

# Aurras Group Invests in grandMA3

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Aurras Group is a busy, energetic and innovative technical production – embracing lighting, audio, video and AV, power, staging & rigging and event supply – company based in Cape Town, South Africa. It is owned and headed by Justin Heyman and Gareth Aitken, who merged their respective companies, TechX and Output AV, to form Aurras Group in 2023.

Previously, both had around 10 years of experience at the sharp end of event industry production. Their work and their worlds often overlapped, and their personalities clicked, so they decided to merge and become a tour-de-force in the Western Cape region.

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Last year, Aurras purchased its first grandMA3 consoles – initially a grandMA3 onPC command wing – and at the same time ordered a grandMA3 light which arrived a couple of months later.

These were added to their existing grandMA2 onPC command wing and onPC setups, but going full grandMA3 represented a fundamental commitment to having larger and more technically advanced lighting control systems available for clients.

Justin also worked as a lighting programmer and operator, and before starting Aurras Group, he had been using and enjoying grandMA2 since 2018/19, so it made complete sense to stay with the power and flexibility of the platform, upgrading to the latest hardware and software.

The grandMA3 investment was also based on Aurras' immediate success as a business after their launch, as well as grandMA3 being specified repeatedly on so many of the technical riders they were seeing.



“All the touring LDs know the system, and as we want to service our shows and clients to the highest possible standards, it was a natural step on every level to get onboard with grandMA3,” commented Justin.

When their grandMA3 light arrived, it was also the first such console to be permanently based in Cape Town.

While other major SA rental companies do have grandMA3 available, their consoles will tend to move around the country to where they are needed, but the Aurras ones are staying there to serve the plethora of local shows and events.

Aurras’ lighting department is headed by Julian Schouw, who, together with all their LDs, programmers and techs, was consulted by Justin & Gareth before making the purchase and was an integral part of the decision-making process. “We all discussed what the best buy would be and its merits ... but to be honest, the decision was actually very easy – a bit of a no-brainer!” declared Justin.

So, grandMA3 it was!

The grandMA3 light and the grandMA3 onPC command wing are perfect for the scale and complexity of most Aurras projects. “We wanted hardware that would give us maximum functionality without having to add extra capacity, so these are ideal,” commented Justin.

Subsequently, the Aurras lighting team have all been very enthusiastic and determined to get the best out of the grandMA3 consoles.

Support from the local distributor was also important when considering the purchase, and they already knew that they had a great partner in DWR, MA Lighting’s distributor for southern Africa.

The company will typically service up to 20 shows and events a week of varying sizes including DJs, Afrikaans festivals and music shows including the recent reunion tour of 340ml, a favourite African band. The Cape Town gig was lit by Craig using the grandMA3 light.

When not in use on their own shows, the grandMA3 consoles will often be out on cross rentals. “It’s been a brilliant investment so far,” noted Justin, “the consoles are out virtually all the time.”

His own interest in lights started in school and he cut his industry teeth lighting theatre shows

and tours. He started working at TechX just after leaving school and later became a partner in the business. He also tour managed the band GoodLuck, a popular South African electronic outfit, so has gained a wide range of related skills including budgeting, which has assisted in some savvy purchasing decisions.

Aurras currently has 25 full-time staff plus a pool of regular freelancers ... and is a growing enterprise with a great attitude dedicated to offering the best client experiences. Justin and Gareth enjoy the diversity of the job, the fact that each day is different, and they appreciate the opportunities to be creative in many different spaces and places.

Their general impression of MA Lighting is that the products are “unparalleled” in terms of offering creative features and value for lighting and visual control, and “it’s clear to see that their R ‘n’ D team is consistently focused on progress and thinking into the future,” as well as ensuring that customers and end-users are kept fully updated through constant communication and training opportunities.