

Gearhouse helps Fill UP FNB

Johannesburg, Gauteng: November 2017 saw the third iteration of the ‘Fill Up’ series of concerts which South Africa Hip Hop artist, Cassper Nyovest, has been using as a vehicle to inspire local youth to recognise their worth and ably demonstrating that anyone can realise their dreams with sufficient perseverance.

‘The reason I do these shows is to change the mind of an African kid’ says Nyovest.

Previous attempts to Fill Up the Dome and Fill Up Orlando also achieved their targets and FNB stadium achieved a record breaking 68,000 pax attendance, on par with many international acts in the same venue – setting a precedent for the local hip hop scene.



The event was produced by the innovative team at Formative and technical was delivered by the Gearhouse Group. The relationship between the two companies is a long standing one and the combination has produced some of the most remarkable events in SA over the past few years.

In line with Cassper’s promise to bring ‘Mufasa’ to the Stadium; the stage design included a 12m-high pair of glowing-eyed, inflatable lions which towered above the performance area on either side. At the start of the show a massive ‘jungle’ curtain swept aside to reveal a stage dominated by LED panels. A centre screen of stacked MC 7 LED screens linked up with 9.6m x 4.8m flown CB 8 screens to the left and right, ROE Visual strips encased the 4 band ‘cages’ top and back and a DUO LED strip ran the full width of the 24m Stageco stage to create a unified set of LED surfaces. The set up allowed for an immersive multi-screen experience with content running across all surfaces simultaneously. The content was created and supplied by Formative and the panels by LEDVision.

In such an AV-intensive environment, the main consideration for Gearhouse’s Lighting Designer Robert Grobler, was to integrate the lighting with the visual content as much as possible. Although Grobler had worked with the same team on the previous Fill Up Orlando event, the lighting requirements were totally different for this one. ‘Each rig is uniquely designed to suit the context; no cut and paste here’ he laughs. ‘For Fill Up FNB, the rig had to be versatile enough to achieve both the big stadium hip hop punchiness and a very theatrical feel, where necessary. The opening sequence / Cassper reveal for this show was especially dramatic; starting with the silhouette reveal on the mountain in blues, moving through several phases and culminating in the spectacular bonfire medley. I needed to pick up the colours from the AV content, using only sidelight, and grow the colour palette and front fill in synch with the content, in a very theatrical way, to the final point.’

To accomplish the effects he wanted, Grobler combined a range of fixtures ranging from Martin Vipers, Robe Pointe, Mac 2000 Washes, [Clay Paky Scenius Unico](#), SGM P5’s, Martin Mac 101s and Rush Pars to

Molefey and Phillip Nitrostrobes scattered around the rig; the latter to be used as audience blinders and accents. Grobler spent an intensive week pre-programming and time-coding looks for each of the 41 songs – working offsite in the LEDVision warehouse as well as in the rehearsal space in Soweto, using previsualisation software, before getting a chance to finalise on site. “For me, although a much more labour-intensive choice, having pre-programmed all 3 hours of this concert helped us achieve a much tighter visual impact. The content from Formative was truly amazing and my aim was to seamlessly integrate the lighting look with that content.”

From an audio perspective, FNB Stadium jobs can be incredibly complicated due to the sheer size and reflectiveness inside the stadium. For this reason, the Gearhouse Audio team prefers to treat the roof delay completely separately to the ground PA. “Our crew were already working in the roof from the Wednesday prior to the show to pull in all the ropes and cable runs for the roof delay” says Audio HOD, Llewellyn Reinecke “One circumference in the roof catwalk is approximately 1 km, so our crew racks up many kilometres pulling cables at FNB Stadium.”



The main PA comprised fourteen L-Acoustics K1 with three L-Acoustics Kara down fills, eight K1 SB subs flown and sixteen L-Acoustics V-Dosc out fills on each side. For delays, the team used eight flown arrays of L-Acoustics V-Dosc left and right with three L-Acoustics DV-Dosc down fills and a centre delay of eight L-Acoustics K1 with six L-Acoustics Kara down fills beneath that. From the roof, they had an additional sixteen hangs with a combination of seventy L-Acoustics Arcs2, Kudo, DV-Dosc and Kara.

The team at Gearhouse Audio were excited to be able to send their new AVID S6L consoles out on this job. “The gain sharing/gain tracking functionality on the S6L makes it incredibly easy for our FOH and Monitor Engineers to do their jobs. It also has the capability of recording up to 128 channels of individual live audio and then to play it back for the band in the sound check phase, so that the band can listen and approve” says Reinecke “It allows for a much more controlled process with better results all round.”



“On FOH, achieving amazing results with the PA, was Tshepo Mokgosi and on monitors was the legendary Revil Baselga. Because of the complexity of these types of setups, we also sent our resident FNB Stadium expert, Systems Engineer, Kgashane Malatji to oversee the set up from a Gearhouse point of view” says Reinecke. “The combination was very successful and the sound quality garnered plenty of positive comments from audience members.”

“As always with the Formative Team, the look, design and overall entertainment factor was incredible,” adds Project Manager Nickolas Chapman. “On this one, it felt as though we really got it right. All aspects just pulled together beautifully.”

Formative’s Gareth Hadden concurs “I love working with the Gearhouse team! You know you’re dealing with the best guys and we all have fun.”

And that is exactly how it should be.

Story – Robyn D’Alessandro

Photos – Drawn To Light