

Getting The Creative Factor with Astera

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Courtesy Scala and Kolacny Brothers

Kristof Van Mensel from Belgium-based lighting and visual design company TCF (The Creative Factory) likes Astera products!

He uses them extensively – particularly AX3 LightDrops – in his projects for anything from a live performance to festivals to television studio lighting work.

The tiny AX3s are particularly useful for ‘pop-up’ scenarios, he explains, or for shifting between mobile locations. “Two cases of eight AX3 LightDrops are always in the back of my car ‘just in case’ and are infinitely useful,” he states.

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The AX3s are battery powered and wirelessly controlled like all Astera products, and with their quality LED lightsource and magnetic bases, are perfect for situations where lighting needs to be impromptu, invisible, or fitted into small and difficult spaces.

He thinks they look fantastic, appreciates the frost filters available and the fact that the wireless signal has a good reach.

Kristof is long term lighting designer for the amazing Scala & Kolacny Brothers women's choir, a highly visual act that has gained worldwide recognition and popularity. He regularly incorporates Astera fixtures into their live show designs and loves the fact that something as small as the AX3 can give the artist such a dynamic a tool to work with.



Courtesy Scala and Kolacny Brothers

"I ensconce them in the set and have also used AX3s on occasions as hand-held

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lighting effects for the artists, which is really effective and dramatic to up-light faces,” Kristof comments. Artists like Scala & Kolacny Brothers are always up for experimentation and trying new dramatic treatments. “AX3s are simply a hugely versatile and compact light source.”

His association with Astera started about five years ago when Controllux became the Belgian distributor and contacted him to show the range of products. Now they are one of his key inexpensive and indispensable creative tools.

“It’s incredible what you can do with Astera AX3s or Titan Tubes for a band or a music artist wanting to tour on a limited lighting budget,” he commented.

The wireless philosophy really appeals. “Astera has really thought this through and been genuinely innovative – long battery life, practical rigging solutions, flicker-free operation which is essential for any camera scenario – which especially in the pandemic is almost everything! The output and the look are clean, and they are excellent fixtures for creating an ambience in any space.”

Kristof and TCF designed lighting for the opening ceremony of a new market place shopping area in the Belgian city of Sint Truiden, a show featuring dancers and interactive water fountains, where he used AX3s to enhance the motion and flow of the dancers and the water.



Courtesy of the city of Sint Truiden

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AX3s also provided a cool and uncomplicated solution for a tour with Belgian new wave band The Arch. He wanted something he could easily take on a plane or a train that could be used as fuss-free extras / specials. "There is always a little place or a space onstage for these fixtures!"

More recently, Kristof has started using Astera Titan Tubes as artist floor packages onstage and for TV productions.

"A single tube above the camera and you have an excellent key light – no complicated stands or power generators needed – and you can also use them for creating nice fluid water or flame effects."



Courtesy of the city of Sint Truiden

He has also used Titan Tubes to illuminate the drum kit of well-known drummer and e-drummer Michael Schack among others.

Since the pandemic, Kristof and his colleagues at TCF have been busy lighting a lot of live streams plus AR, VR and XR broadcast events. Like everyone, they are eagerly awaiting the time when live events can start resuming.