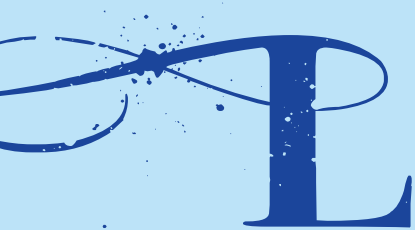


# DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

Pierce the Veil's recent tour was informed by a retro-futuristic concept

By: Sharon Stancavage





Late this fall, the rock band Pierce the Veil toured the US and Europe in support of the album *Misadventures*. The US leg was titled *The Made to Destroy Tour*, while the European leg was known as *The European Vacation Tour*. "Pierce the Veil is very involved in the production process; they really enjoy being a part of it," explains the group's lighting designer/director, Jeff Maker.

The tour depicted a kind of retro-future world. Maker explains, "The boys are all big fans of Disney, the parks and everything like that, so a lot of their stuff has a cartoony vibe, especially when it comes to the video intro and

of the show, with projection on a white silk Kabuki. Maker notes, "The band's idea was that they were going to crash land in every market, as shown in the video intro.

Consequently, we would have a new intro every day, from the first-person perspective of someone riding inside a rocket, flying through space; they would encounter the album's artwork, and then they would crash-land in every city." When the Kabuki dropped, the band was revealed. Maker adds, "The rocket split in two, and the band came out if it, dressed in space suits. The fans loved it; it was a great way to start the show."



Microphones from Shure, Sennheiser, Neumann, and AKG were all used onstage with Pierce the Veil.

set pieces. In the past, they've done things like movable, cartoonish cogs and gears and saws." This time, a rocket crash-landed onstage.

The concept, which has a distinct Disney Tomorrowland-meets-*A Trip to the Moon* vibe, came from lead singer Vic Fuentes. "Vic always wanted to do something like this," says Maker. The rocket theme was a late addition to the production, after the lighting design was completed. "The trick is to design around their set pieces and make it all come together in a way that actually makes sense," he says.

The retro-future theme was addressed at the beginning

Maker adds, "Each rocket piece was about 10' wide and 7' tall; you could get inside them from the back and out of the front. The stage-right side had a circular window that attached to the rocket with Velcro; they pushed it out and smoke would bellow out of it. The other piece was just a big hole they could climb out of." The rocket was fabricated by the Gardena, California branch of Accurate Staging and designed by Michael Cortada [the band's graphic artist], along with the band members; the smoke machines were off-the-shelf 400W wireless foggers. "We provided eight Chauvet Professional ColorDash Batten-Quad 6s for illuminating the inside of the rocket," notes

## CONCERTS

Jason Reberski, president of Chicago-based JR Lighting Design Inc., the lighting vendor for the production.

Reberski says, “The downstage Kabuki was 20’ x 30’ on double-release solenoids that we had fabricated to their specifications.” Maker says, “Following the acoustic song, we had an upstage Kabuki system that revealed a fluorescent painted backdrop from their album *Collide with the Sky*. We turned everything onstage—every moving light—to UV and it transformed the set to close out the second half. If it was regular UV paint, it wouldn’t work with LED, but since we use fluorescent UV paint, we didn’t have to worry about doing pure UV to make it pop. It really added a nice effect.” Both backdrops were designed by Pierce the Veil and Cortada. Maker adds, “The rocket backdrop was manufactured by [St. Paul, Minnesota-based] Hellcat Design Group. The girl/UV drop was manufactured by [Los Angeles-based] Grosh Backdrops and Scenery.”

To illuminate the UV drop, Maker used six Elation Professional SixBar 1000s. “Jeff originally specified [PixelRange] PixelLine 1044s to light the backdrop. We ended up using the SixBar 1000s, with the same RGBAW + UV LEDs as [Elation’s] Six Par 100s,” says Reberski.

### Lighting

To keep the informal retro-future sci-fi theme in mind, Maker added onstage truss structures that proved to be both scenic and functional: “There was truss surrounding each rocket piece, to create kind of a launch pad. On

them, I had four [Martin by Harman MAC] Quantum Profiles on top of each, for a total of eight. I also had six Elation Protron 3K LED strobes and three Elation ACL 360 BARs across the top of each one.”

For his floor package, Maker had “two Quantums downstage left and two downstage right. We also had [Elation] Platinum Beam 5Rs—two midstage right and two midstage left. In front of the drum kit, on the drum riser, I had five ACL 360 Bars and two Protron 3K strobes.”

Speaking of the ACL 360 Bars, which were one of the tour’s workhorses, Reberski notes, “They have been a fantastic for us; they’re very much in demand and are extremely reliable on the road. As for the Quantum Profiles, they are some of the most reliable workhorse fixtures that you can have in a production inventory: bright, reliable, and compact.” Two upstage ladders “had 12 ACL 360 Bars, six on each; I also had three Quantums on each ladder,” Maker adds.

“The guys don’t like followspots, so we took that off the plate. I used whatever they had in-house, whether moving fixtures or Lekos,” Maker says. Those additional fixtures typically came from a downstage house truss. “I don’t find it hard to add house fixtures into my show. If it’s a Leko, it’s super-simple; I just have to send someone up to focus the light. If it’s a mover, it’s a lot easier for me, as far as sending someone up to focus them.”

The set also included three ego risers, one for each band member, for which, Maker says, “We had Elation Six



Maker ran the show on an Avolites Sapphire Touch console.





In the US, lighting gear was provided by JR Lighting Design Inc.; in Europe, the supplier was Zig Zag Lighting Ltd.

Par 100 LED fixtures.” The stage was also home to two Antari Z350 hazers, and, Reberski adds, “they also had a single Rosco Vapour Plus fog machine that was added a quarter of the way through the US portion of the tour. The extreme density and long hang-time of the standard Rosco fog fluid used in the Vapour Plus machine was key for the outdoor festival dates, for creating excellent atmosphere.” In addition to Reberski, other JR Lighting Design team working on the tour included Kevin Rosenhagen, director of operations, who handled tour logistics, coordination, and communication, and Justin Litterio, systems integration manager, who was responsible for CAD, engineering, and touring systems integration. On the US leg, Maker’s lighting tech was “Chud” Williams and in the UK, Tom Clifford-Loynes; Myles Elliot is the production manager for the band.

On the road, Maker ran the show on an Avolites Sapphire Touch console; he also used it for programming. “It’s a very user-friendly console,” he says. “It has a fantastic pixel-mapper and the shape generator is super-easy-to-use, if I have to update something very quickly during the

show, it’s easy to do on the fly. It has automatic faders, it’s very easy to program, and I just love it. Every time they update the software, they make it a lot better.” In the US and in the UK, he toured with two Sapphire Touches; an active and a backup unit. He also controlled projections via his laptop, which was connected to the Sapphire console using ArKaos MediaMaster Pro 5.0 software.

In the UK, the Quantums were replaced by Robe BMFLs. Maker says, “The BMFL was the dominant fixture on stage; however, the ACL 360 Bars punched through and were able to keep up with the BMFL. I’ve used both fixtures in tandem before, and I like how they work together.”

Instead of the Platinum Beams, Maker used Robe Pointes. “I’ve always been a fan of the Pointe,” he notes. “I think it’s more versatile than a Platinum Beam and a [Clay Paky] Sharpy; it can do a lot more looks while still getting a Sharpy/Platinum Beam effect. I like the six-facet prism as well.”

The band’s biggest show was a sold-out gig at London’s O2 Academy Brixton. Maker explains, “It’s a 5,000-capacity venue, and it was a blank slate, so we basically treated it





Located upstage was the rocket that the band emerged from at the top of the show.

as if it was an arena. It's a great-sized stage and a great-looking room. Being their biggest headline show to date, it was very special for the band, and we wanted to make sure it was perfect." In Europe, the lighting vendor was Zig Zag Lighting Ltd., located in Leeds.

### Sound

Front-of-house sound engineer Kevin Flaszka carried only a control console and racks. "The Midas PRO2C console has been my go-to for several years now," he says. "We had some fluctuation in room size on each leg of this cycle and the PRO2C has given me incredible consistency, not only sonically but also physical-footprint-wise."

Flaszka worked without plug-ins. "For Vic Fuentes, I use a vocal chain consisting of a Heritage Audio '73 Junior 500 Series microphone preamp with a JLM Audio LA500 opto compressor in an Empirical Labs EL500 2 Slot 500 Series rack," he says.

He adds, "Our mic package is something that has been ever-evolving over the time I've been working with PTV [Pierce the Veil], but this current Europe run is something I'm really happy with all around. It's a Shure-heavy package, also pulling from Sennheiser, Neumann, and AKG."

For the drums, Flaszka has "a Shure Beta 91A and

Sennheiser e 902 combo on the kick. There is a Shure SM57 and Shure Beta 87A combo on the snare and Shure Beta 181s on the hats and ride. I have Sennheiser e 604s on the rack and floors, with AKG C414s serving as close-proximity underheads."

Flaszka also worked closely with the band's guitarists, Fuentes and Tony Perry. "For stage left guitar—Tony—we had a Kemper [amp] running a modeled profile of his actual amp," he says. "On stage right, which is Vic, we switched between a live custom Marshall stack in the states and a Kemper profile of that amp when we were in overseas. When we had the live amp out, we miked it up with another AKG C414 and Sennheiser MD-421 II combo."

For bassist Jaime Preciado, Flaszka had "a rig that terminated in an unaffected pre-send, a post Tech 21 Samsamp pedal send, and a mic on a mini cabinet that also received an un-effected send. We put a Sennheiser e 421 on the bass cabinet and used a blend of all three sends to achieve his tone from song to song." For Fuentes and backup vocalist Preciado, there were wired and wireless Shure SM58s; the wireless mic was a Shure UHF unit with a UR2 handheld. Sound gear supplied by the group's longtime vendor, Chicago-based Sound Works

Productions for the US leg and SSE, located in Redditch, UK for the European leg.

Flasza notes, “The band has incredible tone coming off the stage, which makes all the difference in the world for any show. Drum sounds are both fantastic and consistent acoustically, thanks to drum tech Casey Ervin and the drummer, Mike Fuentes, hits hard, which gives me plenty of control. The bass channels sound incredible, especially after they run through Avalon DIs and both guitar tones are dialed in. The tones show how much the band cares about the quality of their live show.”

For the Brixton show, Flasza says, “We ended up keeping an L-Acoustics rig that was already flown from the show the night before. It consisted of 12 V-DOSC cabinets per side, three dV-DOSC per side and six SB28s subs per side. We also had three KARA and four ARCS for front fill as well as a Lake LM44 audio processor. L-Acoustics or d&b audiotechnik are my usual go-to companies for shows of this size or bigger. It worked out for everyone that the rig was already in the room.”

Monitor engineer Bryan Williams has a past that includes time in the studio, and that led him to bring along an Avid Profile on tour. “The Avid consoles helped me seamlessly transition into live sound, and allowed to me carry over many techniques and work flows that I rely on

in the studio,” he says.

For his onboard gear, Williams notes, “I recently added a Neve 5045 primary source enhancer to my vocal chain. Vic is a very dynamic singer, and likes a lot of compression and effects in his mix. This unit has allowed me to achieve that while cleaning up ambient noise from stage. My effects have a new found clarity to them.”

Williams adds, “My show file is full of Waves plug-ins. I could talk about this forever,” he says with a smile. For the drums, he used Waves’ Trans X transient shaper on the kick, Waves MV2 [a compressor plug-in] on the toms, Waves SSL G-Master buss compressor and CLA 1176 [a compressor limiter plug-in], PuigTec EQP-1A, and MV2 on the snares. For the vocals, he had PuigTec EQP-1A, along with [Waves] CLA 1176; for the acoustic guitars, he used a PuigTec EQP-1A and Waves CLA-2A.

Williams used JH Audio’s Roxanne custom in-ear monitors, which are part of the firm’s Siren Series. He says, “The stereo imaging is incredible! I’m able to spread around different elements of the mix and find a pocket for everything easily. Most of the band also takes advantage of the variable bass-boost; Vic keeps his flat to focus more on the midrange of his vocal.”

Pierce the Veil wrapped up *The European Vacation Tour* in December. 📶



Elation Professional gear—including Elation ACL 360 BARs—was an important part of the lighting rig.