Hillsong Colour Conference in Cape Town

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Photos by Hillsong South Africa

The annual Hillsong Colour Conference was hosted at the Grand West Casino in Cape Town from the 15th to 19th April. Rental company C&S supplied and set up the custom built stage, lighting – which included over 160 Robe fixtures – rigging, trussing, LED Screens and the Backline. Bad Weather, for the third consecutive year, helped Hillsong South Africa redesign and primarily execute the lighting and video elements whilst assisting all areas of the technical production.

“As the conference was hosted over three countries, our equipment had to meet with international standards,” commented Henning de Villiers, Production Manager at C&S. “We worked with the Hillsong team to achieve and surpass all expectations and were delighted that the event was a major success.”

Jonathan Bandli, Creative Director at Bad Weather elaborates. “This process is very complex. The Colour Conference production is designed and creatively birthed each year in Sydney by Hillsong Australia and their team, where it is executed first on the series of stops around the world.”

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The full design package is sent to Hillsong South Africa where it is unpacked by their production and creative departments. The design is amended to fit local gear supplier kit lists, quantities and venue capabilities.

“This has to be done while maintaining the heart of the design and keeping the creative elements intact, as the focus on continuity is vital for a global experience. This is where Bad Weather begins its involvement in the project,” said Jonathan. “We work hand in hand with Hillsong South Africa’s Production Manager, Alan Leviton, with whom we have an incredible relationship, spanning over the last three years of this conference from when our involvement began. He proposes the redesigned concept and we advise on lighting and video elements from our long standing relationship with gear rental supplier C&S and with the understanding of the overall look and feel of the Colour Conference identity.”

Bad Weather then handle the technical drawing packages and prepare all the paperwork required for a production of this international scale.

The visualization of the conference is completed in their in-house pre-visualisation studio. “We import the designed stage from the 2D drawings to 3D and import them in the visualizer and spend a week in studio working on the items,” said Jonathan. The team works extremely closely with Hillsong South Africa’s local Lighting Designer, Hendre Bloem, who has a deep understanding of the direction of the conference and the

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church’s overall creative identity.

With reference videos from Sydney as a guideline, Bad Weather recreates the key items of the conference as accurately as possible. There is more creative flexibility with praise and worship, and this is conceptualized alongside talented Hendre Bloem.

“Working in this configuration, of having a Lighting Director from the church’s production team and combining it with our experience and knowledge to handle the programming and operation is an extremely effective and creative way to work for this production,” commented Jonathan. “This model is typical overseas and we enjoy working with people who excel in their respective fields.”

With the show produced in studio before load in, only minor updates are required on site, freeing up the team to focus intently on every rehearsal and fine-tune every fade and movement. “It also lends to shorter load in times and more sleep for the crew, who are the backbone of all productions.”

Jonathan believes a large quantity of fixtures is imperative to produce an immersive and dynamic experience in a venue such as the GrandWest Arena. “The conference itself was a diverse musical

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and theatrical journey and we needed not only variety, but flexibility when it came to lighting fixtures," he said.

Robe ColorSpot 700E ATs were used for primary key light and specials – and also moved into the audience and arena for special effects – alongside the Robin 600 LEDWash, used for overall front wash. It took some creative planning and programing to create the desired look.

> "Using a large quantity of ColourSpot 700E AT on the overhead cubes added big aerial effects, breakup gobos, stage textures, special pick ups and theatrical backlighting effects. These were surrounded by the Robin 300LEDWash to handle backlight, and to frame the cubes beautifully. This led to some great in-depth programming opportunities and fantastic visual lines.

"We also had a combination of Robin Pointes on the three downstage flown cubes as well as the upstage edge, just tucked off the stage to hide the ballast for a particularly clean looking stage. These of course handled all the beam work and with the upstage Robin Pointes, I often utilised the frost and zoom function to achieve some back wash style effects for that big backlit worship moment."

Handling audience lighting was a combination of Robin 600 LEDWashes and Robe ColourWash 700E AT. They did a great job, and with wide coverage and variable CTO he was able to emulate a nice warm CTO for house lighting during preaching moments and wonderful colours for artistic elements of the conference.

"I landed up utilising the fantastic zoom of the Colourwash 700E AT, using the wide soft beam for a smooth room wash and could have the latitude to zoom right down to a rather pleasant "beam style" effect with a nice soft finish. This created a variety of great textures for the audience.

A substantial quantity of LED strips were incorporated into the large set that framed the stage. "These all had individual control which gave us incredible effects. We also had the main stage outlined in LED strip which created that final touch and made the stage look immaculate."

Bad Weather was proud to be part of this production. "We value the trust that Hillsong South Africa has put into us and the partnership that we have with not only the church but also the rental supplier, C&S," said Jonathan.

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Henning from C&S agrees. “A special thanks to the GrandWest Arena team and Bad Weather Productions for their assistance, and of coarse Bradley Bruchhausen from DWR who was always on call and eager to assist.”

Lighting Equipment List:

32 Robe ColorSpot 700E AT Spot

28 Robe ColorWash 700E AT Wash

24 Robin Pointe

24 Robin LEDBeam 100

30 Robin 300 LEDWash

24 Robin 600 LEDWash

MDG Hazer

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