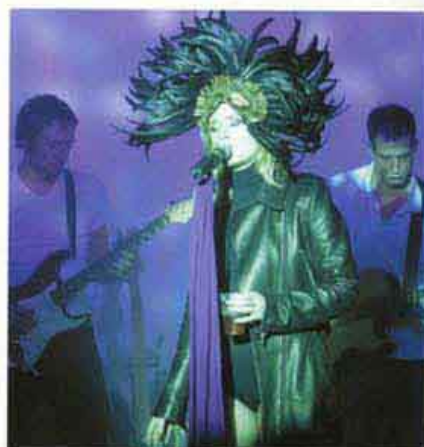


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moloko

THE SPARKLING STATUES TOUR BY MOLOKO HAS SEEN THE BAND THAT DREAMILY CAPTIVATED GLASTONBURY METAMORPHOSE INTO A STUNNINGLY DYNAMIC LIVE OUTFIT.

'Sing It Back', surely one of the finest festival soundtracks ever penned, bounced irresistibly to its close and the rapturous capacity audience at the Carling Academy Brixton responded with an ear-splitting cacophony. "Do you think it's going alright?" deadpanned Graham Peacock from across his XL3, the affable Moloko manager doubling with aplomb as FOH engineer. But the look on his face said it all. It was indeed going alright: a valedictory celebration to mark the finale of a tour that's created a whole new vibe — not to mention an expanded live audience — for the Sheffield-based duo.

Led by the slinky, golden-voiced Roisin Murphy (the Irish chanteuse's first name is pronounced 'Rosheen') and partner-in-music Mark Brydon, augmented live by three session players and the 'unofficial third member', Hammond player Eddie Stevens, Moloko's was a vibrant, beautifully paced and often tongue-in-cheek performance, bursting with energy and ideas underpinned with razor-sharp musicality.

It sounded awesome, with Colchester-based Audio Plus' newly-acquired Funktion One Resolution system and XTA control, and looked great, too, thanks to a Tom Lesh design that made the most of punchy moving lights, rich colours and teasing shadowplay.

Surprisingly, *Statues* (the title of their most recent album) marked the band's first full production tour, the

decision to 'go for it' taken by Peacock and Moloko in the light of a cooling-off in press support after the heady days of 'Sing It Back' and their other dancefloor monster, 'The Time Is Now'.

Said Peacock: "We took the decision to push the new record through being a really great live act. We went out in May and stayed out all summer with indoor shows and 25 festivals, and it just built and built. The promoters were so happy with it all that they immediately made offers for this tour, and we just kept going.

"I wanted to make it a production tour, and we slightly forced the hand of the promoters to make it possible — they were very co-operative. The shows sold between 85 and 100% and here we are, full again tonight." The tour played arenas, clubs and theatres ranging from 900 to 8,000 people, kicking off at the Heineken Music Hall in Amsterdam.

Peacock continued: "We all made our choices of production suppliers and, having listened to so many systems over the summer, I wanted Funktion One. After that first show for 5,500 people I knew it was the right decision — people were coming up wanting to know what the system was. In the biggest venue it was throwing 400 feet and it was still right in your face. It blew me away, it was everything I wanted in terms of mid and top end clarity without distortion, and, of course, the 218 bins really deliver! It's not the cheapest

to hire but it's the best so I had to have it."

The band went on to win Best International Live Act at Belgium's *TMF Awards*, beating Coldplay and Radiohead with 80% of the vote, adding extra impetus to the band. Laughed Peacock: "It's created a momentum of its own — it's all turned around into a non-stop steamroller."

He mixed the shows on a Midas XL3 with a Heritage for production manager/monitor engineer Gerry Wilkes, using a Shure Beta 58A wireless through an Avalon compressor for Roisin's wide-ranging vocal. He ran the mix through a stereo Avalon for further warmth along with an XTA SiDD, using the latter's dynamic EQ function, he explained. "I used one of the SiDDs simply to stop the bass lifting off. 'Forevermore' has this huge sub in it which can be quite painful, so I set up the SiDD at 80Hz and it took the sub under the pain threshold. That was a recommendation from John Newsham at Funktion One, and it's a really superb treatment. I used it as a kind of safety net over the mix as well." A further SiDD 'nurtured' a Fender Rhodes.

The Funktion One Resolution system comprised left and right arrays of self-powered Res 5 mid/highs, flown five wide, two deep, complemented by five Res 4D downfills, a centre cluster of four Res 5s, and eight F218 bass bins per side. QSC Powerlite 4s drove the subs. XTA DP226s provided system crossovers and delays, controlled through AudioCore software via a

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Above Right (Top): One side of the Funktion One system at Brixton. **Right Centre: (L-R)** Stefan Imhof of Audio Plus, system engineer David Cole, Moloko manager/FOH engineer Graham Peacock (also bottom left), Tony Andrews of Funktion One.

live link to system engineer David Cole's laptop ("It's the ultimate in control and flexibility"). XTA processing was also in charge of the monitor system.

Meanwhile, an XTA C2 digital compressor was used on stage for another specific task. "It did a lovely job on the bass guitarist's Ampeg SVT cab, which gets a little bit lairy, and the C2 kept the bass under control fantastically. In a way they're almost too good: you just can't hear them doing their job, which is great for the musician."

Effects included a Korg SDD3000, two Yamaha SPX990s, one SPX90 MkII and an SPX2000. Peacock had a special mention for the Opus 87 clip mics for toms and snare bottoms, a 65 for the kick and a stereo MC930 for the glockenspiel, all supplied by beyerdynamic UK. "The whole system's come together very well; it's an engineer's dream, and it's made me change my engineering technique because it's so accurate you can hear any flaws in your mix. You have to be very precise in what you're doing," said

Peacock.

GETTING HIGH (END)

LD Tom Lesh had been asked to light a handful of Moloko shows in Brazil three years ago and heard nothing more until, by chance, Roisin saw one of his Primal Scream shows and asked for his services for Statues.

"In Brazil the band blew me away immediately, so it was great to be asked back," he grinned. "We started in April and then did an exhaustive number of festivals over the summer — but ultimately, that's what shaped the show that we have now. The way the band tightened up their set really paid dividends on this tour.

"They let me have *carte blanche*, and when we started in May, we just got used to working together as a small unit doing the festivals, and ideas started getting thrown around about specific more bits and pieces of the show. Roisin knew she wanted a big and bold look that included the audience, which I like to do with a

dance band, to get rid of that invisible barrier and make the audience part of the whole experience."

The look was big and vivacious yet used a minimum of equipment — 12 High End Systems x.Spot Xtreme moving heads, Studio Beams as tower toners and set infills, and Cozmar Power Cyls, all controlled from a Whole Hog II and Wing.

"I was originally going out with Martin MAC2000s but they weren't available; so Neg Earth suggested the x.Spots which are certainly as bright, if not brighter, and have some very nice features — great colour mixing and gobos. They're very smooth lights and have given me no real problems, which is good, especially with six of them on top of the towers. So it's turned into a High End show. The fact that Neg Earth were so busy worked out perfectly for me and I'm a very happy man!"

For the Academy, where a Dick Carruthers-directed DVD shoot was in full swing, a 48ft audience truss was added to the touring rig with eight bars of

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ACLs and extra eight x Spots, with another four bars of ACLs over the drinks bars at the back.

Tricks that were born on the festival circuit include one number where Roisin entwines herself in ropelight: "She brought it from home one day and said 'can we use this somewhere?'" A handheld red followspot in the stagefront pit was Lesh's idea: "I wanted to start playing with silhouettes just because of the way that she moves, and the gold cloak that she wears; you get these great shadows on the cyc." Silhouettes abound, in fact, featuring alongside the six slender truss towers as a visual echo of the *Statues* theme.

BLOWN AWAY

Breathless in Brixton, superlatives were flying at the end of the show. Audio Plus founder Stefan Imhof opined: "I've been a Turbosound user for eight years from TSE/TMS through to Floodlight, and, having heard a lot of systems over the last few years the Tony Andrews/John Newsham designs are still way ahead of the rest of the major players, coupled with the fact that Funktion One provide an excellent service and are still passionate about audio, as we are. Our new Res 5 system has proved itself on this tour; with its ability to be configured for a multitude of venues that require different horizontal and vertical dispersions from ground stacking through to flying. Audio Plus is now set to 'deliver the experience'."

David Cole added: "Funktion One bent over backwards throughout the inception and the tour itself to back us up — they were hugely supportive." Tony Andrews had the last word, this time on the subject of the music on offer. "That was the best live band I've ever heard at the Academy. I didn't know they made them like that any more — fantastic!"

Photography courtesy of Gasoline Media & Graham Peacock

MOLOKO — *Statues* Tour 2003 Key Production Crew & Suppliers:

Moloko: Roisin Murphy & Mark Brydon with Eddie Stevens, Dave Cooke, Davide DeRose and Phil Peskett • Promoters: SJM & ClearChannel Entertainment • Agent: ITB (Maria Hutt) • Artist Manager/FOH Engineer: Graham Peacock • Tour Manager: Ross Duncan • Production Manager/Monitor Engineer: Gerry Wilkes • PA: Audio Plus • Monitors & Control: Skan Audio • Lighting Designer: Tom Lesh (www.lushlounge.co.uk) • Lighting: Neg Earth Lights • DVD Director: Dick Carruthers • DVD Production: M Productions • Backline Technicians: Kevin Bell, Paul 'Spoonar' Heywood, Matt Cox • Catering: Flying Saucers • Buses: Beat The Street • Trucking: Fly By Nite