

Getting Wild with Astera PixelBricks



Photo by Nick Pope

Lighting designer Elliot Baines from Spiralstagelighting reached for some Astera PixelBricks to help create an imaginative, memorable, and high-value lighting effect for the London show of Canadian indie band Wild Rivers, a showcase gig at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire that was part of their 2024 UK tour.

Introduced to their tour manager Ben Pollard by Portsmouth, UK-based lighting rental company LiteUp, the brief was to create a homely and warm vibe onstage, whilst also impressing fans who packed out the London show, which was a great success.



Photo by Nick Pope

Elliot achieved some cool results by using a careful combination of the 20 x Astera PixelBricks which were used as 'specials', the venue's house lighting rig and the band's own touring lighting specials.

Wild Rivers were already touring a number of filament light bulbs on stands for additional visual effects, which inspired Elliot for this Shepherd's Bush show lighting design. He decided to expand on these with the 20 PixelBricks which were rigged on different height individual stands.

The highest stands were deployed upstage and the lowest downstage which added considerable depth to the performance space and harmonised nicely with the touring bulbs on stands.



Photo by Nick Pope

The PixelBricks were supplied from LiteUp's extensive stock of Astera fixtures.

"I wanted to enhance the existing look and aesthetic of the tour," explained Elliot, "whilst also making it a bit more intense. I wanted to add some extra dynamics that dovetailed with the warm ambience, so whatever I did had to look integrated and slick. PixelBrick was a perfect solution."

He also found that in these side stage positions the PixelBricks could be used for adding extra subtle key light.

Elliot chose Astera's PixelBrick – a small and lightweight multipurpose lighting fixture with a powerful and high-quality output – as they are "punchy and have that elegant Astera colour mixing that everyone loves," making them generally a good choice for eye-candy effects in this scenario.

"PixelBrick was definitely the workhorse of this lighting design," confirms Elliot. The PixelBricks also blended perfectly with the band's touring bulbs, and even accentuated their effect, making them pop out even more than usual!

In this case PixelBricks were used – with the widest filter for a great wash look – for numerous effects including creative twinkling and fluid, undulating kinetic effects. They also brought excellent blasts of colour to the stage at strategic moments which worked brilliantly for accenting.

Wild Rivers' touring backdrop was up-lit with LED battens on the floor which complemented down-lighting with the house wash moving lights in the overhead rig forming a grid like effect and vertically mimicking the PixelBricks shooting in horizontally from the sides of stage.



Photo by Nick Pope

“These ingenious products are an excellent tool for a show like this – simple but highly effective,” enthused Elliot. “Used smartly and sparingly, they made a big difference to the overall visual impact of the lighting.”

He has used PixelBricks before for key and floor lighting, but this was the first time as a major effects luminaire, an opportunity he jumped at. “They are such a handy and flexible little light and worked exceptionally well for augmenting the band’s melodic and organic indie style music,” he concluded.