

Astera NYX Bulbs Dream with Alt-J

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UK rockers alt-J were back on the road again in 2022 having released their fourth studio album “The Dream” earlier in the year, and their enigmatic live performance style could be enjoyed with a new lighting design by Davy Sherwin.

A striking scenic element of the design was created using 60 x Astera NYX bulbs hung on a series of asymmetric drops from the overhead trusses and attached to specially modified mic stands deployed on the floor.

All of this created a cool organic looking 'forest' of NYX Bulbs which were supplied together with the other lighting kit for the UK and European dates by Hampshire-based rental specialist, Liteup.

Davy wanted to bring a fresh look to the stage and something that was simultaneously intimate, quirky and interesting, and the NYX Bulb drops were one of the first visual pictures that came to mind when he started imagining the design.



He knew they would work for big scenic looks as well as being able to help close the space down for some of the more intense numbers.

He had become familiar with the various Astera products during the pandemic when live events halted, and he was able to transfer his lighting skills and sensibilities to working as a console operator / programmer on several films and television series.

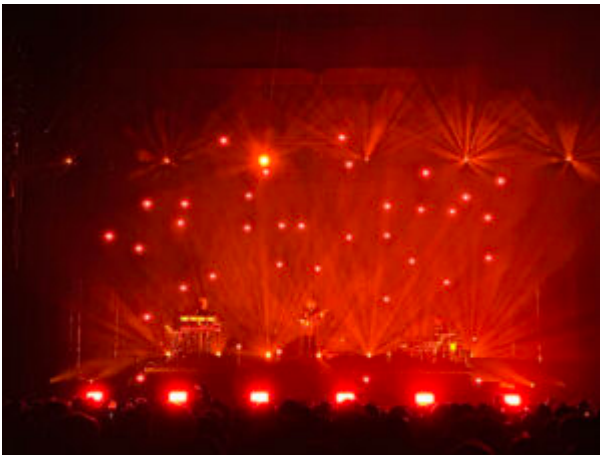
“I needed a versatile, lightweight and cost-effective solution for creating big bespoke looks and it immediately just screamed ‘NYX Bulb’ at me,” he explained.

Liteup already had the fixtures in stock as they have a good range of different Astera products.

To create this specific NYX Bulb environment, most of the fixtures are hung on random length catenary wires from all three trusses - front, mid and rear - so they covered the whole area. To add depth and three-dimensionality, Davy deployed approximately a third of the NYX Bulbs on

the floor stands and around the band for a fully immersive experience.

The stands and the wires disappear into the darkness when the band are onstage and in full flow, so the Bulbs look like they are floating in the air!



It is Davy's first stage lighting design using these products! On the TV and movie sets he had discovered just how adaptable and dynamic they were to use as practicals and other basic lights, but ever since then he had been waiting for an opportunity to incorporate them more imaginatively into a stage or music show context.

He sees the wireless connectivity as a big advantage although they were used wired on the alt-J tour, and he loves the colours, noting that they are "proper and beautifully mixed," unlike so many other LED bulbs!

He has discovered numerous NYX Bulb effects in the process of programming this show - colour effects, dimmer effects, twinkling, chasing, sequences and big blocks of colour - and with 60 over the stage area, he was able to use clusters of them to highlight solos or to accent inflections and incidentals in the music - sometimes extremely subtle but with maximum impact like 'popping' above the heads of band members during a solo.



“They are simply fantastic for strobing and adding those little kinetic flourishes to certain musical parts,” he noted. “They are an ingenious and well thought through product that is seriously so much more than a colour changing lightbulb!”

Even Davy was surprised with how inspired he became and the sheer number of different ways he found to use NYX Bulbs in the alt-J show!

Fitting them into regular ES lampholder strings which are light and easy to attach to the trusses made the daily rigging detail quick and efficient.

Lighting for the tour was operated for the tour by Dave Singleton using a grandMA2 Light with Liteup’s Marc Callaghan also on the crew as lighting tec. Marc commented “NYX Bulbs – and all the other Astera kit – has proved a great value investment for us, and designers like Davy are continually finding new and inventive ways of using the products!”

Ends.

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Photos: Courtesy Liteup