

Stage Design by Ralph Larmann

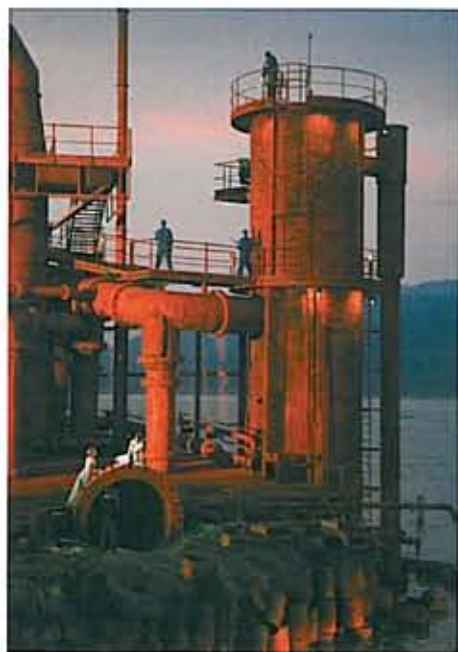
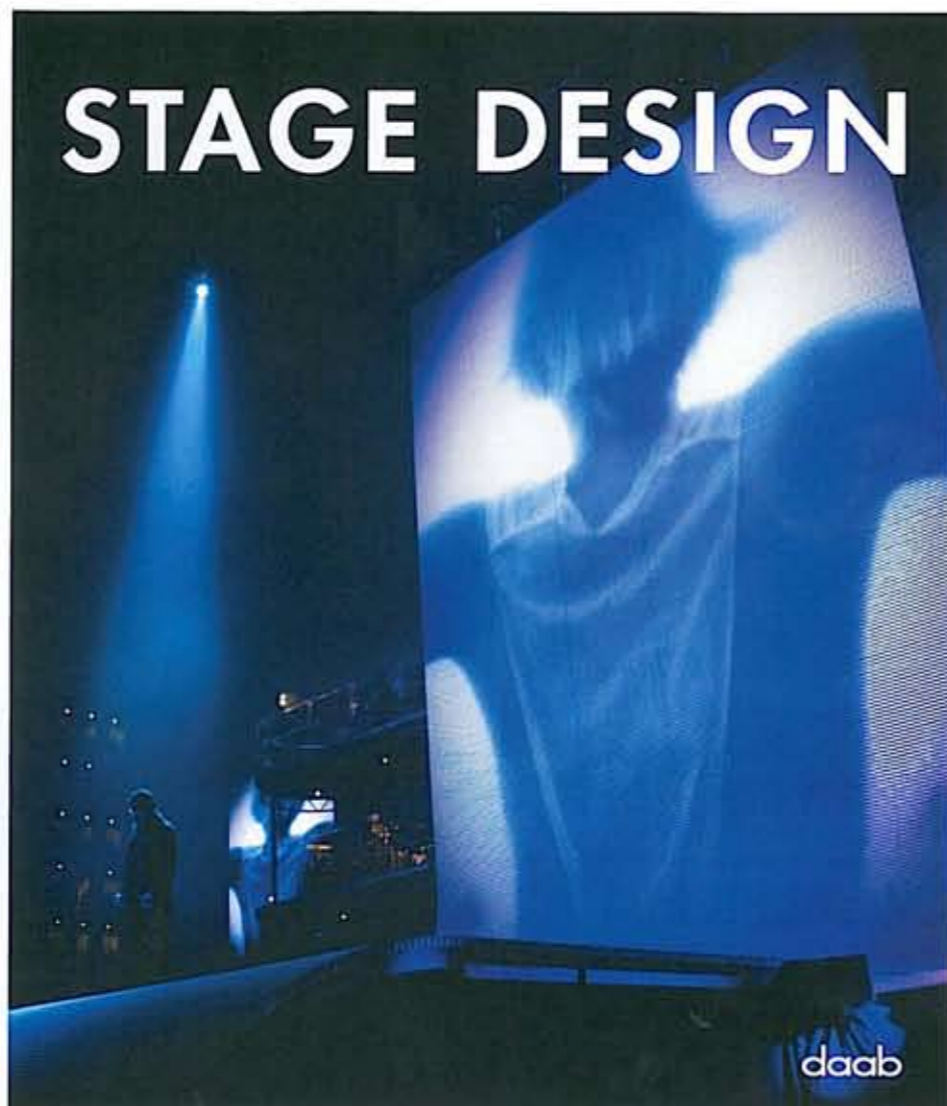
John Offord describes a production epic – on the printed page

For the first time daab Publishing of Cologne, specialists in illustrated books on design, architecture and photography, has brought out in book form a photo documentation of widely impressive international stage productions. The book, *Stage Design*, by Ralph Larmann, the German author, photographer and journalist, documents 30 productions in the fields of concert touring, opera, theatre, special events, and TV shows.

I met Ralph Larmann for the first time at Vienna State Opera House in 2002. He was busy moving about the auditorium, deep into his subject, taking photographs during rehearsals for a new production of *Roméo et Juliette*. I was watching lighting designer Patrick Woodroffe at work with the intention of coming home with material for a magazine article, and ended up writing a book. After a day in the venue I put my own camera away and came to an arrangement with Ralph. We agreed to trade my words for his pictures.

Now, here is proof that Ralph Larmann's work has come of age. *Stage Design* is a massive tome, and at almost 400 pages it will need a strongly-built coffee table to support it. More important it provides a huge tribute to so many aspects of the entertainment technology industry, for Larmann's work is unique in reflecting so much of the effort and expertise

Stage Design by Ralph Larmann: ISBN 978-3-86654-032-3 published by daab Publishing. Format 24 x 28 cm, 400 pages, hardcover. Languages: English, German, Spanish, French, Italian. Price 49.95 euro.



Il Travatore at the Water Stage Bregenz, Austria, 2006..

that goes on 'behind the scenes' in addition to the traditional up-front portraits we expect to see. And of course, from his eye, many of these are described through his camera with a new energy and angle.

Vivid, emotionally charged photographs of the selected shows and productions are the essence of *Stage Design*. Larmann focuses in the main on the portrayal of various stage designs in their entirety. Having a broad definition of 'stage', the author presents both the scenery details and the bare stage with aesthetic precision. The wide variety of stage perspectives and captured moments shown is so imperceptively woven into a single thread or as one thematic whole that even those people responsible for the productions or the people who have seen the show may not realize its wholeness. The range of events portrayed includes stage designs from classical theatres, brilliant operas, colossal tour productions and the illumination of a city's skyline.

Stage Design is the first of its kind to cover a wide range of stage productions. Not only is it a valuable object for art photography devotees, it is also a unique historic document and

constitutes a veritable source of inspiration for everyone dealing with scenery, stage designs and shows. *Stage Design* draws reality from the fact that 27 of the projects portrayed have been performed between 2005 and 2007 or will be shown within the coming months.

The composition, perspective and brilliant colour of the captured scenes in the book are nothing short of spectacular. Details of name, location, date of the productions, as well as the names of those responsible for set, stage, lighting, and video design are cited.

The corresponding website www.stagedesign.org offers additional information on Stage Design and the productions presented in the book. Besides the visual emotions the author's performance includes specialist knowledge offering a new dimension to his artwork. At the same time Stage Design mirrors the author's know-how, creative power and his love for his work and his projects.

Ralph Larmann has been an active photographer and journalist in the show, fair, and event business since 1989. As an



Ralph Larmann.

author, he writes articles for music and specialist magazines, as well as for artists and publishing companies. Among others, Larmann's exhibitions on event and concert photography have made him known to a wide audience. With the first edition of Stage Design he ventures into a new area of art documentation. In particular, he intends to set up a serial documentation of stage designs using his photographs built around a holistic aesthetic concept.



George Michael: 25 LIVE, 2006.



Disney's The Lion King, Hamburg 2007.



Eurovision Song Contest, Helsinki, 2007.



Rolling Stones: A Bigger Bang 2005/2006.



Robbie Williams: Close Encounters, Olympic Stadium, Berlin 2006.