

14.8.2018

Keith Urban Graffiti U

Products Involved

BMFL™ Spot **BMFL™ WashBeam** **CycFX 8™**

Jeremy Lechterman and Jackson Gallagher of creative visual design firm FragmentNine are the imaginative wizardry behind the stunning production design for Keith Urban's "Graffiti U" tour which has just commenced in the U.S. The album of the same name is enjoying critical and commercial success, and the architecture of the stage design brings a modern visual twist for Urban's diverse fanbase.

Various Robe products are incorporated into the lighting rig including BMFL Spots, BMFL WashBeams, and Cyc FX 8s.

It is the first time that FragmentNine – known for their flair and imagination – are working with Urban and his team. Talks started about a year ago with reference to the upcoming 2018 tour, and they chatted to the artist extensively about how he envisions his music and how he likes to be presented live.

Known for his genre-defying compositions, and true 'crossover' dynamics, he wanted a strikingly contemporary look.

The clean and uncluttered aesthetic canvas that resulted allows for huge visual scope and brings a lot of potential for variation to the stage space. It's an elegant environment defined by an upstage LED video wall and a video 'roof' comprising 6m x 6m of video hung at 45 degrees to center with the entire structure being automated on 3 axes.

This works in conjunction with two 6m by 3.6m header pieces which join at a 90-degree angle with the apex over the downstage edge. The roof and this header can create the impression of a box hanging over the stage.

In addition to these video surfaces, four "pods" are hung upstage of the LED wall with lighting that can be positioned behind the blow-through video wall or rise over it.

At first glance it might look a little simplistic, but once the show unfolds, the true power of unleashing and revealing multiple visual layers and textures becomes apparent.

A less-is-more approach to lighting means that each fixture's use is measured and considered, programmed with intelligence rather than gratuity by Bobby "BJ" Grey, adding visual elements thoughtfully to the mix to create ongoing WOW factors.

Six of the BMFL Spots are rigged on the downstage truss, two on three backlight spot trusses, and the 11 x BMFL WashBeams are on the deck behind the upstage video wall. From this position they can kick in for some spectacular effects. The three other BMFL WashBeams are on the mother grid supporting the flying (automated) video screens and the sub-hung trusses.

The 12 x CycFX 8s are running along the front edge of the stage in the footlight position. The BMFL Spots are attached to a remote follow spot system and provide the majority of the show's key light. Their high CRI and good whites make them ideal for the task.

The BMFL WashBeams are one of their major effects systems, producing big, bold looks that contrast the screens.

The CycFX 8s are primarily footlights for Urban and his band, but also create some specific effects at strategic moments.

Jeremy and Jackson selected Robe as they feel that the "new flagship product lines are incredibly reliable, bright, and multi-featured."

When it came to follow spots, they needed to source the brightest "traditional" spot type fixture available, and a unit that was rock solid, so the BMFL Spot was an obvious choice. They used BMFL WashBeams on the 2017 alt-J tour to great effect and loved "the sheer horsepower" of the units!

On Graffiti U, they again make a huge impact sitting peacefully behind the upstage video wall, low down and close to the stage, then revealing themselves spectacularly.

Several other light sources are involved in the design, all supplied by lighting vendor Upstaging.

It is a show where the two medias - video and lighting - have been combined into a seamless visual flow right from the start. The moving video screens changing the physical structure of the space, and all elements combined ensure it remains interesting and stimulating throughout the show.

Most of the playback video content was produced by StrangeLoop, Bryte, and Visual Endeavors, with the live camera IMAG mix being directed by Phil Neudlman, who has been with the band for some years, and brings another dimension to the visual picture.

Bobby "BJ" Grey programmed the lighting on a grandMA2 console, while Tony "Tennessee Jesus" Caporale programmed video and is also the touring lighting and media director, supported by FragmentNine.

Keith Urban himself is quite keyed into what will and won't work for his audience, and on how far limits can be pushed, so Jeremy and Jackson worked closely with him to develop both the show they wanted to create ... and an environment that serves his music and audience.

"That's been both the most challenging and the most incredibly rewarding aspect of the tour so far!" commented Jackson, with results that are a great balance of modern design, spectacle, fun and entertainment.

Photo Credit: Jack Gallagher of FragmentNine





