

Hippotizer is content powerhouse for Finnish show Tähdet, tähdet

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Finland - Finland's popular TV contest 'Tähdet, tähdet' returned for 2024 with a host of singers belting out numbers ranging from 1980s pop to Eurovision classics. Broadcast on Finnish channel Nelonen, audiences watched performances backed by nine Roe Vanish V8T LED screens with live and pre-made content manipulated using tvONE's Green Hippo brand of Hippotizer Media Servers.

"The set design required visual appeal tailored to the viewers both in the studio and at home," explains Varpu Sipilä from Finnish visual design company Visual45, which was brought in to create the lighting and visual elements. "Lighting design and operation, as well as video content production and operation, played a significant role. Particularly, the use of video surfaces was emphasized to enhance the atmosphere of the performances."



On stage, the Visual45 team deployed the nine Roe LED panels, all of which measured 2x3 metres, creating an enveloping canvas. More than 250 Sceptron LED tubes were positioned at the edges and at the top edges of the stage to create a sense of wider space, and more LED tubes were embedded in the judge's table in a custom structure to reflect the shape of the stage. The Sceptrons were operated in hybrid mode, using a GrandMA2 light console and a Hippotizer Boreal+ MK2 Media Server linked to a laptop running ZooKeeper.



The design was led by Tero Kärpijoki from Visual45, whose expertise includes lighting design and visual design for TV productions. "From our perspective, much of the creative work happens during programming, where we make many changes and fixes as we start to see more clearly what the overall picture looks like," he says. "Hippotizer enables easy testing and content

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creation even at this stage. For instance, using effects within Hippotizer is invaluable for programming. Additionally, Hippotizer's VideoMapper has been a great tool, as manipulating image surfaces can be done both on the Viewport and the Layer level.



"Hippotizer is fast and reliable, especially when lights and videos are operated by the same operator, and directing it from grandMA2 is simple."

Content was created by Visual45's Motion Graphics Designer Jani Saranpää, designed to complement each performance and drawing inspiration from the songs. The team created the content to act as a whole, with the lighting design in mind, but adapted the overall design to be individually distinct for every singer. In some numbers, live footage from cameras was played back on the screen, fed through the Hippotizer's live inputs.



"The combination of live camera feeds, pre-designed content, and lighting effects were all carefully coordinated to enhance the overall visual experience," continues Kärpijoki. "We were proud of creating variation in performances regardless of the musical genre. The schedules were quite challenging at times, but Hippotizer enabled quick adjustments to visual elements between rehearsals and recordings and helped us create visuals that we could stand behind with confidence. Hippotizer's absolute strength lies in its ability to quickly and effortlessly stylize and modify different looks. This was incredibly beneficial, especially in this production."

The Hippotizer Boreal+ MK2 Media Servers were supplied by Creative Technology Finland, which also provided the technical execution for the project.



The performers included Finnish singers and entertainers such as Teemu Roivainen, Hanna Kinnunen, Riku Nieminen, and Tidjân Ba, backed by a band led by Risto Niinikoski. The show is produced by Moskito Television.