

SETTING the **STAGE** for **SUCCESS**

Manchester strikes a chord with Stage Tops USA

Down the back roads of Tennessee's Coffee County, past the sign that says "fresh eggs for sale," and across from the cattle farm, there's an unusual business called Stage Tops USA with a large "T" painted on its metal building. You may have never heard of Stage Tops, located in Manchester, but plenty of big names in the music industry do business with this leading manufacturer of stage rooftops. If you've ever attended a Kenny Chesney or Bon Jovi concert, the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival, or the Country Music Awards, you've probably seen the work of Stage Tops.

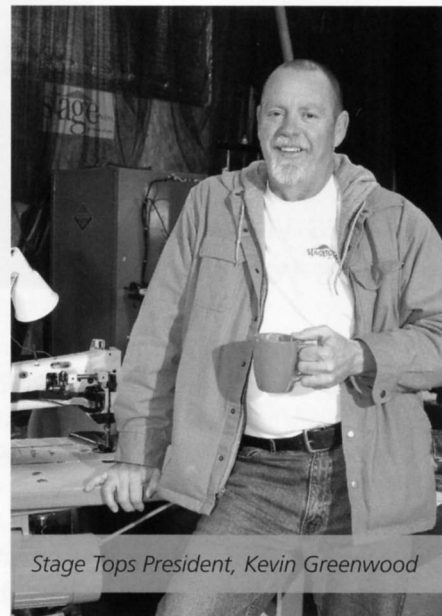
Stages Now Get More of the Spotlight

Today's musical events are a much bigger production than concerts of the past; singers no longer simply stand in front of a black curtain strumming their instruments. Now stages usually have intricate designs and shapes that coordinate with the theme of the show or tour—elements that enhance the concert experience.

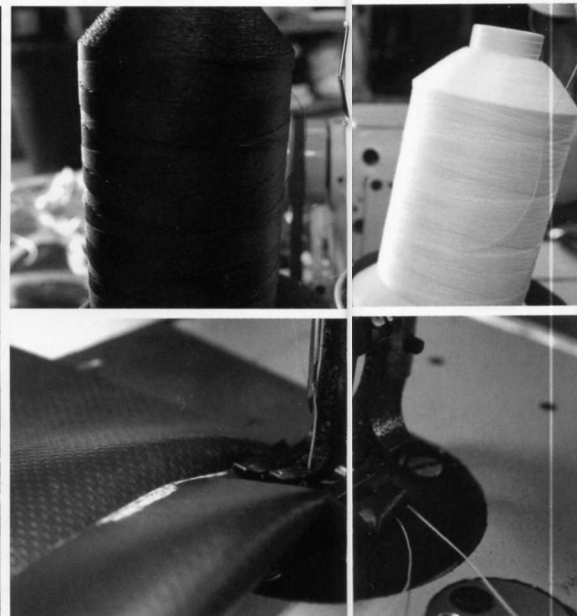
Kevin Greenwood, President of Stage Tops, came to the United States in 1980 from Great Britain. As an entertainer, he'd already traveled the world and was looking for an additional source of income that dovetailed with his contacts in the music industry. As Greenwood puts it, "I happened to be at the right place at the right time." He was working with a friend who was doing canopies for stages and saw a market for the production of soft grip products for the staging and touring industry. He formed Stage Tops in 1987 in the North Hollywood area of California.

It Began With Bonnaroo

What brought a company like Stage Tops to Manchester, Tenn.? Bonnaroo, of course. Stage Tops does the main stage for Bonnaroo, and Greenwood had been coming to Manchester since Bonnaroo



Stage Tops President, Kevin Greenwood



Stage Tops employee, Travis Sapp



Stage Tops Office Manager, Melissa Morin

started in 2004. During one of his visits in 2007, he happened to pick up a real estate guide for Coffee County and was astounded by the land prices in Tennessee. Compared to California, Tennessee was a much more economical place to live and run his business. Greenwood found the perfect piece of property, met with a realtor, and "did the deal on the spot." Six months later, he moved 50 percent of Stage Tops to Benson Road in Manchester.

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The business was not adversely affected by the move to Tennessee. Thanks to his ESI phone system and Firewire Broadband service from Ben Lomand, Greenwood continues to do business all over the world including his newest office in Bulgaria. He notes, "My phone and Internet service are the lifelines of Stage Tops. With the ESI phone system, my assistant can transfer calls to my office, and if I'm not available, she can transfer them to my voicemail so they can leave me a message. If I'm talking to a client about an important project, I can record the call so that I can listen to it later to make sure I haven't forgotten any details. With Caller ID, I can see who is

calling before I pick up and decide whether to answer or let it go to my voicemail so I can check it when I have more time. And our Auto Attendant answers the phones when we're not here and allows callers to leave messages on each person's extension."

Greenwood's work often begins with clients emailing him technical drawings of the stage frame. He then draws and designs the skins to form the shape of the stage. From there, he decides where to cut and bond or sew the vinyl that makes the skins. All jobs are custom and either done for that event or tour. The skins have a long life span and can be used for 10-12 years if well maintained. Of course, with the inevitable set up and take down at each city during a concert tour, the skins sometimes need repair which is also done by Stage Tops. "Pyrotechnics can be very hard on the skins, causing small holes that need repair right away. This helps prevent large rips or leaks later," explains Greenwood.

In addition to music clients, Stage Tops also created the stage for the Doha Tribeca Film Festival in Doha, Qatar. Greenwood and his crew flew there last year and produced all the stage skins on location.

Out of Town, Not Out of Touch

Greenwood is on the road a large part of the year, especially in the spring and summer during peak concert season. This makes communication with his office manager, Melissa Morin, all the more essential. Morin loves the fact that she can easily field and prioritize Greenwood's many phone calls with the ESI phone system.

This month, Greenwood will be spending much of his time amongst country and rock musicians of the world but he loves coming home to Manchester. When things slow down, he enjoys watching his BLTV video service at his home and office. He has everything from DVR to HD service, and takes full advantage of them by recording his favorite programs that he misses while traveling.

By working in concert, Stage Tops and Ben Lomand are hitting just the right note.

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