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Diana Ross Tour Leads Way in Event Safety

TAO Misc. (part of the TAO Group) and the PA rental company, **Major Tom**, have joined forces to deliver a new level of health and safety for the touring industry, pioneered on Diana Ross's European / Love You Tour.

Highlighting the lack of awareness of responsibility for health and safety issues on tour, and seeking to eliminate the "fingers-crossed" approach to this important issue, TAO's **Andy Cotton**, who lectures for the UK home office on event safety, and Major Tom's **Chris Marsh**, Diana Ross' sound engineer / production manager, have developed the approach to ensure all legal requirements and safety measures are met, proving it can be done in a cost effective manner on a medium size tour.



For the recent Ross tour, TAO produced all health and safety documentation and risk assessments (including fire under the new Regulatory Reform Act), event guidance documentation, produced crew tour welfare books listing nearest amenities and basic principals of safe working, and signed off rigging, staging, lighting and PAs. They liaised with American crew and suppliers, monitored crowd movement and reaction during the show, oversaw traffic and pedestrian management, addressed changes during the tour and handled all specifics concerning health, safety, welfare, and security. "Our role and focus was to look around site, highlight H&S issues, and not only report the problem, but provide the solution," explained Cotton.

"Having fully researched current health and safety regulations and legislations, I found it scary to see how many things you thought were just practice or venue-related ideas that were possibly an obstruction to your everyday work, are actually a legal requirement," continued Marsh, "and, as production manager, the buck stops with you. I'd worked with Andy Cotton before and respected his approach. The health and safety of your crew and audience shouldn't be swept under the carpet and we both strongly felt shows like this need someone to oversee this whole area. As experts, TAO developed a complete strategy, providing complete peace of mind and enabling the crew and myself to get on with our jobs."

Diana Ross's tour manager, **Mike Droke**, agreed: "It's a great guard against litigious action, so things that normally we've said that's fine and deemed safe we're taking a second look at. I've seen a bit of this in Australia, but the States isn't all over it yet. On this tour, every sheet and curtain in fire retardant, every cable is taped properly, and we know no-one is going to sue the sound engineer because the sound is too high."

"We think it's important that industry starts to implement this practice on every tour, stresses Marsh. "Our biggest fear is people will only wake up to this when something goes really, really wrong. I'll continue to work with TAO to take this to every tour I am involved with. I'd rather be one of the first test cases of introducing this health and safety practice rather than one of the first in court defending my name."

(9 July 2007)

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