

## Encore SFX invests in MDG for BBC1's The Greatest Dancer



When forming special effects company, Encore SFX, George Baker and Anthony Earles, both of whom have many years' experience in senior roles in the SFX business, decided to invest in the highest quality special effect products available, and knew exactly which company and products they wanted to partner with.

"We needed great products from a reliable company who could offer not just the quality but the essential support required, and immediately thought of MDG," says Baker.

The company purchased 4 MDG ICE FOG Q HP low fog generators with DMX interfaces, and 4 pneumatic Round Floor Pockets with remote control boxes. The ICE FOG Q HP is the quietest low fog generator on the market which it produces a thick, low-lying fog with zero residue. The award-winning Round Floor Pocket is DMX/RDM operated and can be embedded in the stage floor or set wall to conceal a fog output and deliver low fog or fog to precise locations.

"The ethos of our company is to make effects more accessible and give our clients the best products for their money. The only way to do this is to offer the best," says Baker. "We have worked with many different brands of fog and haze machines over the years, and as we are not tied to any one brand, we can choose which we want to go with. When we started the company we were in a unique position of having no pre-existing stock, so could make a fresh start by investing in the best, and latest, products on the market."



Baker and Earles have very definite reasons for their faith in MDG: “We believe the ICE FOG Q HP is one of the best-built units we have seen. The volume and consistency of the output is incredible. It’s the best looking effect I’ve seen and it doesn’t rise up when you move around in it. Other low fog machines’ output tend to flick up and get wispy, but MDG just sticks to the ground and is solid, no matter what you do to it.”

The ICE FOG Q HP units and Round Floor Pockets were instantly put to work in BBC1’s current series of The Greatest Dancer which is filmed at LH2 studios in West London, with lighting director, Tim Routledge.

“The products we’d used for the previous series were OK, but not the best quality, and with a such big stage and

lots of movement from the dancers, we found the low fog was getting thrown up into the air,” says Baker. “For this series we swapped to the ICE FOG Q HP and sunk the Round Floor Pockets into all four corners of the stage. This instantly made the stage look a lot cleaner as the space is just an open dance floor where you can’t hide ducting. Then, because of the ICE FOG Q HP’s high output, we got really dense low fog, with the floor pockets ensuring an even distribution and sharp cut offs. They are just incredible. We were very happy with the result and it’s the perfect opportunity to showcase an excellent product on six weeks of prime-time national television!”



“Anthony and I spent a long time looking at other units, but MDG was the obvious choice by a long way,” explains Baker. “When The Greatest Dancer came along for the second year running, we knew it was the ideal opportunity for us to initiate the investment we’d been wanting to make. Working closely with the production team we had a clear choice of which route to take. Why would you opt to put together combinations of products from other manufacturers when MDG does the full package in one?”

Encore SFX chose the Q version for its high output and ability to fill much larger areas, as it now runs on regular HP (high pressure cylinders) that can be sourced easily from local gas suppliers. “I prefer to have the bigger output units in our stock to give us more options on the many, varied jobs we have lined up for them in future. We can be in a TV studio one week and an arena show the next and anything in between. The ICE FOG Q HPs give us maximum flexibility.”

But Encore SFX’s investment in MDG goes beyond the quality of its products: “The service we got from MDG, in particular Matt Wiseman, was incredible. This is a big investment for Encore SFX but an exciting prospect for us, and Matt was there to advise us every step of the way. We are the only SFX company to have MDG in their stock, and aim to develop our relationship with MDG further.

“We like to work with people who support and help us right from our beginning, and keep working with those who

have proven, not just to provide the right product, but also the support. It's very important for us to know the service is there, and the danger is from companies who just want to sell you a product rather than invest in you as people or as a company. With Matt and MDG, I know I will get the best service and a straight answer with every call. We want to invest in MDG to the same level as they want to work with us."

Tim Routledge, lighting director for The Greatest Dancer, agrees: "We've never quite cracked low smoke at LH2 during live TV shows but with the new investment by Encore in MDG we have gorgeous low smoke that lasts and sits low for an entire performance. MDG are by far the go-to company for haze and fog."

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