operation of sound systems for some very high-profile clients and the massively expensive events they stage to launch products or motivate their staff. Due to the global economic climate, this area of business has waned recently, but in all cases these events demand absolute clarity of speech and very often there is a significant musical content, be it a band, an orchestra or something a little more off the wall. Some examples of these would be;



conference

Lloyd's Bank

A major conference in Birmingham with keynote speeches and a live performance from The Corrs.

Rover 75 Launch

The Motor Show, Birmingham – an important launch of the last model to be manufactured under the Rover name, featuring a live performance by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Carl Davis on the stand.

ICL Computers

A series of ambitious events over a period of several years that pushed the limits of industrial event design, including moving auditoria by various means with the audience in place during the event, either utilising multiple sound systems or in some cases ones which travelled with the auditorium.

Apple Europe

A high level conference in Monaco introducing the first generation of iMacs and featuring quite a lot of partying to live bands.

Mobil

Another Monaco conference, this time about oil.

Toyota

The launch of an entire new range of vehicles in Barcelona, with live music, dance routines and the inevitable presentations from Japanese executives.

Porsche Stuttgart

An event to launch the Carrera 4, which took place in the factory on the actual production line and in the ancient walled town of Rothenburg.

record producer

The War of The Worlds New Generation – Live - film presentation and DVD

Having completed the 2012/2013 tour of the new stage production, I was asked by Jeff Wayne to mix the 5.1 and stereo sound tracks for the Universal Pictures film and DVD release.



Cinematic presentation of live events is relatively recent, giving audiences the opportunity to either revisit a memorable show or experience it as close as possible to actually being there. This was a challenging job, involving creative use of 5.1 surround sound whilst maintaining the atmosphere of the show recorded as it was at London's O2 Arena.

The Quails – Master of Imperfection

Of all that I have done in recent years, my work as producer on 'Master of Imperfection', the second album from Devon based rock band The Quails has given me the most pleasure.

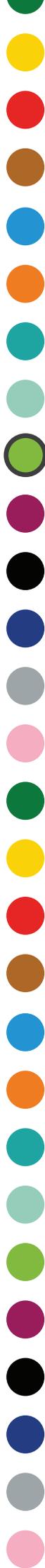
Recorded in just two separate week-long sessions at the remote Sawmills Studios in Cornwall, this album is full of great tunes, raw energy and accomplished songwriting and performance.

In Dan Steer, The Quails have a front man with all the qualities you would want from a modern rock singer, a great voice that enables him to scream like a young Robert Plant and yet be sensitive when required, and the image to go with it. The guitarist, Max Armstrong, is quite simply technically brilliant, and the rhythm section of Sam Banks and Chris Prentice deliver the requisite punch with commitment.

Being only reachable by water and well out of reach of any phone mast, Sawmills Studios is perfect for focussing the mind on the task in hand. The band's relative inexperience of working with a producer was inspirational as there was a clean slate, with the basic songs in place ready to be honed and shaped. It was an exciting and artistically fulfilling time, and I think the band and the album deserves massive recognition. Time will tell.

PS – well, time has told, the album has gone the way of so many and The Quails have sadly split. It's the nation's loss. Dan Steer is now front man for These Reigning Days – watch this space...





record producer

Chris Rea – The Road To Hell And Back

For an artist whose career has lasted as long as his, it is surprising that Chris Rea has never made a live album. His explanation is that he has never felt confident enough in being properly represented as a performer.

In over ten years of working as his live sound engineer, I have built up sufficient trust that he commissioned me to record, engineer and produce his first ever live album, *The Road To Hell And Back*, released in September 2006. Since then, we have worked together on Chris's retro-project, 'The Return of the Fabulous Hofner Bluenotes', an album and subsequent tour that sought to recreate the sounds of the acts that influenced Chris from the 50's, 60's and 70's.





r g j o n e s

My first job after having moved to London in 1979 was as a van driver with South London sound equipment rental company R G Jones Sound Engineering. My entire career since then has been connected with them in some way, whether as an employee or as a freelancer. It was this company that gave me the unique grounding in the audio industry that few others have been lucky enough to experience. My positions there have included van driver, rigger, storeman, junior engineer, senior engineer, system designer, sales manager and project manager. I am now a consultant director with the company but remain self-employed. My clients come to me, I go to R G Jones, the client gets a great result. It's a proven formula that continues to be highly successful. Over the years the work has extensively included classical music (something for which both R G Jones and I are renowned), television, conference, touring, and major public events. It is an association of which I am proud, especially as the company has the enviable reputation as the oldest established sound company in the UK (since 1926), and holds Her Majesty The Queen's Royal Warrant for audio services to the Royal Household.

Some of the projects in which I have played a major part for R G Jones include:

Classical Spectacular; UK and Europe for Raymond Gubbay Ltd. Since 1993 and still going strong

D-Day 50th Anniversary Commemorations, Normandy, France – this involved the design and installation of a discreet system on the sensitive site of the British War Cemetery in Bayeux, for addresses by Heads Of State including John Major, President Bush and President Mitterand. It was also necessary to install a system on the beach at Arromanche between tides for H.M. Queen to address assembled veterans.

VE Day 50th Anniversary Celebrations, Hyde Park satellite stages and Buckingham Palace for Major Sir Michael Parker KCVO CBE

King Hussein's Jubilee Accession Celebrations, Amman, Jordan for Major Sir Michael Parker KCVO CBE

Open-air classical concerts throughout UK for Leeds Castle, Royal Opera, RPO, IMG, World Choir among many others

Henley Arts Festival 1985 – present

Myriad television shows, including Gladiators, Miss World, An Audience With...

Joy To The World 1992 – 1995 at the Royal Albert Hall for Major Sir Michael Parker KCVO CBE

The Golden Jubilee Celebrations 2002

Cittaviveka Buddhist Temple, Sussex – design and commissioning for a new sound system in the aesthetically sensitive Dhamma Hall. The sound system is essentially invisible.

HM Queen's Golden Wedding Anniversary Gala Concert, Royal Festival Hall, November 1997

Papal Visit, 1982

Opening of Thames Barrier by H.M. Queen 1982



advocate of MLA

Martin Audio is a British manufacturer of professional loudspeakers at the highest level. Recently they introduced a revolution in loudspeaker design that threatens to turn the industry on its head, in the form of Multi-Cellular Loudspeaker Array technology, MLA. The MLA range of products is such a radical departure from the herd that I wanted to be a part of the revolution, and lend my name and reputation to something that fitted in with my philosophies on how to make the world a better sounding place.

With this system it is now possible to accurately predict and create the most egalitarian sonic experience for an audience yet. As a tool for covering an auditorium it has no equal. As a device for delivering the highest fidelity audio, it has no equal.

I am now contracted on a retained basis with Martin Audio as an advocate of MLA. Having been using the system since its inception some two years ago, I am well qualified to speak with authority on the massive advantages this system has over all of the competition.



s o u n d e n g i n e e r

freelance...

Royal Military Tattoo 2000

Assistant sound designer and FOH. A major production at Horse Guards Parade in Central London, summer 2000. A very large distributed sound system was used to convey the story of the defence of Great Britain through history. The show had a mixture of live action and multitrack reproduction, supported by 300 marching bandmen, miked to fit with the recorded material. The soundtrack included the explosion of a nuclear bomb.

Janadriyah, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, January 1999

Assistant designer to John Del Nero for a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the re-unification of Saudi Arabia, produced by Major Michael Parker KCVO CBE.

13th Asian Games Opening & Closing Ceremonies,
Bangkok, Thailand, December 1998

Sound consultant for stadium PA system, audio mix for broadcast to a potential viewing audience of 1.5 billion.

Moscow 850, Red Square 1998

FOH for Britannia Row Productions. This was a theatre production, classical concert, political statement, history lesson and potential public disaster all in one. Fortunately, only one member of the crew was stabbed, and it wasn't me.

The Classical Brit Awards, Royal Albert Hall

Sound design for a major awards show with a large live music content. Artists appearing have included Nigel Kennedy, Lesley Garrett and Julian Lloyd Webber.

Karl Jenkins' Adiemus project

System design and FOH. This show involves the musical moulding of a traditional orchestra with a large array of ethnic percussion, nine incredible vocalists singing an invented language, solo recorders, guitars, pipes and female vocals with pre-recorded percussion and click tracks. Karl's unique music is a very powerful sonic force when played live, and is one of the most thrilling mix jobs I have ever had.

Heineken Night Live 2001, 2002, Ahoy Stadium, Rotterdam

Two large scale rock "variety" shows for which I mixed front of house. Featured artists were Madness, Steve Winwood, Chaka Khan, Donna Summer, Shaggy, En Vogue plus many others

Songs And Visions, Wembley Stadium August 1997

FOH for Britannia Row Productions. The show was a large production featuring major artists such as Rod Stewart, Jon Bon Jovi, Seal, Robert Palmer (RIP), Mary J Blige & k d lang, performing with a band of the world's best session musicians and an orchestra.



sound engineer

Various events

For the record industry, mostly for Sony and BMG, including showcases by many established artists (Alicia Keys, Kosheen, John Mayer, Christina Aguilera)

A few tours & shows I remember...

Gary Barlow UK Tour, 1999. FOH

I remember it, but Gary would rather not

All Saints UK Tour, 1999. FOH

They sacked me, thank GOD...

Boyzone, 1998. FOH

Couldn't get it loud enough to get above the screaming

Midland '97 Festival, Battersea Power Station for SSE. FOH

Everything was fine until The Prodigy showed up...

Awards shows

Everybody does these, here are some I can recall

National Television Awards, Royal Albert Hall

World Sports Awards, Sporting Club, Monaco

World Music Awards, Sporting Club, Monaco (spent quite a lot of time there over the years – got to mix Stevie Wonder one time!)

British Rock and Pop Awards – in the early 80's, before it became the Brits

Lord OfThe Dance June 1996 - Jan 1997

FOH Engineer/Sound Designer, Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance inaugural World Tour. This included a major involvement in the creation of the show's soundtrack, featuring quad effects and music combined with a live eight piece band, and adapting the sound design to fit into venues as the tour progressed.

And going even further back...

Aida, Earl's Court 1989

Luciano Pavarotti, various European venues 1989 - 1991

Jean Michel-Jarre Docklands concerts 1990

Silk Cut Country Music Festival 1988

Military Tattoos in Germany and UK for Major Sir Michael Parker KCVO CBE

TX sound balance engineer, Lifestyle TV

PA systems for the extinction of the dinosaurs



The Beginning... 1977 - 1979



Performing musician, general boatyard work, boat delivery around SW England, Europe and N.Africa



Current Ambitions



Be a better guitarist



Be a better father



Develop my skills as a husband



To constantly improve my creative ability and ensure that it benefits others.



To create a grounding in education for the industry to which I have dedicated my working life.



To drag the South West of England kicking and screaming into the 21st Century of event production.



If you've got this far and haven't dozed off, you're either looking for somebody who's not a sound engineer, or you can't find somebody to do a really specific job, like amplify the sound of plankton or something like that. Well, look no further, because I've done that too. Seriously.

