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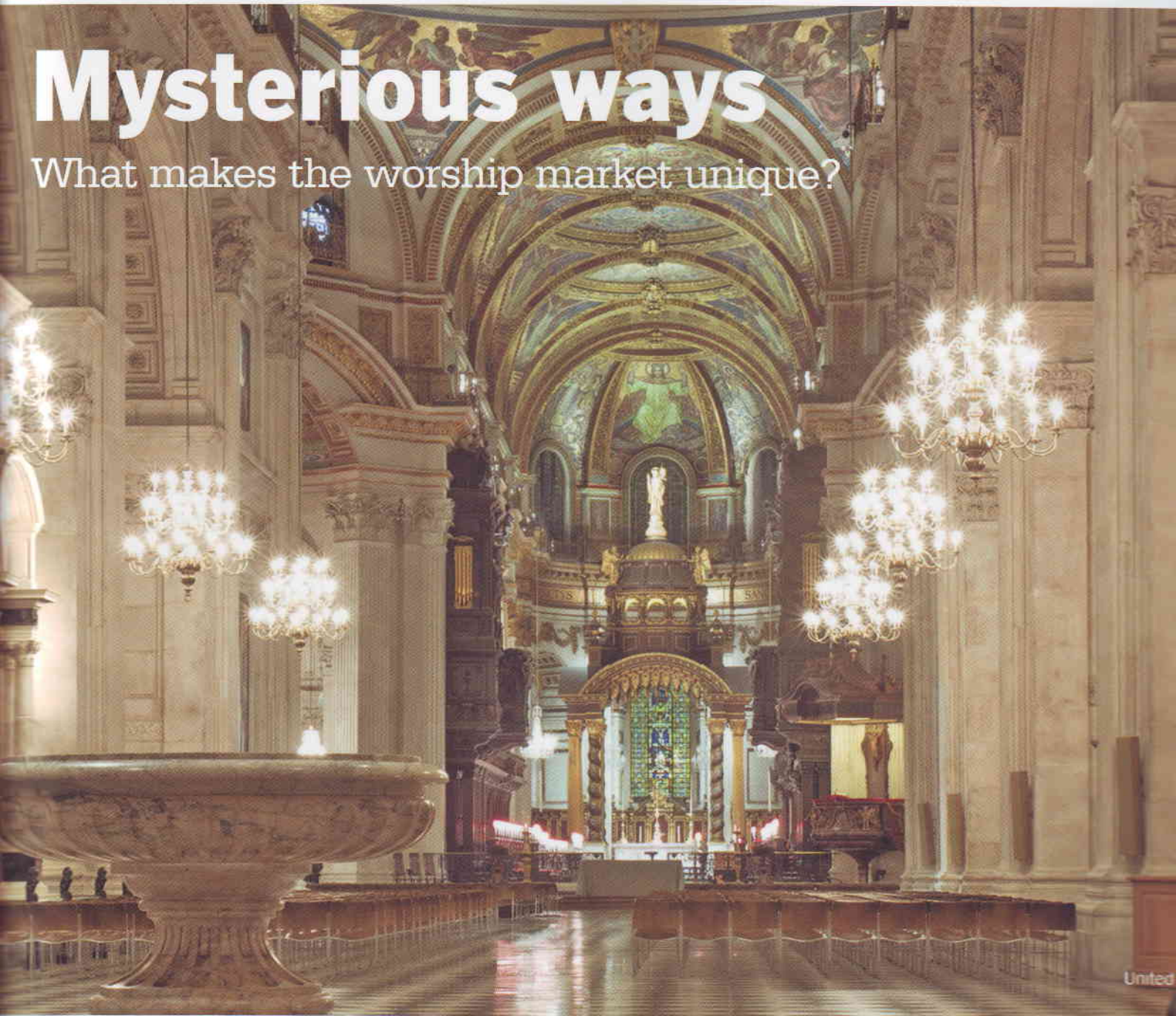
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Case study: Noor Masjid Mosque installs multifunctional system

THE NOOR MASJID MOSQUE in central Manchester typifies the integration of several technologies to lift one community's messages from the realm of private prayer to broadcast belief. Worship takes place three times a day, 365 days a year, along with many community events, and the building has recently been wired for audio, video, communications and satellite links.

Audio is handled by a combination of Allen & Heath digital consoles, with an iDR-8 mixing processor at the heart of the distribution system. Signals from both Sennheiser radio mics and AV sources are fed to Amina Technologies' 'plaster-in-wall' loudspeakers, actually embedded into the ceilings to satisfy a strict demand to preserve the visual aesthetics of the interior.

The 10ft screen is to be used to project live sermons from around the world, while inside the building AMX video distribution is used. "We're setting a new standard

The mosque is wired for audio, video, communications and satellite links



within our community," says Karl Kapacee, technical manager of a team of five. "As well as the AV, this is an eco-friendly, climate-controlled building, also with WiFi. But the key thing is that we're broadcasting both into and out of here – and we're doing teleconferencing, videoconferencing and internet

relay now. From January we'll be running a private TV channel that we're leasing from NTL.

"That's why the installation had to be to this quality. Manchester is the second-largest of our UK communities after London, serving around 1 million people. It had to be state of the art."

"We tend to use the SR32 in churches because it's just so easy to operate," says Gardiner. "It's ideal in that budget bracket – very clearly laid out with a gentle sweep to the EQ that prevents an inexperienced user from radically altering things."

Quality control

Quality is essential. "The front and back speakers are time-aligned via BSS Minidrive," Gardiner adds, "and once they were in place and switched on, remarkably little tuning was required. That's down to the sheer quality of the speakers. The alignment ensures that, when the minister speaks, it's coming from the minister and not from a speaker above your head. They're full-range, rolled off around 45Hz and EQ'd slightly

around 10kHz and 250Hz-450Hz. That's all the tweaking there is."

Meanwhile, the microphones are all Sennheiser. "They may be slightly more expensive, but this is where the churches will spend money," confirms Gardiner. "The cabling, for instance, is all Van Damme Blue Series multicores and Van Damme RGBHV video cable – real specialist cable, and not cheap."

Equally effective are the PTZ dome cameras feeding the Kramer Electronics switcher and various screens. These are used for community announcements, biblical images, hymns and even PowerPoint sermons. Now that these features have won over the purists, there's talk of video feeds into the community via CCTV, as well as CD and DVD spin-offs to support the ministry.

Crucially, this has worked because of the subtle nature of the installation.

"With a nightclub you can put anything in and nobody really notices," adds Gardiner, "but in a church there's more time spent on attention to detail than anything else. You have to have it just so, with no loose ends – and, actually, it improves our standard of installation technique."

As far as rational thought will allow, a house of worship is, in essence, a theatre. The same kind of magic has to happen. For this reason alone, professional contractors need to be involved as much as possible so that installation technology can be allowed to do what it does best in a rarefied acoustic space: suspend that disbelief.

The next phase, quite literally, will transmit the messages to a new, younger and much wider audience. **IE**



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