

Heaven on Tour:

Designing For Boston

The summer shed season brings out a wide variety of acts, which this year includes Boston's *Heaven on Earth Tour*. "Over the years, Boston's designs have included a lot of the latest technology that was available at the time," notes Mark Fetto, chief operating officer of Morpheus Lights, the tour's lighting vendor.

This year, Boston is mixing its old hits with new material, a balance that is reflected in the lighting rig. "The rig is half old-school—that's why I kept the PAR cans—and half new, with the hip moving light stuff," explains the band's longtime lighting designer, Gregg Maltby.

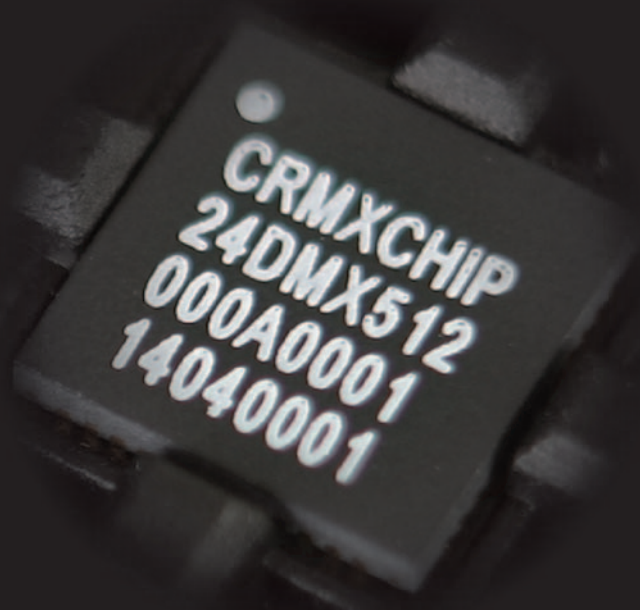
The lighting rig is streamlined. "We are carrying three straight 40' trusses," Maltby says. Two are filled with 120 ETC Source Four PARs. He calls the automated light truss, a 6'-tall-by-40'-wide structure upstage of the amps, "the jungle gym." "It's for backlight, air stuff, graphic effects, and lighting the back of the amps," he adds, "On them, there are six [Martin Professional MAC] Vipers, eight [Clay Paky] Sharpys, and six [Ayrton] MagicPanel 602 beam projectors."

Additional MagicPanels are placed on the floor. "I'm also using them as shin kickers, stage right and stage left, and they work really well," Maltby says. The units replace the Ayrton Wildsun 500s that Maltby employed on the band's 2012 tour. Using the MagicPanels, he says, "you can go totally crazy—you can write letters and numbers and so on. They do rainbow stuff, they do chases, and they look pretty cool."

Under the risers are eight Philips Color Kinetics ColorBlazes. "We put this honeycomb mesh-expanded metal on front of set, so you can't see under the riser. I light under the set with [the ColorBlazes], and it looks really good. We also have two ego boxes downstage right that have Chauvet Professional COLORado 1-Tri Tour LED PARs, with grating on them, for Tom [Scholz] and the other guitarist," says Maltby. The rig also includes five Martin Professional Atomic 3000 strobes, six 4-light Moles, and two Reel EFX DF-50 hazers. "Gregg is very good at what he does and has the ability to visualize the look he is trying to achieve," says Fetto. "Because he is flexible and open to suggestions when it comes to the equipment he uses, we're able to make suggestions that will help him get the overall look he is trying to achieve."

Maltby runs the show on an MA Lighting grandMA 1 console. "We do 70% of the shows in sheds; I used to have a stagehand stand and focus the lights from 120' out," he says. "You have to have really good eyes. And if it's sunny out, it's almost impossible." Now, he says, "I'm focusing with

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an iPad, which I've never done before. I go into focus mode, take my iPad up on stage, and focus everything there, instead of being out at the console. Seth Rapaport, my programmer, set it up." It's the ideal situation for Maltby. "I can even do it on my iPhone—you just have to get the grandMA app, and it works great."

Located upstage is a scenic wall called "the dashboard," conceived by Scholz. "This set piece, once assembled, ultimately resembles what someone would see in the cockpit or flight seat of a plane or spacecraft. There are three large windows through which the audience views their flight and imagery," notes video director Charles Teer. "It's a fascinating concept."

Also, says Teer, "The video department consists of primarily two separate entities: LED displays and media server control." The dashboard windows are 11mm LED panels supplied by LMG's Orlando office. "There are

technically three separate LED displays but they are hung on an inwardly curving angle and then later pulled together to form one seemingly seamless video wall. Once together, the three displays form a wall approximately 50' wide by 21' tall."

Content was provided by Taylor Price, working with Scholz, who essentially was the tour's production designer. "The content includes space-related imagery as well as several pieces that highlight the conservationist views shared by the whole Boston family," Teer notes. "In addition to the pre-produced content, the video portion of the show includes several live video streams which are routed ultimately to the LED displays."

For live video, Teer uses GoPro cameras. "They offer an affordable, yet highly reliable, video feed," he says. "Not to mention, they are tiny and eliminate the need for multiple camera personnel or switching equipment."

Images are delivered via two Catalyst media servers—one active and one backup. "Catalyst delivers versatile and powerful abilities to run the show, or change all aspects of a show from day to day, based on whatever challenges we may meet," Teer says.

The Catalyst works in conjunction with two grandMA 1 full-size consoles—again, an active and a backup. "Several GoPro cameras are strategically placed near members of the band and their video feeds are routed to the Catalyst. From there, I can select and alter them, add video effects, and route them to various portions of the LED displays," says Teer.

Boston's *Heaven on Earth Tour* moves to Japan next month. Maltby concludes, "I really don't expect Boston to go out for four or five years, but who knows? Tom's having the best time he's ever had on this tour."

—Sharon Stancavage