

Building a Higher Art: An Experiment in Architectural Lighting

By: Catherine McHugh

Students from DePaul University transform a church's façade

Since its dedication on May 1, 1897, the graceful French Romanesque lines of Chicago's St. Vincent DePaul church has drawn admiring onlookers. But for three nights in May, passersby stopped in their tracks while others hung out of their cars to get a better view of its colorful light show.

With guidance from lighting designer Paul Gregory, of New York City-based Focus Lighting, four groups of DePaul University lighting design students used moving and static images, inspired by artists AJ LaGasse, Vincent Van Gogh, Leonid Afremov, and Mary Ann Papanek-Miller, to transform the church's façade. An alumnus of the Goodman Theatre School, the predecessor of the DePaul theatre department, Gregory proposed the project for the university's current technical theatre students as a way to help them expand their skills.

Gregory has done similar public lighting projects in Bochum, Germany; University of North Carolina School of the Arts; and the Marcus Center in Milwaukee, where he took inspiration from Wisconsin native Georgia O'Keeffe's flower paintings. (The De Paul students took a field trip to check out his work there.)

With support from DePaul University president Father Dennis Holtschneider, Gregory worked with

Chris Binder (chair of design and technology and head of lighting design) and John Culbert (dean of the Theatre School) to scout out a suitable building. The church was an obvious choice.

"It's impossible to make bad scenery look great; it's easy to make good scenery look great," Gregory says. "We wanted it to be a wonderful experience for the students. It would have been unfair to just give them a building and say, 'Light it!' So this project gave them some restrictions by asking them, 'How would Van Gogh have interpreted this building if he were alive today?'"

Binder happily added the project to the students' regular curriculum. "It provided an experience that they wouldn't otherwise get—in addition to the work they did in class," she explains. "We incorporated it into a series of seminars that became the perfect vehicle for getting everyone together to talk about the project in each of its phases."



The DePaul students outside the church, with one of the lighting projects in the background.

Binder assigned the 17 lighting design students into four teams; each team chose an artist whose work would be interpreted. The first step was to write and present it to Gregory, explaining and defending the choice of artist.

Anthony Forchielli's group chose New York-based artist AJ LaGasse. "There are shapes present in his compositions that we could translate onto the surface of the church and help accent the architecture," he explains. "We primarily used the paintings *Chocolate Mint Explosion* and *Blue*

LEX
We Deliver the Power™

Power control for the full range
of lighting, audio and video devices...
RE-IMAGINED!

PCS TRIO™

With its revolutionary design, PCS TRIO™ is the only single panel system to allow each Module to harness all available phases of power.

The ability to consolidate single and double pole relays as well as dimmers into one panel has never been accomplished until now!

- Delivers power to a wide range of devices in a single panel including LEDs, Moving Lights, and more
- Modules connect dimmers, single pole and double pole relays to all phases of power
- Integrates easily with other power control and management devices
- Simplifies electrical installations with less cabling and conduit with a single panel solution



LEX™
Power Control Solutions
for Permanent Installations

UL US LISTED

LEARN MORE ABOUT PCS TRIO™ AT

LEXPRODUCTS.COM/REIMAGINE

OR CALL TOLL-FREE 800-643-4460 FOR MORE DETAILS.



The project drew the attention of many passersby, allowing the students to see the impact that lighting can have on a community.



Students at work, programming one of the looks.

Moon Rising as our basis.”

Along with students James Mitchell and Rickie Latshaw, Forchielli also created the light plot. “We figured out the shots that we would need and where we would need to place fixtures,” Forchielli explains. “Since we are mostly being trained in theatrical lighting design, one challenge was that we don’t really light things just to look cool; there should always be a motivating factor. In theatre, the script supports our design choices. With music, there is certainly a lot of play in terms of lyrics and style, but with the architecture, it wasn’t quite as clear.”

Another DePaul alumnus, Protolight, Inc. owner Chris Prezas, provided the project’s equipment, which included, from Elation Professional, Platinum Profile 35 Pros,



EXPERIENCE 60 YEARS OF
AMERICAN
INGENUITY,
GRIT
AND
TOUGHNESS

INTRODUCING THE 2-TON, SINGLE-REEVED
CM LODESTAR – QUITE SIMPLY THE WORLD'S
BEST ELECTRIC CHAIN MOTOR

www.cm-et.com



800.888.0985 / +1.716.689.5400 **CALL FOR A DEMO**



The students drew inspiration from the work of various visual artists, leading to a variety of looks.

Platinum Spot 15R Pros, Six Par 300s, Arena Pars, and Level Q7s, plus ETC Source Four LED Daylights, ETC Paletta 42 LED strips, and Philips

Color Kinetics ColorReach Powercore. Control was via an ETC Ion 1500. Also used were Elation EWDMX wireless transmitters and receivers, Doug

Fleenor Design opto-splitters, and a Pathway Connectivity Pathport Quattro node. "A lot of us did want framing in the profiles," Forchielli says.

THE MANIAC™

BORN TO BE WILD

- MOVING HEAD LED FOG MACHINE
- CO₂ EFFECT WITHOUT CO₂
- ADJUSTABLE FOG OUTPUT
- INSTANT STOP FOG TECHNOLOGY
- STROBE, DIM, & MIX COLORS
- SEQUENCE SEVERAL
- UPRIGHT OR UPSIDE DOWN
- 10 DMX CHANNELS



AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FROM CITC

CITC SPECIAL EFFECTS EQUIPMENT • INFO@CITCFX.COM • 888.786.2482 • www.CITCFX.com



LIVEDESIGN



BOOTH #116

DOUG FLEENOR DESIGN

PRODUCTS FOR DMX512

The Preset 8 is a lighting control station that stores eight preset looks. Each look, or scene, has an associated slider that adjusts the light levels for that look. The preset looks are recorded into the Preset 8 by capturing the output of any DMX512 console.



Model: PRE8-A
Preset 8 Architectural



Model: PRE8-D
Preset 8 Desktop



Model: PRE8-P
Preset 8 Portable

The Preset 8 can operate alone or in conjunction with another console. When operated with another console, Preset 8 can either “back-off” when the other console is on line, or merge its levels with those of the other console using a “highest-takes-precedence” approach.

www.dfd.com

Phone and Fax: (805) 481-9599

“The challenge was figuring out the angles. Some people wanted them for side scrapes on the building and some wanted them front-on, to frame out some of the architecture with a pattern. That and the brightness of the fixtures were big considerations.”

Prezas provided guidance in terms of equipment choices, but the students made their decisions. “They have to have room to make mistakes, because that’s the best way to learn,” Gregory says. “They would put a moving head fixture with movable shutters

up on the façade and then have one of the shutters pull away so it looked like a paintbrush applying the paint. Incredibly creative stuff, but they balanced that out with how much time it would take to do that versus how much time they would need to spend on color and cueing.”

The project began in October, but most of the work happened in the last three weeks, with the opening night set for Wednesday, May 20. After solidifying the fixture counts, the students came up with a load-in plan but

found it took much longer than expected to set everything up on the first night. “But that gave us an opportunity to bundle all the cabling and build some pods that made load-in easier for the rest of the week,” Forchielli says. “We were setting it up in half an hour and striking it in 20 minutes. It was about 80 – 90 fixtures, so that was pretty great. We had teams of about 15 people on every night to do the work, and we rotated between the lighting designers and the technical directors at the school, who were also a big part of the project.”

Beginning at 8pm, each group got one hour to showcase its design on the church. “The number of people who stopped and asked what we were doing was great,” Binder says. “I think the students really understood not just how cool it was but the kind of impact it could have on the community. I cannot stress enough that none of it would have been possible without Shane Kelly (chair of the design and technology department) and his students, who were instrumental in figuring out the logistics of how to get all the equipment in the right places. It was a fantastic experience.”

The students are interested in doing more architectural lighting, and Binder is committed to exploring how to do more projects like this. “This was a one-off. The opportunity arose, and we were able to get funding for it,” she says. “We are thinking about doing a Kickstarter campaign or something along those lines to keep this kind of thing going from year to year.”

“We hire many theatrical lighting designers because of their training,” Gregory says. By the time they graduate, they’ve done 20 shows, for audiences that are going to show up at 8pm, whether you are ready or not. They have a list of 100 things to do when there is only time to do 20, so they are much more prepared. The architect and the interior designer don’t really build anything over the course of their years in school, whereas lighting designers see their work and learn what paid off and what didn’t.”



A Complete Line of Lamps & Production Expendables for: Film, Video, Television, Theatre, Concert, Nightclub, Themed Entertainment

Lamps	> Moving Light Lamps, Theatrical Lamps, LCD/DLP Projection, TV & Film Lamps
Batteries	> AA, AAA, C, D, 9V, Alkaline, Lithium, Rechargeable
Expendables	> Gaffer Tape, Electrical Tape, Sash Cord & Tie Line
Gobos	> Glass, Metal, Custom, Holders, Stock Gobos
Color Filters	> Gel / Diffusion, Sheets, Rolls, Sleeves, Panels
Electrical Supplies	> Stage Pin, Twist Lock, Cam Type, Edison Type, Multi-Pin, Powercon, Assemblies
Lighting Fixtures	> Led Lighting, Work Lights, Moving Lights, Followspots, LED Panels, Stage Lighting Fixtures



Lamps & LED's: Archipelago, Bulbrite, Cree, Feit Electric, General Electric, Green Creative, Halco, Ledtronics, Lighting Science Group, Osram, Sylvania, Philips, Satco, Sora, TCP, Ushio, Zenaro
Tape: 3M, ProTape, Shuretape
Gel: Apollo, Lee Filters, Rosco GAM
Accessories: City Theatrical, TMB, Littlite, Chimera

Batteries: Duracell, Energizer, Rayovac, Yuasa, Rhino, Panasonic
Electrical: Marinc Power Products, Bates, Hubbell, Leviton, LEX Products, Union connector
Fixtures: OEnergy, Altman, American DJ, Apollo, Arri, Desisti, Elation, ETC, Kino Flo, Lowel, Rosco, Osram, Philips, Chauvet, Lycian

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

DURATRUSS NOT ONLY OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF LIGHT DUTY, MEDIUM DUTY AND HEAVY DUTY TRUSSING PRODUCTS, BUT WE ALSO OFFER ACCESSORIES, CLAMPS AND STAGING PRODUCTS THAT ALLOW YOU TO CREATIVELY DESIGN YOUR STAGE OR LIGHTSHOW "OUTSIDE THE BOX."

DT-DYNO WHEEL

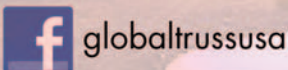
- Round Totem Top for F34
- Diameter: 3.28Ft
- Tube Diameter: 50mm(1.96")

GT-12 GROUND SUPPORT TOWER

- Maximum Working Height with F34 Truss: 6m (19.68')
- Components: GT-TOP/CM, GT-BLOCK, GT-44BS-1
- GT-49214S-1 Outriggers (4x), HINGE M12 (4x), SQ-4109
- The GT-BLOCK will accommodate F33, F34, F34P and F44P truss horizontally.
- Optional: 1 Ton Manual Chain hoist

TRUSS GRID

DT-QUICK GRID (matte black) or
DT-QUICK GRID/TP (aluminum finish)



DuraTruss/Global Truss America
Tel: 323.415.6225
support@globaltruss.com
www.GlobalTruss.com


DURATRUSS

