

Lighting & Sound America

\$10.00

plasma media

Katy Perry:

The Prismatic Tour

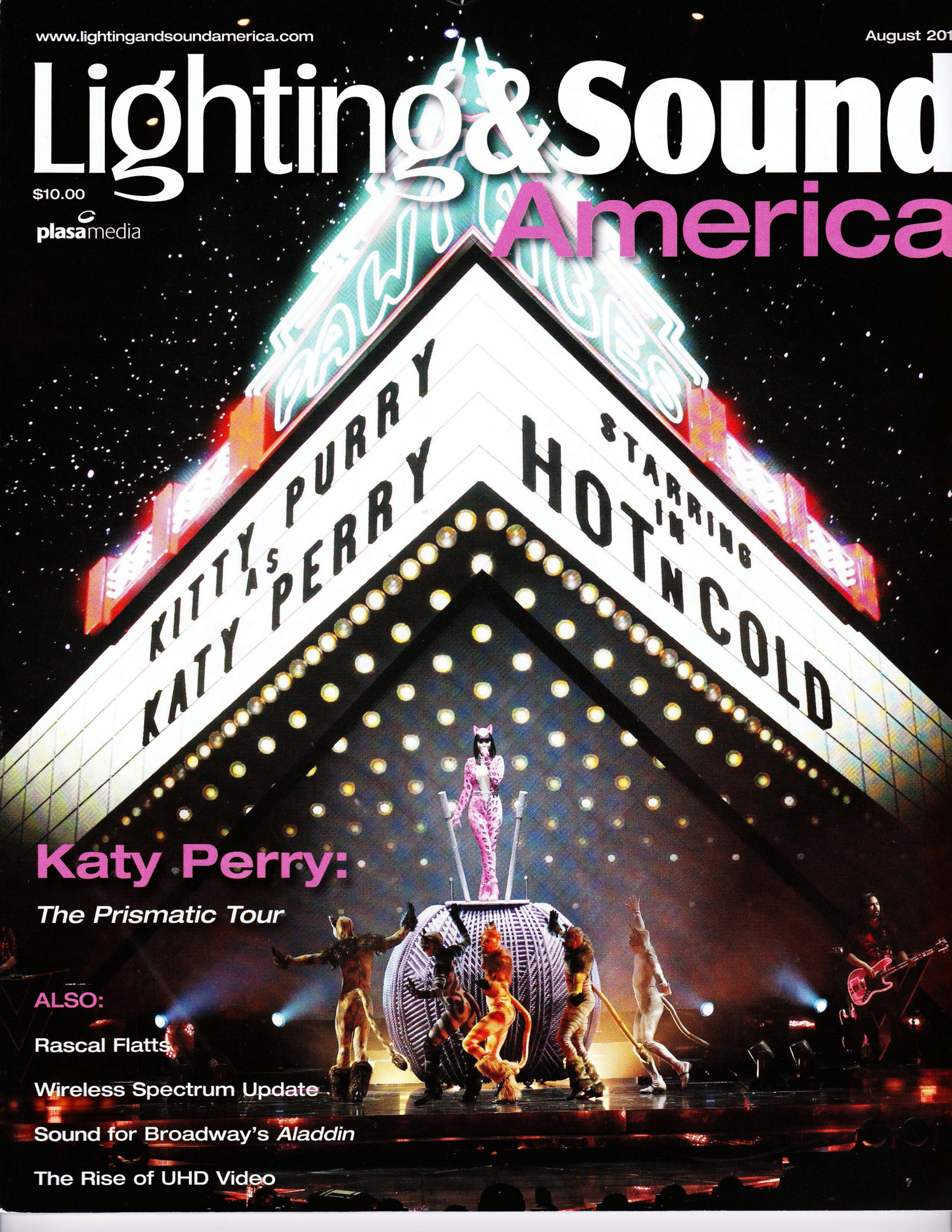
ALSO:

Rascal Flatts

Wireless Spectrum Update

Sound for Broadway's *Aladdin*

The Rise of UHD Video



Parallel Processes:

Designing a Production for Clubbed Thumb's Summerworks Festival

Billed as the home of "funny, strange, and provocative new plays," New York's Clubbed Thumb Theatre has become a primary generator of new works by many of today's brightest new theatre voices. Such now-prominent names as Adam Bock, Lisa D'Amour, Sarah Ruhl, Jordan Harrison, Madeleine George, and Samuel D. Hunter have had their early works produced by the company over the last decade.

Each June, Clubbed Thumb presents Summerworks, a festival of new plays. Unlike the table readings or semi-staged productions that often make up such events, the company goes a long way toward giving the new plays full productions, with

designers working alongside the playwrights to refine their work before the audience arrives.

"Our productions are fully designed and staged under an Equity Showcase contract," says Michael Bulger, Clubbed Thumb's associate production. "Each festival has three plays, and each has nine performances. There are four days of turnaround between each production. We do other series throughout the year, but they are more script-focused. In this workshop, the playwright, director, and scenic designer get together with a set of actors. In the course of a week, we stage the play, break it apart, poke holes in it, and come to a much clearer idea of what it might be."

One of this year's productions was *16 Words or Less*, by Peggy Stafford. "It's about a woman who works in a one-room flower shop in Brooklyn," says Portia Krieger, who directed. "She is overhelpful and overly involved in the lives of her customers." The title comes from a customer's request that she help him edit a long condolence note to the length of the title.

Daniel Zimmerman, who designed the set for *16 Words or Less*, notes that this is his third Summerfest. (He and Krieger are speaking to *LSA* several weeks before the production opens.) Flexibility is the key, he notes: "Coming in with lots of concrete ideas wouldn't be the most efficient approach. Portia and I talked about the play, but we purposely didn't make any decisions about the design. Something I've discovered is to bring in Foamcore and other building supplies; that way, I'm sketching, even creating the model as we go along, seeing the actors in the parameters of



SPECIAL EFFECT SUPPLIERS FOR KATY PERRY'S PRISMATIC WORLD TOUR

+1 (817) 480 9443 | WWW.Q-SFX.COM | INFOUSA@Q-SFX.COM



the space." This is quite different from his usual process, he says: "I feel way more active, designing with the director in real time."

Krieger says, "We really started with zero this year in a way that has been exciting." She adds that the presence of Zimmerman and his in-development model allow her to work on two planes at once. "I'll say, 'What if we did this in the model?', and then we can execute the same idea in the space."

Zimmerman adds, "With the playwright in the room with us, we can bounce ideas off of each other."

Of course, this means the design is changing during the entire process, Krieger says: "A huge development today was, a half-hour before the workshop, we twisted the flower shop 45°," Zimmerman concurs: "Putting the room on an angle was really very informative for us. It makes the staging of some scenes easier." Krieger adds, "The play is a lot about people calling each other on the phone. And so



we're still figuring out how to show a room in the center of the stage and have people calling from elsewhere. Do we want to create sets for these other locations? What is the useful language for the callers?" The solution proved to be a central flower shop unit at stage center, with the callers seen along with walls of the theatre. The fin-

ished design can be seen in the accompanying photo.

The final production, which was favorably reviewed, also featured lighting by Mike Inwood, costumes by Sydney Maresca, and sound by Steve Nelson. All Summerworks plays were staged at the Wild Project in Manhattan. ☺

LITTLE FOCUS

FOCUSING WRENCH DESIGNED FOR THE LIGHTING PROFESSIONAL.

Fits standard bolt heads and wing nuts* found in the lighting industry

Sizes: Square 5/16" and 1/2"; Hex 3/4"

Wing nuts*

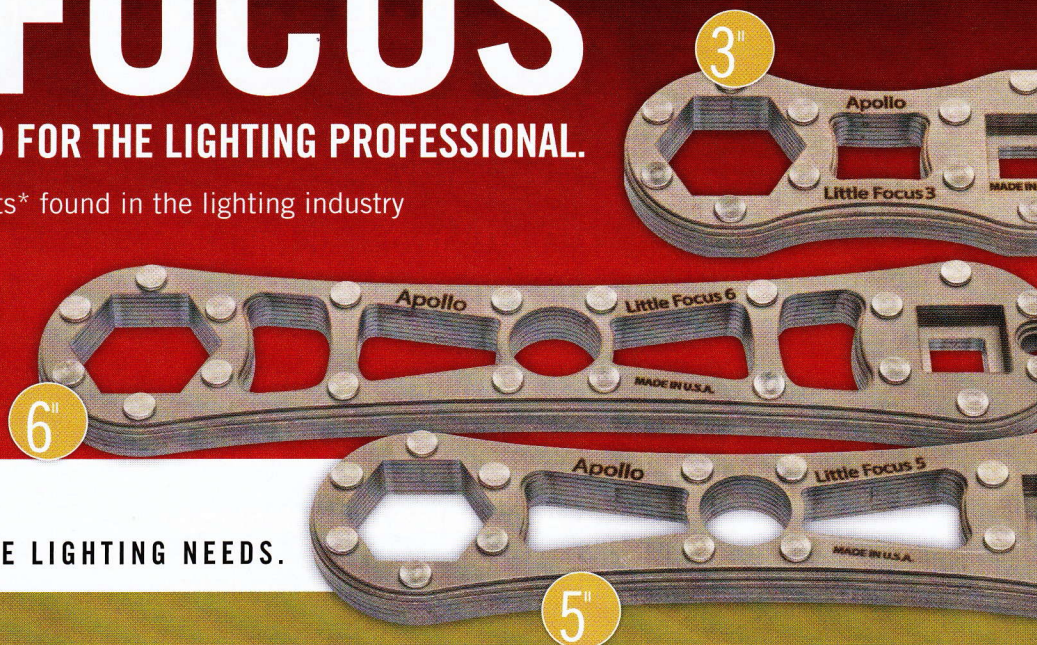
Lightweight solid design

Constructed from durable stainless steel

*Not available on the Little Focus 3.

AS ON YOUR BELT?

THE WRENCH FOR ALL YOUR STAGE LIGHTING NEEDS.



Apollo Design Technology, Inc.
+1.260.497.9191 • +1.800.288.4626
ApolloDesign.net

