

BOTH SIDES NOW

U2's *iNNOCENCE*
+ *eXPERIENCE*
Tour is all about
the juxtaposition
of opposites

By: Sharon Stancavage



The design brief for any U2 show is both simple and incredibly challenging. Creative director Willie Williams explains, “My concerns are always to try to find new expressions of the same basic task—to maximize the emotional connection between the performers and the audience, whilst hopefully showing them something they’ve never seen before.”

The U2 creative team is expansive and varied. According to Williams, the key members include executive director Gavin Friday; set designers Ric Lipson, of Stufish Entertainment Architects, and Es Devlin; sound designer/engineer Joe O’Herlihy; production manager Jake Berry; video director Stefaan “Smasher” Desmedt; choreographer Morleigh Steinberg; and head of wardrobe Sharon Blankson. Williams says, “It is a highly collaborative process between the band and creative team with much crossover and interdepartmental delegation, all ultimately at the call of the band members.”

Last time we met was a low-lit room...
—“Until The End of the World”*

The *iNNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE Tour* design began in 2013; the late Mark Fisher, founder of Stufish, was then an important part of the design process. The creative brief was signed off on in December 2013, for a 2014 tour. A postponement followed, however, and everyone regrouped in July 2014. A key concept that survived the process was the idea of a narrative, a word that isn’t typically used in the concert world, unless it’s in the context of a rock opera. However, Williams notes, “On this project, the genesis was narrative. It’s the narrative that runs through the album; the story of four teenagers growing up in ’70s Dublin, looking out of their bedroom windows and trying to figure out how they fit into the often violent and disrupted world outside.”

There was also talk of taking a more varied approach. “We fully intended to have two different set lists and make it a pair of shows,” Williams says. “The idea survived all the way to the beginning of music rehearsals, at which point it became apparent that it wasn’t really viable.” Instead, the set list changes slightly from night to night. Williams explains, “The narrative portions of the show don’t change, but there are slots within the storyline where different songs can be played, to give variety. It works well and allows for both structure and spontaneity.”

The realities of touring the production were addressed from the beginning by Berry. “I work closely with Willie Williams, Es Devlin, and Ric Lipson when creating the show to make sure they are creating something that we can afford and can also transport around the globe,” Berry says. “Because we’re an extremely heavy show—we’re rigging 172,000lb—we have to be very careful in advancing the show in regards to rigging.”

A veteran of the concert industry, Berry is nonchalant about his role. Others are not. “The show was only possible because Jake was 150% behind it all from day one,” Lipson says. “His commitment to making the best show possible for the band pushed every detail to the maximum and meant he was constantly trying to deliver the best artistic experience for the band and the audience whilst pushing all departments to think about every extra meter of cable. This is one of heaviest touring shows and only Jake, with his passion and experience, could take on this challenge with such competence.”

iNNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE is structured in two acts. “Act I represents innocence, Act II, experience,” William says. “The storytelling in Act I is surprisingly literal for a rock show. The end of innocence arrives with violence from without and within—death of parents, terrorism, and so forth. A short hiatus takes us into Act II, which looks at the wider world and how we try to make sense of it as we become grown-ups.”

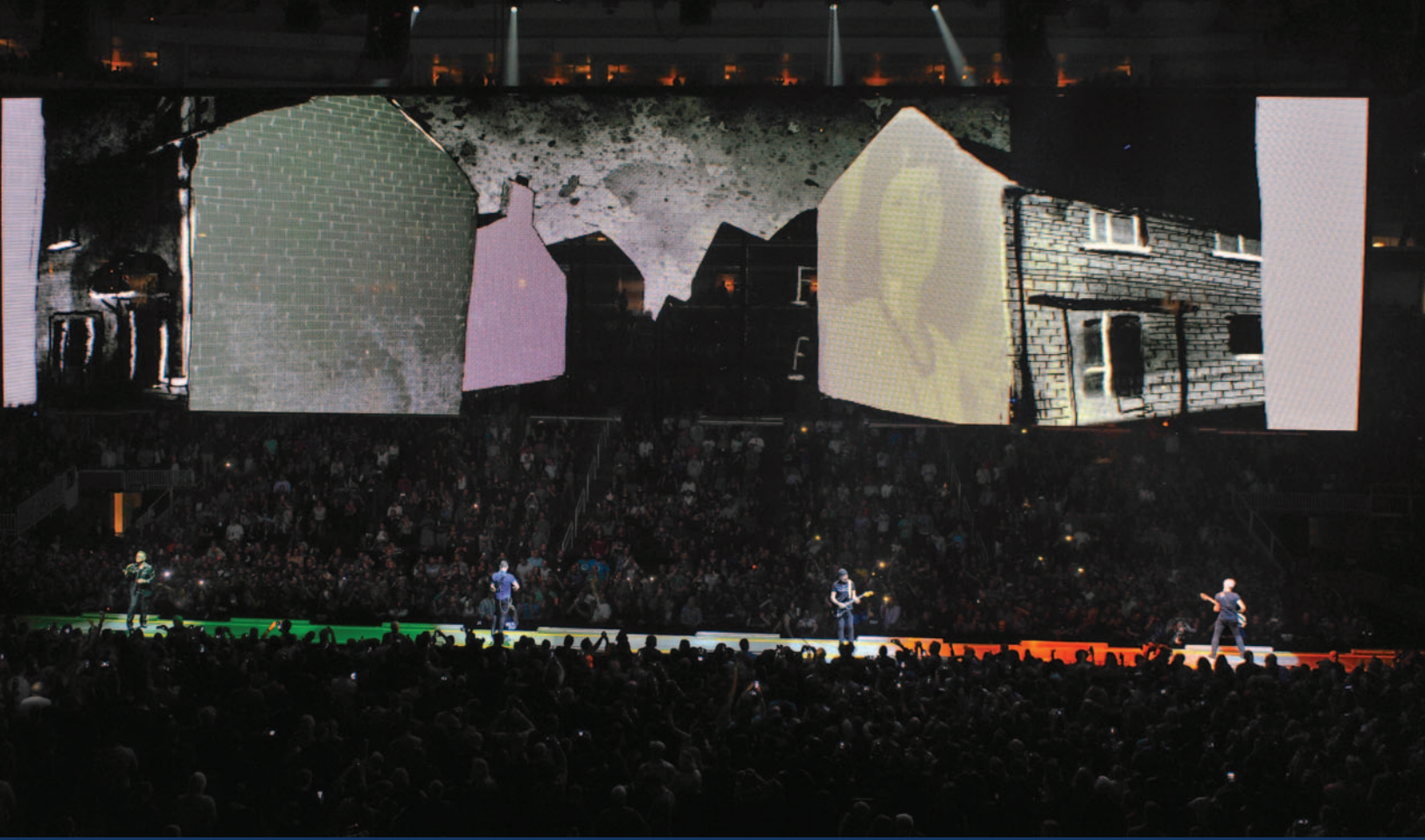
As always, style was an overall concern. “We wanted to find an aesthetic for the show that felt masculine and used tough materials. We wanted to avoid the usual rock tour clichés, but we didn’t want it to feel posh, either. We tried to find an aesthetic that was pure, to the point, and slick and modern without looking like a pastiche.” This thinking can be seen in the floor of the set, which was fabricated by TAIT, based in Lititz, Pennsylvania. “If you look at the stage close up, you’ll see that the floor is grooved like an escalator, and is painted silver and black, so it feels metallic.”

I was chasing down the days of fear
Chasing down a dream before it disappeared...
—“The Miracle (of Joey Ramone)”

To facilitate the transition from youth to adulthood, the creative team had a variety of tools available, one of which was the staging itself. Lipson explains, “The way we ended up exploring it, although it changed in its guise over the two years, was always similar. The basis was that one end of the room would have the square stage which represented home and, at the other end of the arena, you would have the round stage, representing the world. Then there would be some way of getting between them.”

Given the extended design time line, the team was able to consider many ways of getting between the Innocence stage and the Experience stage. Lipson explains, “We went through every concoction of catwalk, bridge, shaped stages, and eventually ended up with a singular runway that runs right down the center, dividing the room. We also very early on had what we called the divide, which was actually a Kabuki cloth, and, halfway through the show, we would project on it and then it would be gone.”

The main, or Innocence, stage, is 60’ wide and 32’



Many of the messages in the production are subtle; note the colors of the Irish flag on the catwalk stage.

deep; the performance area in the center is 35' x 22'. "The mood of the square stage is straightforward rock and roll, echoing the late '70s/early '80s, which is thematically where that part of the show is set," Williams says. "We've essentially built a punk club." The latter reflects the youthful exuberance of the band at that particular juncture in their personal lives and musical careers.

Video

You don't see me but you will
—"Invisible"

To allow the band to move between both stages, the design team created what Williams calls "the screen-stage-bridge-lighting hybrid object." It's comprised of two 96' x 23' V-Thru LED screens, manufactured by SACO Technologies and distributed by PRG, the production's video gear supplier. The V-Thru screens contain all their cabling hidden in the support rails, which are placed 6' apart. It is essentially an arena-spanning electronic scrim. "It's like an invisible block," Lipson explains. "You don't come in and say, 'It's the biggest screen ever.' It really is about how to reinvent the next experience of the

audience." At times, the screen is up in the ceiling and not part of the show. Then, Williams explains, "After half an hour of no-bullshit rock and roll, a giant double-sided television fills the airspace of the arena."

The introduction of the screen is gradual; as the production progresses, it slowly moves closer to the catwalk stage via automation from eight 3,000kg Tait Nav Hoists. Lipson explains, "The first time we see the screen is during 'Iris,' in which Bono sings about his mother; this is the start of his story of moving from innocence to experience. At this point, the screen comes down, and the next song is 'Cedarwood Road,' where a connecting staircase unfolds from the side of the screen to meet the stage, allowing Bono to enter the screen."

Enabling the stairs to move are a variety of hoists and winches; there's also a slipstage inside of the screen. In total, there are 69 active axes of motion on the show, controlled via a Fisher Navigation system.

At this point, the video consists of a simple animation of row houses on the street where Bono grew up; the image moves one way, while Bono, inside the screen and consequently inside the video, moves against it. The effect is surreal and groundbreaking. Content producer Sam

Pattinson, of UK's The Third Company, notes, "The aesthetic of the animation contrasted with the technology is a very interesting juxtaposition to me, and I think the band really handled that well. I'm not really sure how many artists could perform in that space."

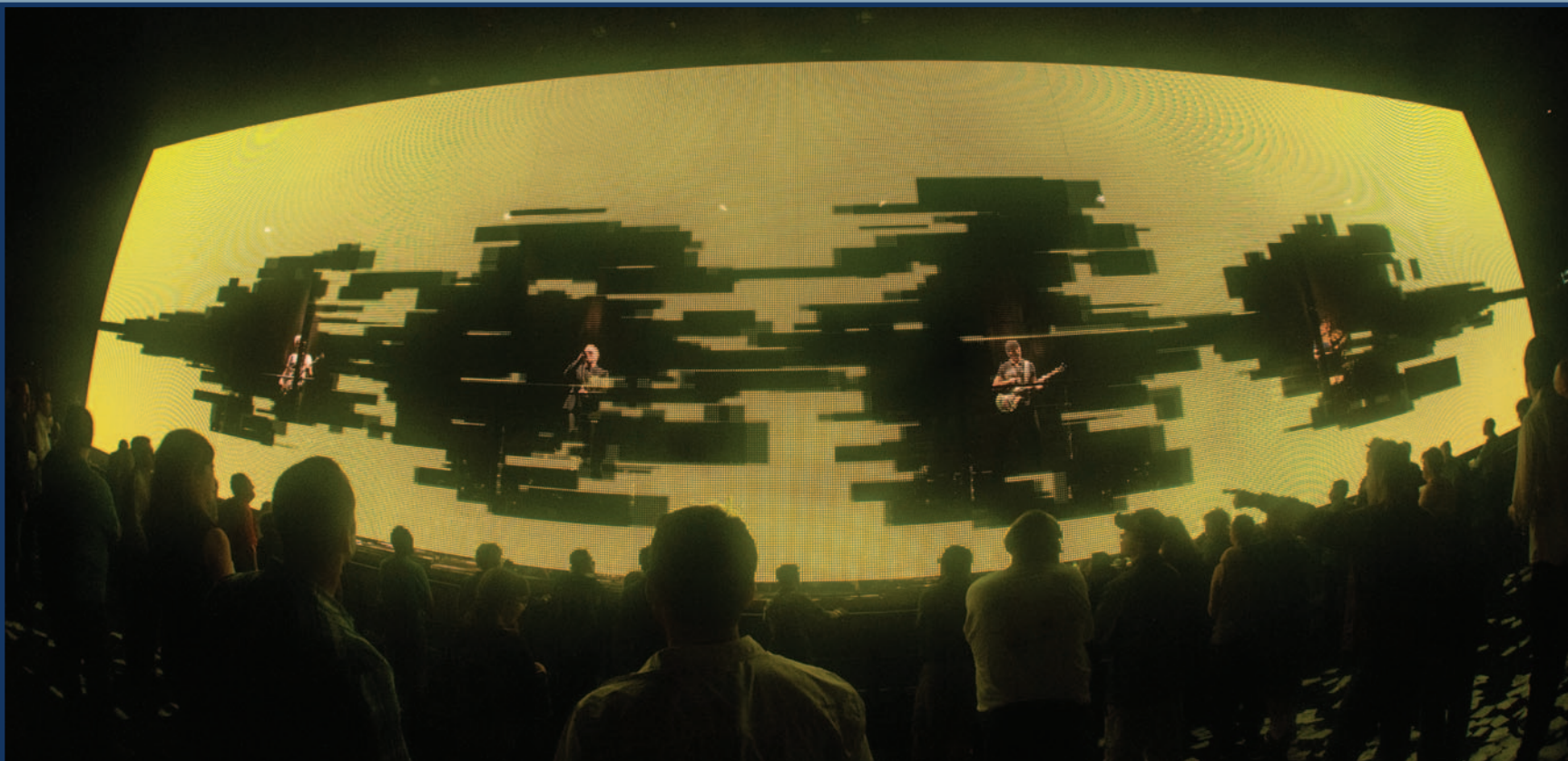
Working with U2 is a distinctive experience, Pattinson says: "Usually when we do a show, we come up with a half dozen or dozen ideas and then they get signed off. The U2 process is so much more fluid, and there's this desire, this drive to explore ideas, which is fantastic, but keeping up with it can be a challenge. They're all great ideas, so they're all worth trying."

Pattinson brought on producer Ben Nicholson, of Empirical Studio, to assist with the production duties in the US, while Pattinson and his team of ten in-house animators, four editors, and a full-time archivist handled content creation and the administrative duties, including licensing, from his vantage point in the UK. "Willie will start looking at points in the show that need video and will put a concept forward for that, then I'll suggest creatives that might be able to meet that brief specifically," Pattinson explains. "I found Jeff Frost, who is one of the key contributors to the content. We also commissioned a company called four23 [specifically artist Warren Bramley] to do 'Bullet the Blue Sky.' For 'Cedarwood Road,' we commissioned an artist named Oliver Jeffers, who originated the

key elements of that animation." In the end, more than 50 commissioned artists from around the world—including Tom Kruger, Kevin Godley, and ATYP—worked on the project; more than a dozen had their contributions make it into the show. The crews at The Third Company also did six live shoots in both Europe and North America.

Pattinson and his various creatives use a variety of programs, including After Effects, Cinema 4D, and Maya; the latter is used mostly for 3-D modeling. The media server of choice for Pattinson and U2—who Pattinson has worked with since 2004—is the d3 Technologies 4x4pro. "We're big fans of the d3, and we've used it since its inception—in fact, we used it on the *Vertigo Tour* in 2005," Pattinson says. "At The Third Company, we work with people like Willie, Patrick Woodroffe, and the late Mark Fisher, so we have these dynamic surfaces to put content on; other systems struggle [with this], while d3 does not." He adds, "When we're using the d3, we work on a time line the same way we do in Final Cut or Adobe Premiere, and that really suits us. We can insert the CAD, create the environment, test our content in the show environment through visualization, build the show, and deliver that program to play out on it. The fact that we can visualize the show is amazing." The production uses two d3 4x4pros.

The screen is the nexus of "Until the End of the World,"



Act II opens with "Invisible," a song that renders the V-Thru screen invisible by its conclusion.

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which ends the first act. In it, IMAG of the band is interlaced with a variety of images, that, says Williams, includes “an explosion,” and then “a light bulb shatters, a tsunami comes out of it, there’s the house on Cedarwood Road, 1970s furniture, and a variety of memories; at that point, the screen has come all the way down to the stage and completely divides the room.” It is a stunning moment for the audience. “When the screen lands on the deck cutting the audience in half and obliterating the runway stage, the atmosphere of ‘WTF’ in the air is palpable,” Williams says.

At that point, the screen plays a role both literal and symbolic. According to Lipson, the concept of dividing the audience “is based on the idea of the north side and the south side of Dublin, the peace walls in Northern Ireland that were built, and all of the various peace walls and barricades around the world.”

“Until the End of the World” includes a massive confetti drop. Lipson explains, “We have—no joke here—a half-ton of hand-ripped book pages that we printed specially on fireproof tissue paper. Each page is printed and cropped to book size and hand-ripped in half. We had a team of ten people in Vancouver for two days; each page was ripped and then dumped into different containers, which allowed us to mix up the 84 different pages that were printed from various texts. The idea behind it comes

from a story Bono tells about the firebombing of the library in Sarajevo, when pages from books rained down on the city for hours afterwards. The confetti blowers are provided by Pyrotecnico FX.

During the intermission, there is content on the screen, along with music; this segment of the production has changed since opening night, and will continue to change, as will the entire production. “These guys never sit still,” confides Williams.

Act II begins with the new song, “Invisible,” which features yellow animated video, and, eventually, the audience realizes the entire band is performing inside the screen. About halfway into the number, Bono sings the line “I am here,” and, Lipson says, “We turn on all the lights in the house, we turn off the screen and the screen becomes pretty much invisible. The audience goes wild, because you can see through to the other side, and it’s a pretty amazing moment.” The audience that was separated is once again one.

IMAG is thoughtfully woven in and out of the video content. Desmedt uses a PRG Nocturne HD Flypack, which features a Grass Valley Karrera K-Frame S-series switcher. Also used are eight Grass Valley HD cameras, manned by PRG video crew, and three Ikegami HD robotic cameras. The video package also includes two 15.75' x 9.8' PRG Nocturne VR-7 seven-



The lighting package includes PRG Bad Boys, Best Boys (both Spot and Wash versions), Martin Professional MAC Auras, TMB ProCan four-light PAR 36 units, James Thomas Engineering four-light PAR 36 units, Martin Atomic strobes with scrollers, Cirro Strata mist generators, Look Solutions Unique hazers, Ultratec Radiance hazers, and LeMaitre Stadium hazers. PRG's BAT truss is also used.



Bono in the V-Thru screen, during “Cedarwood Road.”

millimeter LED IMAG screens.

The band moves to the 24' diameter experience stage during the song “Mysterious Ways.” Lipson says, “It is one of the most interesting, intimate experiences with U2 that you’ll ever find. They are just there on the stage; Bono with his mic stand, Edge and Adam have their guitar and bass, and Larry has a small drum kit, and they play four or five songs out there.”

The color yellow is prominently featured in the scenic design, as evidenced by the tour logo designed by Stufish. “The square stage, which is the Innocence stage, has a big ‘I’ across the front, and it is linked by the catwalk to the Experience stage, which is the round stage,” Lipson says. “There is a big ‘E’ on the round stage. The I/E tour logo designed by Stufish is this scrolled yellow paint that is burned into the stage literally. We worked very closely with Tait to create this yellow stripe; every single deck had to be custom-built. It’s quite the complex piece, it’s all cut, by CNC, into this black-ribbed floor.” Why yellow? “No reason. We just liked it, though, for some reason, for me the yellow represents goodness in a complicated world,” confides Williams.

Although the set can indeed be termed massive, it doesn’t feel that way, Lipson notes, “Because the video screen is very see-through, and the construction by Tait is brilliant. Willie’s lighting is also quite minimal and all around the edge, and, finally, Joe O’Herlihy, who is the sound designer, has designed an in-the-round PA, so there’s not a big stack in the arena, and acoustically it’s outstanding.”

Lighting

*Lights go down and all I know
Is that you give me something*
—“Vertigo”

Williams, who handles the lighting design, explains, “The first conversation I had with Bono about ‘the next tour’ was on the last tour, which tends to be where these things start. Even then, on the *360 Tour*, Bono was asking where we should go next and suggested that, in contrast to the 200 trucks of steel, we should start the next show under a single, naked light bulb.”

Thus the first song in the show, “The Miracle (of Joey Ramone)” begins with the band standing under a large, warm incandescent bulb fabricated by Tait. “I always try to light the show with as few fixtures as possible,” Williams admits and his approach is typically spare. “The three trusses above the square stage house only 16 fixtures, which is fewer than we had on the *War Tour* in 1983!” The Innocence stage is lined by fixtures that delineate the performance area. “At floor level, there are vintage [Martin Professional] Atomic strobes with scrollers and actual DWE Molefays for that fantastic brown low-color temp feel—LEDs be damned, it’s the glitchiness of these fixtures that I enjoy the most.”

Lighting units are also located inside the screen structure—16 PRG Best Boy spots, 32 Atomic strobes with color scrollers, and 32 four-light Molefays. There are two straight trusses comprised of 10 Best Boy Washes and four Bad Boys at the round Experience stage. “The

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truss configuration is entirely pragmatic—simply placed to hold lights where I need them,” Williams says. “The setup also demands enormously high trim heights for sightlines so, when it came to it, the rig pretty much designed itself around the given parameters.”

All of the automated fixtures in the air come from the show’s lighting vendor, PRG. Williams reveals, “Bad Boys and Best Boys—both Profile and Wash—are the workhorse units. I chose these primarily for their output, given the throw distances involved and my desire to minimize the number of fixtures. I love keeping it bold and unfussy.”

I am still enchanted by the light you brought to me
—“Stuck In a Moment You Can’t Get Out Of”

Then there are the fluorescent tubes that serve as a metaphorical bridge between the lighting and the set.

Lipson explains, “During one of the meetings, we had Mark [Fisher] on Skype through my laptop and Bono said at one point, ‘If you were to do something, Mark, what would it be?’ And Mark, in his way, just shouted, ‘You know, it would be a big f-----g cross.’ So the idea of these lights coming down in vertical and horizontal planes to make a series of crosses in the air came up early.”

Speaking of the deployment of the 56 fluorescent tubes, Lipson says, “We wanted it to feel low-tech. It wasn’t that we didn’t want to spend the money. We wanted the innocence of the way they were put up.” There are 16 under the screen. Half are on individual winches; those over the stage are also on winches. “Each unit that lines the stage floor is hinged at one end with a magnetic hinge. At a given point, the crew stands them up by hand. The song determines whether we stand all of them up or some of them up and whether we fly just the verticals in or just the horizontals or all them to make the crosses.”



The fluorescent tubes were an idea generated by the late Mark Fisher.

The fluorescents have another, somewhat ethereal, role. “They have their own narrative arc during the show, which is possibly a first for a lighting instrument,” Williams says. “To begin with, they define the punk club—we leave them on continuously for about the first half hour of the show. Later, when the screen/bridge comes in, very low, more caged tubes, located above and below, become the intimidating ‘underpass’ after the bombing [which takes place at the end of “Sunday Bloody Sunday”]. Finally, at the end of the show, they reappear, some horizontal, some vertical, stretching from stage to grid, forming a beautiful ‘city of light’ as we are all redeemed and go to heaven—or somewhere.” The fluorescent tubes were provided by Tait.

Williams adds, “My philosophy with cueing is very much ‘less is more.’ I’ve always been a fan of creating big, bold, strong looks, then giving the audience a chance to look at them. When we go, we really go, but, generally speaking, the cueing is very sparse,” he explains. Adding to the

Conti, product manager at PRG, had a solution for him: the PRG Bad Boy Spot, or, as it’s now known, the “Willie Spot”—a Bad Boy transformed by PRG’s Bad Boy Followspot Controllers. “The notion of being able to ring the arena with truss spots that would do the job of front-of-house spots seemed a good solution, and the continuity of color/gobos/dimming/zoom and so forth that we’d have by using Bad Boys was very appealing. I was nervous about putting all my eggs in that particular basket because, if the output didn’t live up to expectation, I’d be royally bugged.” Williams sent Conti off to do some tests. “I asked him to experiment with putting increasingly bright bulbs into a Bad Boy Spot until one of them melted and then we’d take whatever output went before that one,” Williams says. “This he did, presenting us with an impressively souped-up unit that Allen Branton—who stopped by rehearsals to help us with the camera lighting—deemed to be at least the equivalent of a [Strong] Super Trouper.” In



One of the concert’s themes, as reflected on the screen in a Stufish render.



A closer look at the Experience stage in render form.

simplicity and boldness of the looks, there are no gobos used in the entire show.

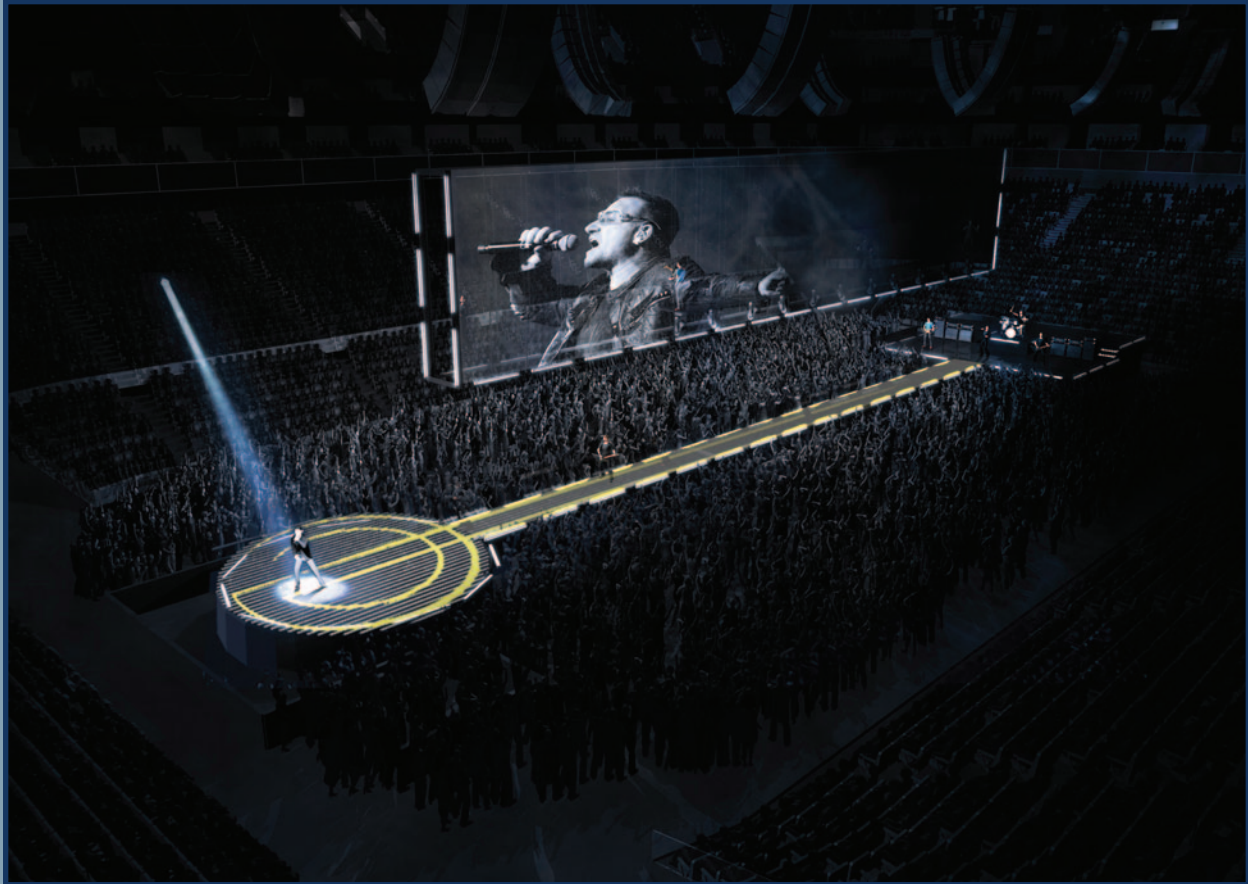
Programming was done on an MA Lighting grandMA2 console by Alex Murphy and “Sparky” Risk. Williams confides, “They spent forever building manual chases to simulate random fluorescent tube flicker and non-linear strobe effects. Sparky has done me proud in his embracing of manual bump-button strobe hits that feel like lighting time travel. It all feels vastly more organic and human than anything you’d ever get out of an effects engine.” Both are on tour with the show as lighting directors.

Spotlights were a concern, as there are multiple performance spaces and a 100’ screen that divides the arena floor. “Followspots were always going to be an issue for this design, given that ‘front of house’ becomes a somewhat meaningless term here,” Williams admits. Chris

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the end, the Bad Boy Spots have had only one problem, Williams admits: “Most ironically, the only issue is that they’re too bright. In the main, we have been running them at around 40% output but I haven’t yet had the heart to tell Chris Conti.”

The color palette is restrained, with one obvious exception. “The signature color, which accents an otherwise very minimal and muted palette, is a psychotic bright yellow,” Williams notes. “This appears in some of the staging elements, video, and even lighting periodically. Otherwise we’re pretty monochrome.” There are moments of color—“Mysterious Ways” is done in a mid-tone purple and features four mirror balls that appear under the screen—while “With or Without You” features a steel blue light wash on the audience; “Vertigo” explores various shades of white, but is accented with circles of yellow from the Atomic strobes ringing the square stage.



A full arena render that shows the transparent nature of the V-Thru wall, as well as part of the PA.

“Essentially, I have found myself working in a minimalist way on a very large scale,” Williams says in conclusion.

Sound

Give me one last chance and I'm gonna make you sing
—“Even Better Than the Real Thing”

Having the best possible sound has always been a priority for U2, their management, and O’Herlihy, who says “I’ve been with the band since September of ’78, and in all the arena tours we’ve done down through the years, we’ve had the opportunity to do the best we possibly can in relation to what the application is—we have been associated with good-quality audio for most of the band’s career.”

The audio department was very much a part of the two-year production process, which was absolutely necessary. Williams explains, “The concept of the arena sound system had to be entirely reinvented for this tour, given the omnidirectional nature of the performance and the fact of the band being all over the arena floor. Joe O’Herlihy and Clair were prepared to be team players to a degree that would have sent most sound designers off in a sulk.”

O’Herlihy originally looked at using Clair Global I-5 system for his PA. Clair Global, another Litz-based company, has worked with U2 for decades. However, the needs of the overall production design weren’t aligned with the physical weight of the I-5 cabinets.

When the band was in rehearsals in Litz for World AIDS Day, O’Herlihy paid a visit to Clair Brothers, where he saw the company’s new Cohesion System, specifically the CO-12 and CO-8 cabinets. “They said they literally came out of the shop that morning, and were just about to turn them on,” he recalls.

O’Herlihy took an impromptu listen to the system, and was impressed. “Of course, it sounded incredible. I could not believe the quality and intelligibility—everything about the system just sounds amazing.” Also, “It’s an incredibly light system—its 132lb per cabinet—a single guy can pick one of these things up.”

The only initial problem was the stark reality of the U2 delivery date. O’Herlihy explains, “Clair said initial manufacturing wasn’t planned to start until early summer 2015, and they would have the first systems available by late summer/fall 2015, but they fast-forwarded the production process so it would be

available to the band on schedule.”

The Cohesion PA can be described in one word: massive. “In the context of indoors, it is probably the biggest system application that we’ve done in any of our tours to date,” O’Herlihy admits. “What we’re doing here, realistically, is hanging three arena systems.” The hangs follow the line of the arena’s hockey dasher, which enables O’Herlihy to send premium directional audio to each level of the venue. “This certainly is a much different approach to using the entire arena as a stage platform, so the application is designed for that. Hence the reason for the number of cabinets.”

There are over 200 cabinets. “The great thing about it is that it never needs to be enormously loud because the seated position of most of the people in the audience is no more than 50’ away from the speaker system,” O’Herlihy says. “You’re not in the situation where you’re down on one end and are blasting the system as loud as it can go to get to the other end of the arena. This basically means that the intelligibility and quality are second to none.” It also means that there’s no bad seat in the house, and each fan has a pristine aural experience.

The base of the system is the Cohesion System CO-12 cabinet, which, the company says, features increased directivity at low frequencies and has exceptionally consistent polar pattern versus frequency with 80° and 120° horizontal coverage patterns. The CO-12 has been designed to perform as a cohesive reference-quality system and as a coaxial, horn-loaded design. “We have 12 arrays of the Cohesion System CO-12s, so we have 120 of them,” O’Herlihy notes.

Working along with it is the Cohesion System CO-8. O’Herlihy has eight hangs of four CO-8 cabinets for down fill and front fill, which assist in the perception of directionality in the system. He explains, “When the performers are on a special stage, the perception of the person that’s hearing the audio is that it’s coming directly from them to them.” The Cohesion CO-8 cabinet is comprised of two dual voice coil high excursion 8” drivers in a 53lb package.

For the subs, O’Herlihy has “eight hangs of the [Cohesion System] CP-218s, three per hang.” There are also 24 Clair I3s for rear fill for the back of the main stage of the arena. “The PA gives you this kind of immersive feeling, because the sound is omnipresent, but it’s never really too loud—and it gets loud. Honestly, it’s a rock show, so it should be loud. Thankfully, we have tons of headroom, and when you have that much headroom, the consistency of the distribution of the quality then is fantastic.”

Maybe you can educate my mind

Explain all these controls

—“Elevation”

At the front of house—which is naturally and quite sensibly located in the audience—O’Herlihy is on a DiGiCo SD7, his console of choice for the past decade. “We have two SD7s—both are completely fitted to run FOH,” he says. “Each of the SD7s has an A engine and a B engine, which gives you the 100% redundancy within the actual console itself. It’s 1,000% redundancy, as I describe it.” However, 1,000% redundancy isn’t quite good enough for U2, he notes: “I’ve taken it to another level—in the event of any issues at all, be they small, medium, large, or even extraordinary, I have another console to go to which is running in tandem as a mirror-image print: What I’m doing in one console, the same thing is happening on the other console.” Consequently, there are two SD7s at the front of house and three in monitor world—two show consoles and one floating backup console.

When mixing, O’Herlihy works without using Waves—or any other—plug-ins. Instead, he chooses a different route. He explains, “We don’t ignore developing technology and I actively go out into the marketplace to see what’s out there, what’s new, what’s different and what we should put through the paces. It’s always an ongoing process.”

That being said, when mixing U2, O’Herlihy stays with what’s tried and true. “I prefer the real deal, lots of old ‘vintage’ processing,” he notes. With him at the front of house are two Manley VOXBox vocal processors, two Avalon 737 SP pre-amps, four Summit Audio DCL-200 tube compressors, two TC Electronic TC 2290 digital dynamic delays, two TC Electronics TC D-TWO digital delays, two Yamaha SPX1000 effects processors, a Lexicon 480L digital effects system, and two Lexicon PCM 70 digital effects processors.

Like his processing, O’Herlihy stays with traditional choices for his microphone package: “It is very simple and very ordinary and very straightforward.” He has a Shure Beta 52 for the drum kit and a Shure SM91 for the kick drum, [Shure] SM57s for top and bottom snare, Sennheiser 421s on the toms, and Audio-Technica 4050s for the overhead and ride cymbals. O’Herlihy reports, “The Edge has six Fender amps and two Vox amps; they’re all a mixture of Beta 58As and we have the Vox mic’d from the rear as well as the front, with SM57. Edge’s vocal headset is a Shure Beta 54.” Bono is on a Shure standard Beta 58A. “It’s simple stuff that has worked, been tried and tested and keeps delivering on every level, so why would you go looking for change?” he asks rhetorically.

When dealing with any tour, the story always starts at pre-production. O’Herlihy reminds us that the story begins well before that. “The amount of work and effort that went into this is amazing—from the band bringing the songs to the studio, the hard work that goes into that whole journey from the studio to the stage, and ultimately walking out there on the first night in Vancouver and delivering something after six months of pretty much exhaustive

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The Innocence stage is lined with Atomic strobes; they're programmed manually to give a flickering fluorescent look.

efforts on behalf of the band and everyone associated with it," he says.

With the front of house located in the seats, O'Herlihy has contact with the audience every night, and loves it. "The one great satisfaction I get out of it is when everyone turns around and they walk out of the building, they're smiling ear to ear," he says. "It makes all of the effort that I've just mentioned, it makes all of that worthwhile and makes me feel good. We've delivered something, we've taken these people to another level, and it's a place everybody needs to be every now and again."

*How long, how long must we sing this song
How long, how long
'Cause tonight we can be as one
—“Sunday Bloody Sunday”*

For the *iNNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE Tour*, U2 is playing a minimum of two days in every city, to accommodate the differing set list. The production is an intimate, sometimes emotional, event that needs to be experienced in person. The tour is currently back in Europe, however, there are unconfirmed rumors of 2016 dates. 📶

*all lyrics are from songs performed during the *iNNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE Tour*.