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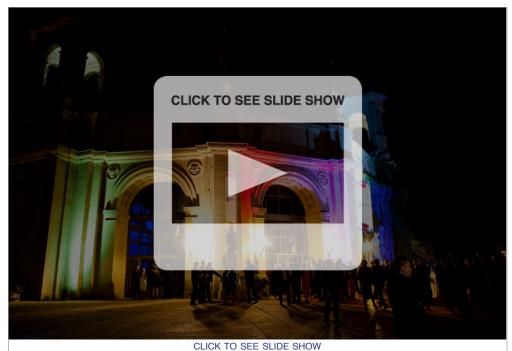
TIFF Opening Night Gala Gets Space-Age Decor

EVENT REPORT 09.09.11 4:00 PM

Thursday's opening night gala was the first of many Toronto International Film Festival parties scheduled during the 10day confab. Held at the Liberty Grand, the evening took its theme from the festival's opening film, From the Sky Down, a documentary about U2. Some 3,000 people attended the event, including band members Bono and the Edge, where audiovisual and lighting components were the decor focal points, thanks to a collaborative effort from Westbury National Show Systems and ESG Show Services.

With the cooperating weather, the venue's courtyard quickly became a popular spot for guests. Minimal furnishing kept the focus on the four-foot mirror ball suspended from steel cables attached to the pillars of the building. "When I did a walkthrough with Joel [Dubin, account manager and technical director of Westbury], I asked him, 'Is there a way to get a mirror ball in here?" said Barbara Hershenhorn, president of Party Barbara Co., who designed the event. "They had never done something like this before." The suspended ball seemed to float in the air and reflected light everywhere in the

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A second audiovisual highlight was a wall of 18 TV screens, which created a moving backdrop within the Artifacts Room. The screens were different sizes and each looped a surreal video - a mirror ball slowly became the galaxy, for example, and the screens periodically switched to static. The video took about a day to program, but Dubin explained, "The hardest thing was actually finding the TVs. No one has TVs anymore-plasmas, yes."

TIFF sponsors also played an important role at the event. Diet Coke had an area to itself in the Governor's Room, with its own bar and lounge comprised of white sofas

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT GALA

Catering Liberty Entertainment Group Catering **DJ** DJ Lissa Monet **DJ** Jojoflores **DJ** Mark Oliver Flowers Emblem **Furniture Rentals Divine** Furniture Rental

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and red and silver pillows. In the Diet Coke "Stay Extraordinary" photo booth, guests could pose for photos that were printed out on the spot, posted online, and later, sent to guests on a USB key. Another sponsor, Skyy Vodka, served signature cocktails and had models posing like pinup girls inside a giant martini glass, while Perrier-Jouët served Champagne in the sectioned-off V.I.P. lounge in the Artifacts Room. The three DJs, Lissa Monet, Jojoflores, and Mark Oliver, played simultaneously throughout the venue till the party wrapped around 2 a.m.

Audiovisual Production, Lighting, Video Westbury National Show Systems Decor, Event Management, Production Party Barbara Co. Security Star Security Staffing Liberty Entertainment Group Venue Liberty Grand

Entertainment Complex

-Carla Warrilow

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