

PROJECTION CONNECTION
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PROJECTION, LIGHTS & STAGING NEWS

Adding Dazzle to *American Idol*



Flexible neon strips for the *American Idol* set can be controlled via DMX.

HOLLYWOOD, CA — For a few seconds, at least, *American Idol*'s warbling hopefuls, exasperated judges and snarky host took a back seat to the show's brand new set and lighting design. The March 11 show began with host Ryan Seacrest standing on a dark stage. With the flip of a switch, thousands of lights came on, dazzling the audience as well as contestants.

The show's new set features CII's (Christopher International, Inc) Neoflex LED neon on most of its components, including the backdrop, towers, pillars, band mezzanine, and steps. *American Idol* logos also used the glowing strips. In all, there was a total of more than 2000 feet of the diffused neon material.

Since the Neoflex strips can be controlled via DMX, they gave designers a way to activate a one-static lighting component on their sets, using flashing sequences, chasing, fades, and other lighting effects. For a discussion with Kieran Healy, LD for *American Idol* and other top shows, turn to the *PLSN* Interview, page 39.

Full Sail Changes Name, Reflecting University Status

WINTER PARK, FL — Full Sail Real World Education has been awarded University status by the Florida Department of Education's Commission for Independent Education (CIEICU) and its national accrediting body, the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSCCT). Effective immediately, the new name of the institution will be Full Sail University.

"We appreciate all of the support from the educational community and the entertainment industry that has led to this milestone in our history," says Full Sail University President Garry Jones. "As Full Sail University, we will continue to grow and carry on the tradition of empowering students with the knowledge necessary to pursue their educational and career goals, through our long-standing tradition of accelerated, real world education and immersive, project-based learning."

Pyro Accident Injures Dozens at WrestleMania

By Frank Hammel

ORLANDO, FL — A record turnout for World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE)'s WrestleMania XXIV at the Citrus Bowl March 30 was marred by a pyrotechnics accident near the end of the event. Fire department officials said more than 30 spectators were injured, none seriously, although three were taken by ambulance to a local hospital to be treated for burns and other injuries.

Deer Park, N.Y.-based Zenith Pyrotechnology handled the pyro for the event. Greg Hoggatt, assistant chief *continued on page 11*

Emilio Navaira Hospitalized after Tour Bus Crash

HOUSTON — Emilio Navaira, 45, a Grammy award-winning Tejano singer, was hospitalized in critical condition after his tour bus crashed in a single-vehicle accident on I-610 in Houston. Seven other passengers aboard the bus were injured as well.

The tour bus crashed into the traffic barrels near a highway divider shortly before dawn on Sunday March 23. Navaira had performed in Houston the previous night with his band, Rio. Navaira, a native of San Antonio, studied music at Texas State and formed a band in 1989 with his brother Raul. In 2003, their album, *Acuerdate*, won a Grammy for best Tejano album. They have released 12 albums in all.

Raul, who was also on the bus, received minor injuries. Five passengers were treated at Ben Taub Hospital. Emilio Navaira was taken to the ICU at Memorial Hermann Hospital. Two others were treated at Memorial Hermann and released.

Creating Magic, Under the Stars



They said it couldn't be done, but François Roupinian and Lightemotion took on the challenge of revamping *Les Légendes Fantastiques*, an annual spectacle of music and dance staged under the summer stars in Drummondville, Quebec.

The main challenge was the outdoor venue — an uneven stage with a man-made lake and a forest in the background. Roupinian and Lightemotion needed to find a way to light the actors on the ground and in the water without obstructing the view of the audience.

But with the help of rehearsals captured on Quicktime and PVC pipes left buried by the previous crew, Roupinian and Lightemotion were able to create theatrical magic in the great outdoors. *For the full story, turn to page 32.*

Inside Theatre

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Technopolis

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