

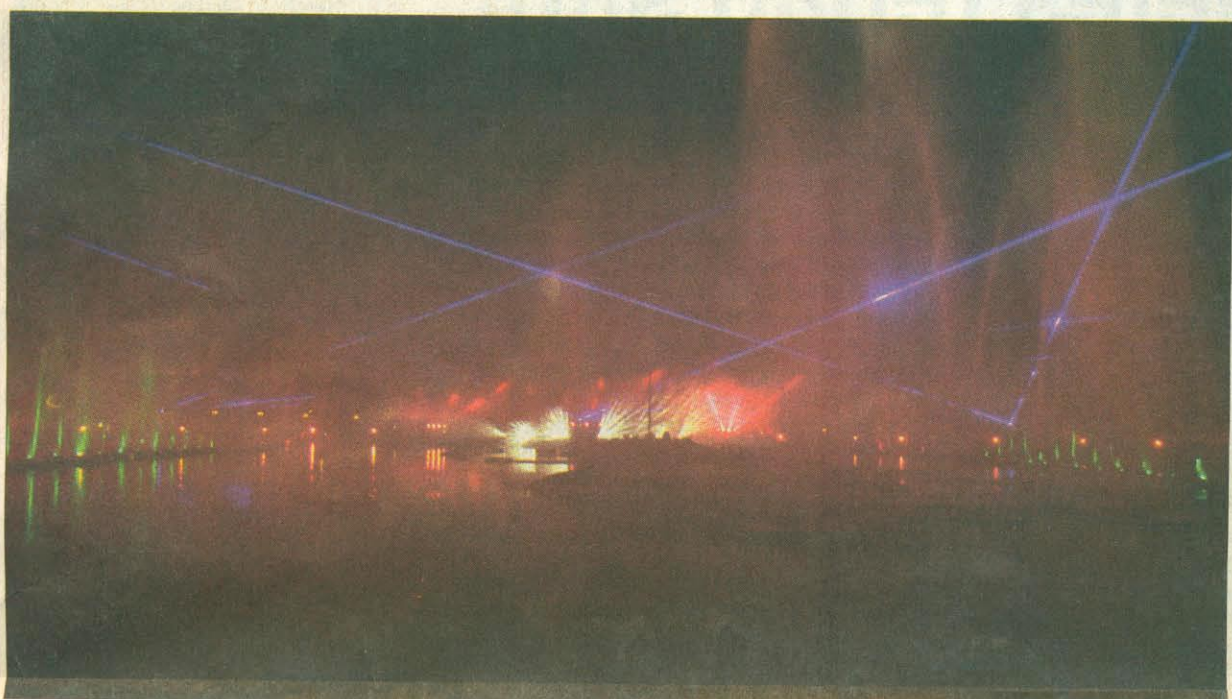
Observer Features

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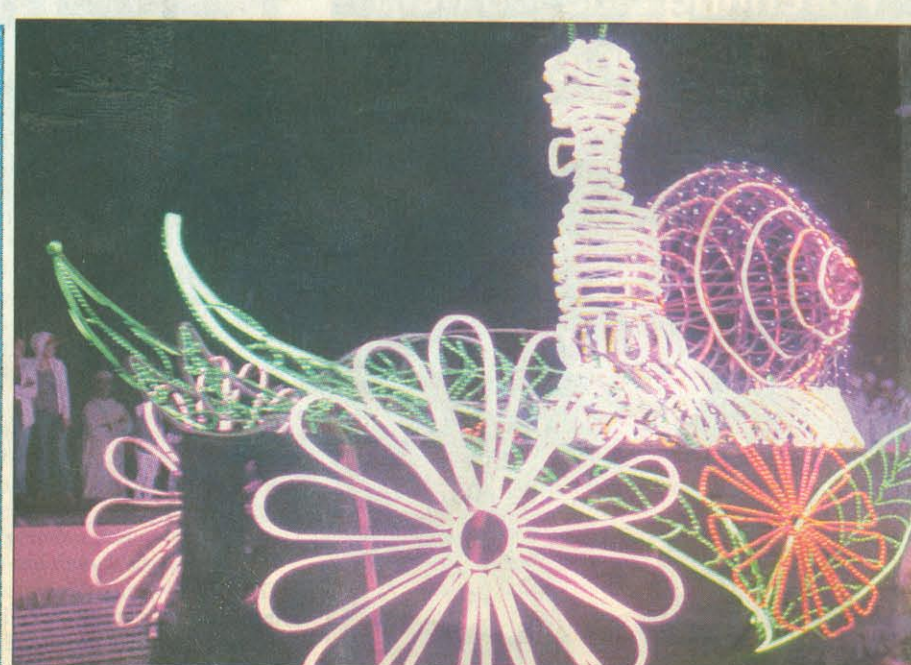
Observer Muscat Festival



Psychedelic symphony of light and sound



In what's proving to be the singular attraction of this year's Muscat Festival, visitors to Qurum Natural Park are treated nightly to a stunning multimedia display that combines lasers, dancing fountains, giant water screens, flame columns, fireworks and other special effects



Exotic floats on show

By Conrad Prabhu

FOR the duration of the month-long Muscat Festival cultural extravaganza, Muscat Municipality is laying on a truly breathtaking multimedia show every evening at Qurum Natural Park's splendid lakeside setting.

Replete with audiovisual razzmatazz, the half-hour display is a feast for the senses as a plethora of high-tech multimedia gear installed all around the lake, kick in orchestral-style to create a psychedelic symphony of light, sound and special effects wizardry that leaves the audience spellbound for the duration of the show.

Festival organisers Muscat Municipality have roped in Lobo Electronic of Germany, European specialists in multimedia entertainment, to produce a *tour de force* performance that not only scintillates, but also captures the essence of Oman's distinctive Arabian charm and cultural heritage.

Lobo's Creative Director Alex Hennig explains: "In conceiving and producing the show, we were keen to move away from an overly emphasis on fireworks and fountains and instead come up with something that conjures strong emotions in the audience through the choreographed use of an assortment of multimedia.

"We also decided to make the show very special in light of the 40th National Day milestone which this proud nation marked only recently. In essence, the show celebrates the phenomenal progress achieved by this country within these past four decades of its modern history. At all times, it spotlights the pivotal role of His Majesty the Sultan in driving this transformation."

Hennig led a 12-member team of multimedia professionals to put together a spectacular display that combines dazzling laser displays,



Mesmerising multimedia display

dancing fountains, giant water screens, flame columns and a staggering array of special effects. Tonnes of specialist hardware were trucked in by road from Dubai and shipped by sea from Germany for installation all around Qurum's centrepiece lakeside venue.

To help create a "dreamlike" ambience all around the lake, Henning and his team have deployed eight sets of the latest generation of high-powered lasers — reputed to be brightest of their kind on the market — all around the lake. Complementing the lasers is an extensive system of high-powered lights, which in conjunction with fogging machines installed all around the lake, creates a surreal atmosphere indispensable to the success of any multimedia show. Also in place around the lake is a ring of 20 fire belchers that produce fiery bursts of brilliant orange flame.

Another key highlight is a trio of giant water screens located at vantage points on the lake surface to ensure nearly 360-degree views of the laser-rendered images projected on these massive

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screens. Towering 15 metres high and 45 metres across, these water screens are the biggest of their kind to be erected in Muscat, says Henning.

Also installed all over the water surface are 40 giant water fountains designed to create a staggering variety of patterns. Located in the middle of the lake are a further 18 larger fountains reaching heights of up to 30 metres.

Preceding the multimedia display is

a carnival-like parade that has echoes of a wonderland inhabited by exotic sea creatures and animals and fairytale characters. The parade features a fantastic mix of dancers, stilt-walkers, jugglers and other performers sporting an enchanting assortment of neon-embellished costumes. Joined by illuminated floats cast in exotic shapes and colours, the parade makes its way along the darkened avenue around the lake in a truly captivating fantasy-like



Alex Hennig, Creative Director, Lobo Electronic

pageant.

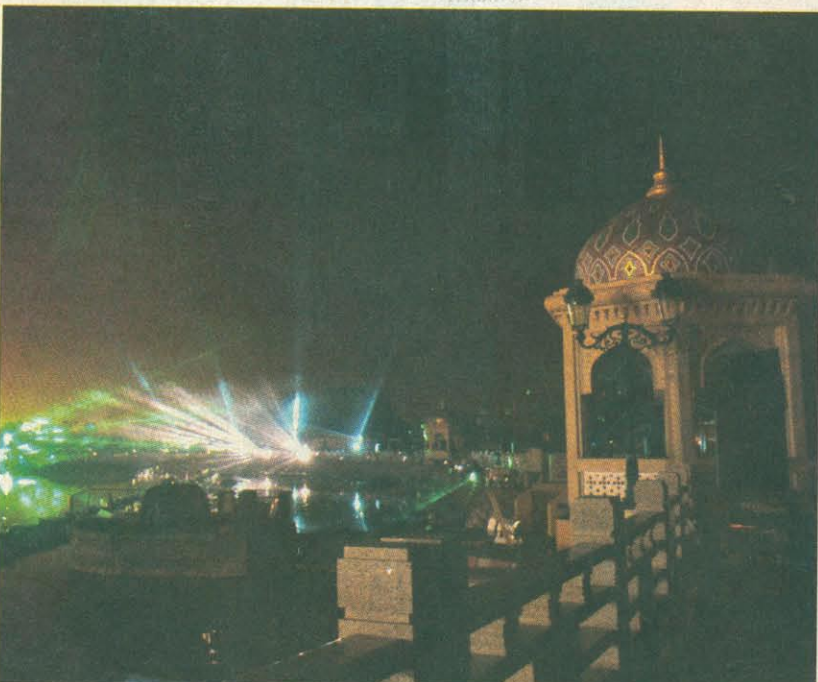
The multimedia show immediately begins in a blaze of laser lighting as fogging machines produce a blanket of haze pierced by high-powered lights. This surreal ambience sets the tone for a mesmerising display that has thousands of spectators riveted for the duration of the 30-minute-long show. The crowd breaks into applause when laser images of His Majesty and other proud symbols of Omani nationhood

are projected on the giant water screens. Laser-render vignettes of Omani culture and heritage, as well as upcoming developmental landmarks, notably the Royal Opera House, Muscat and Salalah international airports, and the opulent Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, are also projected on the water screens. The show reaches crescendo with all of the multimedia elements performing in concert to produce a stunning climax that comes with a dazzling burst of fireworks and pyrotechnics.

Lobo Electronic specialises in putting together high-octane multimedia shows as part of high-profile brand launches, festival inaugurals, sports extravaganzas and National Day celebratory events. The German-based firm, whose shows have been witnessed in more than 60 countries around the world, has amassed more than 100 ILDA awards — the highest honours in the multimedia entertainment industry.

"We are an industry leader in laser and multimedia entertainment, having won a great many international awards for outstanding creative achievement. Our strength lies in our proven ability to put together and undertake technically and creatively challenging shows at short notice," says Hennig, who credits the company's success to a core team of highly talented professionals working on the cutting edge of multimedia entertainment technology.

Lobo has already made its mark in the Middle East, having participated in gala festivities surrounding the staging of the Asian Games in Doha, the 1st Medina Festival in Saudi Arabia, and the opening of several prestigious landmarks in Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere. Its custom-made installations are a permanent fixture at a number of amusement parks and public venues at key locations around the Middle East. The company has also established a commercial presence in Dubai to cater to a growing regional market in high-quality multimedia entertainment.



Laser lighting captivates



Carnival-like setting

