Clay Paky Dazzles at the 1st European Games in Baku

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Photo: Ralph Larmann

Azerbaijan – Over **670 Clay Paky fixtures** amazed two sold-out audiences of 68,000 at the first European Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies, held June 12 and 28 at the Olympic Stadium in Baku, Azerbaijan. The fixtures were the backbone of the incredible **lighting design by Bob Dickinson and Ted Wells,** assisted by **lighting director Travis Hagenbuch**. Assistant lighting director was Charles Dabezias. Executive Producer was Scott Givens of Five Currents.

The newly built 225,000-square-meter stadium was embellished with **437 units of Clay Paky Sharpy Wash 330, 66 units of Sharpy and 174 units of Clay Paky Mythos**. The fixtures were placed essentially everywhere, from Mythos on the field of play surrounding the stage and lining the top of the stadium to the Sharpy and Sharpy Wash 330 fixtures filling in every level in between.

The inaugural event was broadcast throughout Europe and beyond and featured almost 6,000 athletes from 50 countries competing in 20 sports. The Opening Ceremony featured Lady Gaga performing “Imagine” by John Lennon, and the show featured approximately 2000 performers depicting the arrival of spring along with acts showcasing Azerbaijani heritage. The light output

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and sharp beams of the Clay Paky fixtures around the stadium provided stunning effects, even keeping up with the massive pyrotechnic display overhead.

The artistic direction of the Opening Ceremony was led by Dimitris Papaioannou with production designers Thanassis Demiris and Eva Manidaki. Eric Tucker was pyrotechnic designer and Scott Willsallen the audio designer.

The Closing Ceremony was an equally dramatic jaw-dropper, including over 500 LED hexagon panels carried by individual performers to create images on the field of play, accompanied by three Buta stages featuring hip hop dancers. Azerbaijani traditions were featured as well as a representation of the country's oil-fueled rise to economic prominence. In one signature sequence, a model of a 12th-century tower opened to reveal gleaming modern skyscrapers, highlighted beautifully by the Mythos.

The Closing Ceremony was led by artistic director James Hadley with creative director Libby Hyland and production designer Josh Zangen. Nick Eltis was senior technical director and Ola Melzig was the senior technical manager. Anders Karlsson was the technical production manager, and Toomas Vann the senior production manager. All Clay Paky fixtures were supplied by **PRG.**

> "Really so beautiful," said one spectator, who was fortunate enough to attend both the Opening and Closing, "It was such a proud event for Baku and the performances showed our city in a lovely way – blending the past and the present. I saw a flying carpet, mountains rise from the stage, dancing and music both old and new, and even a really big pomegranate. I looked up at one point and it felt like a hundred light

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> beams were meeting in the sky above our heads to create a ceiling. I was so proud to be part of this historical event.”

The shows went off to perfection, gaining international acclaim and making the event the biggest of 2015 and one of the most talked about events worldwide.

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