

to the question of why she was chosen: "The ceremony is strictly Show Biz, the teams only appear in one of the 17 major scenes, and that brief part is my only interface with cricket."

The problems of running an event on a sports ground are many, and here was no different from anywhere else in the world. "A cover is used over the grass," explained Lowey, "which means we only have so much time for lighting and rehearsals before it has to come up again." Bill Lawford outlined the rehearsal schedule as starting on the 23 January, with full dress from the 3-5 February and the opening on 8 February. Which sounds pretty tight? "Hey, if this was baseball, the restrictions would be the same," said a sanguine Lowey. "With the amount of time needed to marshal the huge number of performers around, I ended up with a lighting rig I hardly ever got to see."

Not, it should be emphasized, that Lowey didn't inhabit the graveyard shift like everyone else. "The dancers, mostly kids, would rehearse till 10 in the evening, then we had till approximately 5.00am when the sun came up." It took two days to focus the 1,600 Pars, "and considering this is Africa in late summer, it was cold at night." She's not the first LD to mention that fact - show programming is such a sedentary task.

In essence, Lowey used two colour washes, a blue and an open white: "We had a maximum throw of 69m, so I focused the Pars in concentric rings. Simple and bright was what was needed as this show was about the people of Africa, bringing to life their obvious enthusiasm."

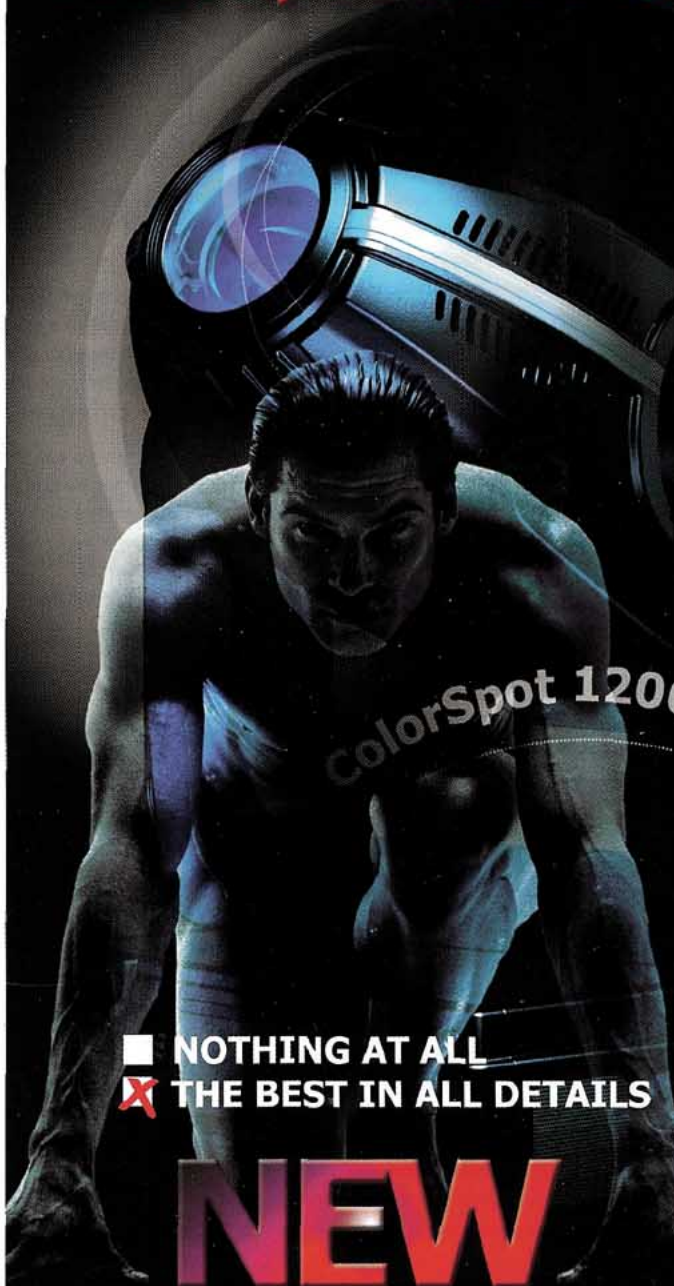
Lowey spent weeks working out her focus plan before she arrived - "time well spent, but even using digital low light cameras, this was tough. It wasn't that I needed more Pars, it was that I needed more effects lighting. Even with 48 High End Cyberlights, I was really just massaging the air. I also had High End x.Spots in the rig and some budget for WYSIWYG programming would have made a big difference." The x.Spots were deployed on the stage, rigged from simple masts designed by crew chief Scotty Duhig (imported from the UK to oversee the 15-man lighting crew) and purpose-built locally by Gearhouse.



Cape Town's Newlands cricket ground - the pitch needed to be prepared for the first match of the Games between South Africa and the West Indies, directly after the opening event.

Being the New Yorker she is, Lowey is not shy in putting forward positive recommendations about how some extra budget might be found. "The event is sponsored, but because this is the first time it's been done, I don't think the sponsors quite understood the potential benefits. When a local corporation gives 500,000 Rand that's a lot for them, a major endeavour. They need to spend more to bring in the tourists, to get out the message that 'this is what the country is like'. When the crew and I - from the US that is - came here we didn't realise it would be so First World down here." A flattering reference to the six-lane highways, tall buildings, and other external signs of wealth which make South African cities appear so reassuringly familiar to the Western eye. I'm not sure the Cricket World Cup is quite the vehicle

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