

Formative light up Cassper Nyovest



Formative were contracted directly by Cassper Nyovest to provide full creative direction, production design, content design, show and technical production for his historical #fillupthedome show at the Ticketpro Dome, Johannesburg on 31 October 2015.



The Production Design was based around the music and the creation of moments, building throughout the show and revealing different elements as the music called for them.



The Artist's brief was to create a show like those he himself has been inspired by, and then improve on them. The only request was that he had one very specific hero moment, which he left up to Formative to create. Formative then directed the entire performance, down to artist placement and positions on stage of which our own stage management team executed flawlessly.



"We familiarised ourselves with the music before designing the production so that we could create lighting, video and scenic elements to match the different musical elements, and we then worked very closely with the different companies in the Gearhouse Group to make these seamlessly come together," explained Thomas Peters, Formative's Technical Project Manager.



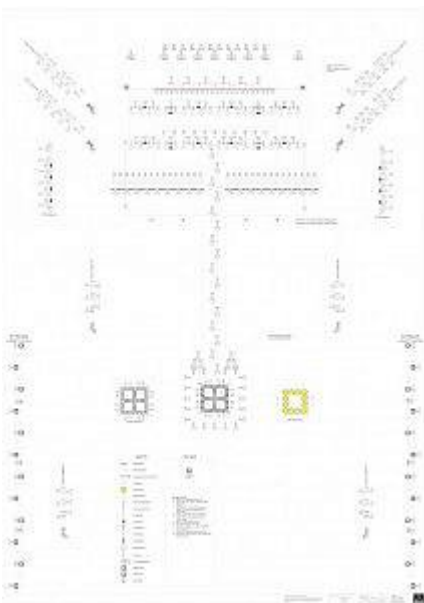
"We planned out the show in Logic Pro X, with tracks for lights instead of music, creating a 'visual score' so that once at the console we only needed to put those elements in and record them, such that we weren't falling into the trap of 'programming the lights' instead of 'programming the show', which clearly paid off."



“Working in Logic Pro X also meant we were able to exchange tracks with the artist, which meant we were able to communicate in the same musical language- my BA Honours in Music is coming in really, really handy these days!” explained Thomas.



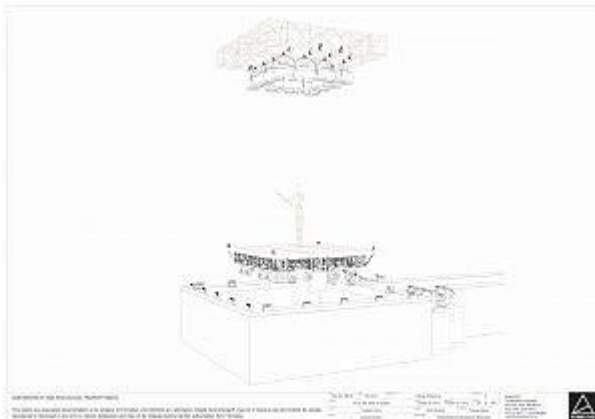
Formative ran two d3 4u v2.5 servers and two MA2 full size consoles, with an additional MA2 Full-size at dimmer beach. “We ran Art-Net from d3 into MA2 for pixel mapping the Rush Strobes, Robe CycFX8 and Robe Pointes, and split timecode between all the systems so that any failover was instant and seamless. We also had a directed and engineered HD four-camera system which we captured with d3 and used in the performances.



"We set up the entire rig in MA3D via Vectorworks on an extremely high-spec rack mount PC dubbed "The Beast", with 64Gb of Ram, a 3.3GHz Intel i7 and a nVidia GeForce Titan X, which with some tweaks to fixture profiles was able to deliver a solid 130fps at 1920x1080 regardless of how many fixtures were running how many effects at the same time. This also meant we could put the entire show into the desk ahead of time, see how different things worked together, move fixtures around as needed very easily and then send a final plot off to be prepped from, making work on site significantly easier for the crew.



"The First half of the show ran from FOH, running 4 channels of audio to play out Tracks, Click and Timecode. The Second half of the show was with a live band, for which we programmed cues according to the album tracks and played those in live, which made for a much more "organic" and flowing show, in contrast to the strictly regimented on-the-beat first half, which even left some room for a bit of busking.



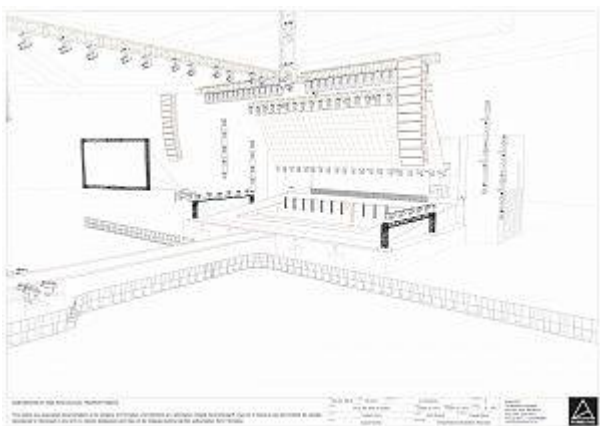
"With Video content we created strictly custom graphics for each track, sometimes making new cuts and even rotoscoping existing music videos (as with Travel The World and Fuseg), sometimes creating new animations (Gusheshe, for example) and sometimes taking it to the next level, driving lights as video screens to achieve a level of sync between lighting and video that would be simply impossible if we had been creating individual cues, as in Bhekindaba Zakho. Creatively, we relied heavily on the LED screens as light sources, mounting these above, behind, inside and either side of the stage and driving them at full intensity. At times we applied solid block colours and ran them on the beat- Cassper's first track for example, Mmagwane, was lit entirely by the LED floor and the SL and SR Strobes. In particular with Mama I Made It we played the toplight of the grid of Patt 2013s off against the uplight of the LED Floor Cassper was standing on.



“To some extent, we were creating darkness within the light. Visually, we avoided Colours and Gobos to get a strictly stark, direct, solid look, using only White, Red and blue, with fixtures focused almost always as narrow as possible, and where a softer look was needed using the prism instead of a gobo- except for “Alive”, where good taste dictated a sharp rotating gobo- and when used in a specific moment like that, it worked an absolute treat.



“We were very strict on the effects we wanted to create, and selected specific lights (or even parts of lights) for tracks, such that some fixtures on the rig were there specifically for one particular moment- the Vipers on their boxes as the end of the runway for “Alive”, placed at exactly the right height to have the lens peek over the stage level so as to provide the light where it was needed without the whole fixture being in the picture, or the Mac 101’s rigged underneath the flying platform, which coupled with the ZR-44 under the stage made it look like a Jet Engine taking off.



“We chose the Robe Pointes because of their optical system- there was an effect we wanted to create for War Ready that needed a zoom system, which other beam fixtures could simply not deliver as effectively. There is no LED Wash fixture on the market like the Robin 600 LED Wash that can give you the look of the outer ring, or match the pitch of the sawtooth synth that drives the bridge in Gusheshe with its narrow to wide zoom.

“Nothing can match semiquavers on a hihat like the 16-bit mode on an SL Nitro 510, and when the demisemiquaver on the hihat sample sounds like an atomic, then clearly, you will need an atomic!



Working in The Dome comes with significant weight restrictions, especially when you are hanging about 4 Tonnes of almost 65 sqm Roe MC7 LED Screen at 30deg to the vertical, the fact that all of these fixtures are very lightweight and still deliver amazing output is extremely useful.”



Said Grant Orchard, Creative Director of Formative, “We really had creative freedom on this project which allowed us to really push the boundaries and considering we only had 1 month to produce this show from conception to completion, it could not have turned out better, we are all very very happy with the result and from what we hear, the audience are too.”.



- 60 Robe Pointe
- 38 Robe Robin 600 LED Wash
- 11 Robe CycFX8
- 8 CityScape Xtreme
- 12 Robe Patt 2013
- 20 Philips Showline SL Nitro 510
- 29 Martin Rush Strobe 5x5
- 38 Martin MAC Viper
- 50 Longman 011A Batten
- 6 Martin Atomic Strobe
- 12 Martin MAC 2000 Profile
- 12 Martin MAC 2000 Wash
- 18 i-Pix BB4
- 19 i-Pix Satellite
- 30 8-lite Molefaye
- 4 Strong Gladiator

- 2 grandMA2 Full-size
- 1 grandMA 3D
- 1 grandMA2 OnPC Command Wing & Playback Wing
- 4 NPU
- 4 MDG Atmosphere
- 2 JEM ZR44



