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A few days after taking ownership of their new grandMA2 Light, Black Coffee generously utilized their console in support of CANSA KwaZulu Natal. Just covering costs, they provided the technical rig at the popular Night of 100 Stars, held at the Suncoast Casino and Entertainment World in Durban on 9th August 2009.

With a line up of South Africa's finest entertainers and tickets being sold at R600 per person, it would be fair to say that Black Coffee's Lighting Operator and Programmer, Grant Leonard, was somewhat browbeaten at the prospect of doing this high profile gig on a brand new console, and what he describes as a monster. Tension and nerves got him through! He talks about his experience.

"I think it might be important to note that we ran the show in GrandMA Compatibility mode," grins Grant. "Getting my mind around MA's way of doing things and programming is quite a challenge, I think I aged 50 years and lost a lot of hair in doing so. The MA is a vast console which is a good thing in my opinion, but a bit intimidating for a beginner *nervous cough*. Some ways of getting to a specific point can be a bit long-winded, I still haven't quite wrapped my mind around some of the MA's "language", but in saying that the desk offers a lot of "get out of jail cards", in other words there are some very convenient and nifty tricks that the MA can do at the push of a few buttons. You can have a pretty impressive scene programmed without even having to think. If you work smart the desk will do most of the work for you."



The team at Black Coffee received training from DWR Distribution's Nick Britz just prior to the event. "Nick was awesome, he was very straight forward and easy to understand. He provided us with ample information. .. I just wish I had a photographic memory!"

When asked his favourite features of the desk, Grant said, "The motorised screens! The faders are touch sensitive...that's quite cool, these two things have little bearing on the operation of the console but they are still just cool. I enjoyed the versatility of the effects engine and the fact that you're not wholly bound to its given parameters. The options of the views you can store is quite nice. The fact that you can patch and setup everything on PC and load it to the console at a later stage is great...potential time saver! The ability to make your own fixture profiles is really convenient as well. The option of the remote is over-kiff!!!"



Along with the grandMA2 Light,

the gig consisted 8 x Robe 575s, 2 x Robe 1200, 6 x Mac 600s, LED curtain (star cloth), 2 x Strong Radiance Followspots and as Grant adds, the ultimate super kick-ass Le Maitre hazer. The elaborate line up included fire performers from Roots & Wings, stars of the Cape Town City Ballet, Rory Rootenburg, Karen Van Pletsen, Melanie Roberts, Shelley McLean, Evan Roberts, Clive Gumede and many more. Making things happen were the crew comprising of owner of Black Coffee the show's lighting designer, Brandon Bunyan, Mike Swart, Bruce Paul, Steve Bagwell, Emanuel Ndlovu, Lucas Makhanye, Alex Matikinca, Jenaid Hanif, Jane Cross(SM) and Megan Levi (sound engineer).

"We are very excited about the new board," added Brandon Bunyan. "For this event, we did things we could never have done in the time allocation before. While there was a whole lot of stress, the show went brilliantly."

Thanks to Black Coffee for going the extra mile for a good cause.