

All The Henge's A Stage

Walking into the *Beyond Stonehenge* theater (the majority portion of Vanderbilt Hall that is temporarily demised for this purpose) is like walking into a nearly full-scale contemporary sculpture of Stonehenge.

The room is dimly lit, with white spots illuminating the white chiffon-like fabric that gives theatrical flesh to the dramatic skeleton of the symbolic stones. Sandwiched between the dimensions of the multiple planes is an impressive array of now latent gear that serves to provide a sense of great expectation, in a surreal juxtaposition of the function of high tech in the form of antiquity.

The faint but discernable sounds of a summer's night, crickets and all, is heard as the audience assembles on the floor, sitting on a montage of carpet throws and surprisingly comfortable camp seats. The arrangement is organic, with clusters of guests seated in all manners in and around the staging. This is not theater-in-the-round, but theater all around.

The audience assembled, the space goes dark, and the sounds of summer intensify, soon revealing a cadence filled with chanting drums, that crescendos to final bass beat. All is silent as a figure appears, first in shadows and then in brilliant chroma, wrapped in an elaborate robe.

"This is the place..." the actor pronounces, "... where it all begins." The sentence is visually punctuated as the sculpture reappears out of the darkness, but this time glowing with multicolored richness of the ancient bluestone. Indeed, *Beyond Stonehenge* has begun.

In the next eight minutes, the audience is enraptured in the spell of story and spectacle, in a three-dimensional multimedia show that immerses the audience on the stage, up-close and personal, in the middle of the scene, with the actor who facilitates the experience at times in narration and at others in soliloquy.

The audience is treated to travelogue as performance art, Cirque du Soleil presents Shakespeare, MOMA does music video. These metaphors are all correct, and yet all somehow impotent in their ability to fully capture an experience that is as dynamic as one's point of view.

As the actor moves around the scene and around the through the audience, ducking in and out of the sculptural henge, at times he is defined by darkness outlined in prismatic silhou-



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ette, sometimes in Hitchcockian-shadow through the translucent scrim, sometimes in full-bodied reality only a few feet away, and all of these perspectives are simultaneously possible.

As the show's story ebbs and flows, so does the theatrical artistry, from a single spot up-lighting the actor's face, to a sweeping vistas of projected England, to array of talking heads set against a visual horizon of their verbal message, to richly textured gobo patterns which magically follow the actor around the henge, to a visual crescendo that makes every surface – human, structure, staging – a projections surface enveloped in the transient lumens, a holistic ballet of image and sonic delight expressing the essence of the Excellence that is Britain.



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The Nu Yourk Tymes

Sunday Scenario Magazine

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 14, 2001

The Play's The Thing!

Beyond Stonehenge

"Right, it's quite ironic, actually," says **Phillip Warner**, the Chairman of UKinNY, "but one of the last major matters to which we committed, could well be the most remembered. I guess dear William was right, the play is the thing, wherein I think we will collect the conscience of the corporate and consumer kings."

Mr. Warner (who's real job is that of President of the prestige Anglo brand Asprey & Garrard, maker of the finest gifts fit for a king – literally), is referring to the RealityPlaysm theatrical attraction "*Beyond Stonehenge*," playing at Vanderbilt Hall in Grand Central Terminal. It is all part of a two week celebration, featuring an everything British barrage of strategic marketing, served with style on a sterling silver platter for New York. While fashion shows and films, buskers and business seminars, symphony concerts and Royalty consorts receive the New York public – up, down and all over town – Midtown's Grand Central Terminal is showcasing a bit of New Age British Broadway (see backpage, **All The Henge's A Stage**).

Though relatively short and to the plot point (as is the format of an attraction with four shows an hour), the show is, indeed, intense theater; and is, itself, British by design. Though the RealityPlaysm theatrical attraction technique was invented and the show produced by the American firm, Strategic Leisure Inc., *Beyond Stonehenge* is the creative magic of the brilliant British production designer, **Mark Fisher** (with such credits as "Steel Wheels" and "Voodoo Lounge" for Stones concert fans), assisted by his London image-maker 'mates' at the firm "4i" (see insert).

"The mission of UKinNY is to celebrate the breadth of British Excellence in products, services, arts, education, culture and tourism," Mr. Warner explains. "British Excellence is a broad topic to communicate across the Atlantic. We had been planning UKinNY for a year and a half, with a myriad of wonderful festival events and promotions scheduled throughout the City. But, I knew nothing congealed our message into a



"... the multi-media mystique of the RealityPlaysm technique ..."

singular, sensational statement. When I had lunch with Alan that day back on May 1st, I knew we had found our vehicle for the public to actually experience our message."

The "Alan" to which Mr. Warner refers is **Alan Capper**, the former head of Saatchi & Saatchi's worldwide public relations operations, and now President of Spectrum Public Relations located here on West 55th Street. "An old colleague and friend of mine, Graham Axford, who is an investment banker in London, introduced me to Strategic Leisure and RealityPlaysm," Mr. Capper explains. "The first thing I thought of was UKinNY. It seemed to be such a perfect, strategic fit. Britain is known for its theater, from the Bard of Avon to the Really Useful brands. UKinNY is focused on contemporary British excellence. What better way to communicate the essence of excellence that is today's Britain than through a high-tech, high touch, high impact multimedia theatrical show. In advertising terms, *Beyond Stonehenge* is an artistic, dramatic advertisement as an attraction, cutting through the clutter by literally putting the audience into the story."

Pre & Post Show & Party

"Originally, all 12,000 sq. ft. of Vanderbilt Hall was slated to be a curated exhibit on British products. As you can see," Mr. Warner declares, "we still have the exhibit in about a third of the space, and it will probably be much more popular, now that, in essence, it acts as the pre and post show to *Beyond Stonehenge*; and the Covent Garden buskers are a big hit as well. In the remainder of the space, we can put through upwards of 2,000 people an hour."

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Strategic Finance

"We could have well over a quarter million people see this show," Mr. Warner continues. "That includes all the parties, of course, about two an evening, on average, over the course of the festival. Quite an icebreaker for any social gathering, I should think."

While all these efforts have very clear strategic and profit making objectives, Mr. Warner is the Chairman of a 501C3 not-for-profit entity. How, then, do you finance within two weeks time what is "in-round-numbers-a-million-dollars" worth of show production costs?

"This did not seem to be easy, or perhaps even possible, at first, but the idea was so compelling we decided to give it a try," Mr. Warner admits. "First, we made the decision that the show would, in practical terms, not be free. Just as the Met and other cultural institutions ask for a modest donation for admission, as a not-for-profit organization we imputed a \$5.00 value to *Beyond Stonehenge*. That seemed reasonable in as much as movies are now \$10 and this is a form of live theater. While we will not turn away anyone, the expectation of the donation we think will qualify the guest as being truly interested. Our target market is New York adults 25 to 54 years old with the ability to actually buy into British Excellence," Mr. Warner reminds.

"Then we asked each of our sponsors to buy a portion of the tickets proportionate to their existing contribution. We sold 200,000 tickets, which my colleagues used very purposefully. The British Tourist Authority invited all the travel agents. BA gave its tickets to MasterCard to be sent them in its September statements to its clients who travel internationally. Then, MasterCard sent its allotment to its graduate school cardholders at NYU, Columbia and other educational institutions in the New York metro area," Mr. Warner detailed.

"I guess they want to establish early on in this sophisticated young adult market that international travel means MasterCard. In the end, all the sponsors did something strategically clever. Not only did their support promote their causes and the *Beyond Stonehenge* show, it has also served to promote the entire UKinNY festival of events. It has been a win-win-win," he exclaimed.

UKinNY has also been quite strategic with the use of the shows final rehearsals. All day Saturday, thousands of doormen, concierge, taxi & car service drivers, and Grand Central Terminal personnel and their families were treated to a complementary show along with an ongoing reception and cash bar. Is this the affluent, influential target market that the show's sponsors are after? No, these are the people who talk to the affluent, influential target market. Last night, the final dress rehearsal hosted hundreds from the New York press.



The *Beyond Stonehenge* theatrical attraction literally immerses the audience in the subject matter.

"...we will take *Beyond Stonehenge* on the road and UKinNY can have a very long run as UKinLA, UKinSF, UKinBigD, etc. In essence, UKinUS."

The After Market Play

Mr. Warner's financing scheme did not stop there, however, and he now "faces" the prospect of actually making money on the show. HSBC is cosponsoring the BBC's documentary, "*Behind the Scenes of Beyond Stonehenge*" that will also include the uninterrupted, high definition video of the show. In the mold of the very popular 'making-of' reality TV, the show will be aired, not only on both sides of the Atlantic, but actually over the Atlantic (and other oceans) on British Airway's in-flight entertainment. The show will be taped tonight at the charity kick-off of *Beyond Stonehenge*, and feature the Oscar-winning British actor, Jeremy Irons, mesmerizing an audience filled with who's who in British/American relations.

Dr. Lindsay Sharp, the entrepreneurial President of England's National Museum of Science and Industry will also capitalize on the *Beyond Stonehenge* show after its New York debut. "*Beyond Stonehenge's* British by Design theme is a perfect fit for the Science Museum in London, and the theatrical attraction is a compelling addition to the renovation of the East Wing," Dr. Sharp says with enthusiasm.

"The Museum has an IMAX theater in the beautiful Wellcome Wing. As we will soon be open to the public free of charge, we have been looking for 'the Next IMAX,' something very different, very compelling, an experience that not only engages our guests, but also helps to generate more earned income as a separately ticketed event. *Beyond Stonehenge's* live actor, the audience's total immersion in the visual subject matter, and the multi-media mystique of the RealityPlaysm technique, are a formula for success, and we are pleased to be the recipients of the show after UKinNY."

Sir Neil Cossons, Chair of English Heritage, the quasi-governmental group entrusted with the custody of the nation's cultural patrimony, including the real Stonehenge, is yet another end user. Sir Cossons is Dr. Sharp's predecessor at The National Museum of Science and Industry, and will eventually take possession of much of the staging and the visuals from the opening and ending scenes of the *Beyond Stonehenge* show.

"...one of the last major matters to which we committed, could well be the most remembered. I guess dear William was right, the play is the thing, wherein I think we will collect the conscience of the corporate and consumer kings."

Sir Cossons explains, "We are extremely pleased that *Stonehenge* is getting such prominent play in all of the show's manifestations here and abroad, showcasing one of England's great treasures. *Stonehenge* is, indeed, an extraordinarily rich story, and to have it bookend the show's strategic, contemporary and commercial message about today's Britain is very appropriate. I am quite confident that *Beyond Stonehenge* will stir great interest in and increased visits to the enormous, ancient bluestone artifacts. And the timing is right, as well. We are just initiating the planning of the redevelopment of the *Stonehenge* visitor experience. When Lindsay is ready to tell a new RealityPlaysm story at the Science Museum, we will redeploy the entertainment hardware and some of the software. We will elaborate on the *Stonehenge* story, and tell it like its never been told before."

BeyondStonehenge.com

"The spirit and impact of this show will live for a long time, as *Beyond Stonehenge* is so rich with potential as an overarching brand that ties together both cultural and contemporary Britain," says Peter Bates, President of Strategic Vision, the British/American firm responsible for managing the UKinNY festival of events.

"We have added to our retail presentation in the Vanderbilt Hall exhibit area, and with the attendance to the show and the many retail opportunities that it has generated, starting with the obvious *Stonehenge* kiosk, we are expecting to sell a significant amount of goods during the festival itself. To top & tail that," he continues, "Amazon.com will be serving and fulfilling the *Beyond Stonehenge, British By Design* boutique Internet store for this year's holiday season."

"Guests of the online retail experience will be able to use QuickTime VR to explore around the whole of *Stonehenge*, and click into lifestyle presentations of the finest British products curated by the British Design Council. We will be featuring 50 SKU's to start, but next year we hope to work up to hundreds, with an all year round presence on the world's pre-eminent e-tailer," Mr. Bates says.



UKinUS?

But if *Beyond Stonehenge* is a hit, does it have a future in the United States? "Absolutely," says Mr. Warner, "If things go as we believe they will, based on everyone's reactions to the rehearsals, we will take *Beyond Stonehenge* on the road and UKinNY can have a very long run as UKinLA, UKinSF, UKinBigD. In essence, UKinUS. Of course we will have to replicate the show, as we have already sold the show to The National Museum of Science and Industry and to English Heritage, but I think we may actually earn enough in the next two weeks to pay for a second production, which will be significantly less expensive than the original creative work."

"This strategy for the *Beyond Stonehenge* show" he concludes, "is, in and of itself, a good example of British By Design Excellence in action."



Mark Fisher (The Mark Fisher Studios, London, England) www.stufish.co.uk

Mark Fisher is a British architect with an international reputation for the design of spectacular shows. Over the past 25 years he has created some of the most memorable rock concerts ever staged.

His work includes 'The Wall' and 'Division Bell' for Pink Floyd, 'Steel Wheels' and 'Bridges to Babylon' for the Rolling Stones, and 'Zoo TV' and 'Popmart' for U2. He has worked with many other distinguished artists, including Elton John, R.E.M., Whitney Houston, Phil Collins, Janet Jackson and Cher.

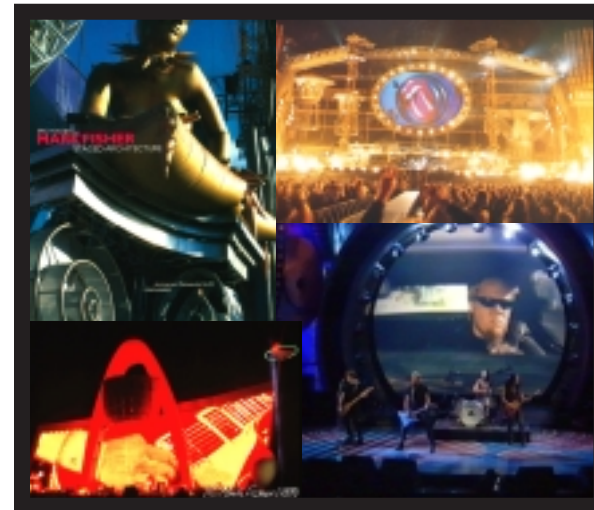


Mark has also designed numerous one-off events and fixed installations, including 'IllumiNations 25' for Walt Disney World in Orlando and 'Aquamatrix', the nightly show at the Lisbon Expo'98.

The Mark Fisher Studio specializes in the design of portable architecture, touring rock shows and live events. Recent work includes the production design for last month's NFL Superbowl XXXV half-time show, the Millennium Show at the Dome in London, and Tina Turner's farewell world tour.

"... the urban consequence of a post-industrial economy [is the] increasing emphasis on the urban center as a source of leisure activities and entertainment. This trend is still continuing, and city centers all over the world are being recast as entertainment complexes. It could be argued that some urban design solutions which have been introduced into places such as London, New York, Tokyo, Osaka, and Las Vegas owe more to rock sets than traditional urban forms. In effect, what appears to be taking place is the **theatricalisation of the city** ..."

Mark Fisher



4i Think.Create.Communicate www.4i.co.uk



4i is a convergent media firm working to deliver business results by design. Started 15 years ago, 4i was the first of the UK design agencies to adopt high performance graphics computers in its studios.

Combining a mix of talent and experience together under one roof, 4i integrates business, marketing communications and technology specialists to create 'total' brand experiences. 4i builds brand character into a wide range of media and products for both traditional and digital channels (internet and interactive TV). 4i's live events and exhibitions sector, which draws on a wider cross section of disciplines, further enhances our ability to creatively fulfill all clients' communication objectives.

Some of 4i's clients consist of the Rolling Stones Lips, Virgin Radio, Telstar Entertainment, Bon Jovi, Mercedes-Benz, Universal Studios, Music.com, and Sapporo Beer.

STRATEGIC LEISURE®

Strategic Leisure is in the business of Entertainment Product Development - developing entertainment destinations that meet the experiential needs of consumers, provide brands with communication channels and satisfy the financial demands of investors.

Our experience has shown that the key to creating dynamic experiences is the simultaneous integration of creative designs with rigorous economic analysis and effective brand-driven strategies. Building on over 20 years of experience, Strategic Leisure delivers a multi-disciplinary approach to entertainment development.

Consulting

In addition to developing its own Enriched Realitysm entertainment products, since its founding in 1992, Strategic Leisure works on behalf of a range of Commercial and Institutional clients, helping them achieve their objectives in entertainment development.

Strategic Leisure augments its clients' capabilities, many times acting as a surrogate entertainment developer, deploying an array of unique entertainment development talent, skill and experience. Strategic Leisure's range of capabilities includes:

Strategizing - the process of defining a Rational Vision by: Assessing, Synthesizing, Analyzing & Rationalizing.

- Comprehensive Strategic Planning
- Disciplined Economic Analysis
- Innovative Conceptual Development

Planning - the process of detailing the strategy through: Designing, Business Planning, Development Planning, Operational Planning, and Marketing Planning.

- Extensive Business Operations Planning

Developing - the process of managing the strategic plan into manifestation, through: Design, Construction and Production, Project Management, Operational Staffing & Training, and Marketing the product.

- Seasoned Development Management

Operating - the process of maximizing ROI through: Assuring Guest Experience Quality, Developing the Organization, and Marketing the product.

- Effective Implementation Leadership



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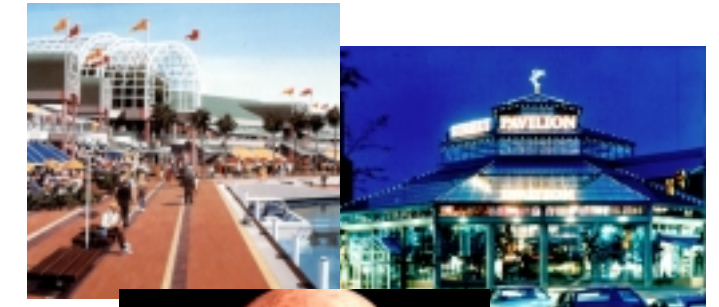
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The Heritage of Disney & Rouse

Strategic Leisure's founder and President, Michael McCall, has been at the vanguard of what is now known as urban entertainment since the early 1980s. As a Vice President of Development for landmark developer Jim Rouse, from 1982 to 1992, he had the extraordinary experience of learning placemaking from the master.

From 1985 to 1988, Mr. McCall led Mr. Rouse's team in a joint venture with The Walt Disney Company. A decade before the term urban entertainment was coined, Mr. McCall and his team worked with Disney's development, Imagineering, strategic planning, and attractions operations divisions - strategizing and conceptualizing the future of urban entertainment.

Following the Disney experience, Mr. McCall conducted international leisure-based development consulting for Mr. Rouse in Australia, England, Japan, Singapore, Spain and the United States and led the product repositioning strategy for the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. In 1992, he founded Strategic Leisure to leverage the extraordinary experience of working for Jim Rouse and with The Walt Disney Company, by developing urban entertainment places infused with social fun and entertaining brand information.



"Entertainment is the multi-modal medium, the engine of emotion, the ether of heightened experiences, striving to structure, edit and embellish tales - of what once was, what is, and what might be - even in the most conventional of places and typical of moments.

The elements of story, the fundamental elements of entertainment, (the theme, characters, plot, script, delivery, set, scene, presentation tactics and special effects) are now found, in varying degrees, throughout what has become the Enriched Realitysm in which we work, live and play."

Michael McCall