



Courtesy Louise

Stickland Luc Peumans from Genk, Belgium based creative visual design practice, Paining With Light, has designed lighting for the new “Ice Age Live” show, a vibrant stage adaptation of the 20th Century Fox ‘Ice Age’ animation movies featuring the same much loved characters and a new story.

The show is scheduled to tour internationally for the next five years and has just premiered in the UK presenting an intricate collage of magic, music, fantasy, acrobatics and action directed by Guy Caron. The audience follow the colourful and highly entertaining adventures of Manny the mammoth, Sid the sloth and Diego the sabre toothed tiger as they try and rescue their kidnapped friends, passing through a series of chilly environments.



Co-director Michael Curry also built the fabulous animatronic

characters and designed the costumes, and the Executive Producer is Hans Staal from Netherlands based Stage Entertainment Touring Productions.

Peumans has worked on many other Stage Entertainment projects in recent years, including the massively successful Holiday on Ice since 2005.

He comments, "It is a real honour to be working with such a prestigious production team" which also includes spectacular video and motion graphics created by Jean-Luc Gason and a set by David Shields.



Peumans'

starting point for the lighting design was the knowledge that it needed a theatrical rather than a traditional ice show approach, and also that the lighting had to be imaginative in its own right while complementing the video. This creates a vast digital backdrop and is fundamental to setting the mood, feel and location of each scene.

Over 300 special gobos are used in a variety of Clay Paky moving lights to help the process of matching and texturing the ice and the props.

Another vital consideration for lighting in general is the arena viewing angles which go from 180 to 270 degrees, offering a more open and wider vista than a standard theatre setting.

Lighting helps animate the characters, with the costumes taking light exceedingly well, together with the large inflatable rock-face set downstage of the video screens.

A substantial trussing grid installed above the ice provides positions for most of the lighting as well as flying facilities for performers and props.



Peumans chose

60 Robe LEDWash 1200s to use as his base and general wash lighting all over the ice and for the main set pieces.

Six are positioned backstage to light the rear of the set and the voids which appear when the screens open.

Twenty Robe LEDWash 600s are positioned on the floor around the perimeter of the ice, skimming over the surface and providing low level cross lighting for the performers and larger dance 'chorus' numbers.

For Spots and Profiles, he's specified Clay Paky's Alpha 1500 series – 32 Spot HPEs and 26 Profiles which are dotted all over the grid.

The Spots are split between creating gobo texturing, overlaying colour, painting the surfaces and for character 'special' positions.

The rock-face set is lit with just six Alpha Spots fitted with special masks to prevent any light spillage.

Five Alpha Profile 1500s have been converted to follow spots, with the pan / tilt removed and dimmer and Iris control knobs added. On/off and intensity is controlled from the grandMA2 desk which runs all the lighting cues, triggered by timecode generated from the audio track.

This is a common Peumans touch to ensure that the spots blend harmoniously with the rest of the lighting.

Also in the rig are Wildfire UV guns and some custom built LED practicals from Invent Design, devised by Peumans to internally light a series of scenic stalactites hanging beneath the trussing grid.

Another custom item is a 600 Nanno-dot LED star-sky ceiling.

Peumans also specified the atmospherics – fog, hazer and snow machines.

It is not a massive lighting rig for the scale and complexity of the show – it also all had to fit into one truck! – so



Now the show is

up and running, the lighting – programmed on a grandMA2 full size and run on a grandMA2 light – is operated by members of the Stage Entertainment touring crew

All lighting equipment is being supplied by leading Belgian rental company Phlipppo Showlight.

In addition to the lighting design, Painting With Light also supplied and programmed the Coolux Pandora's Box media server storing all the video content.

This is interfaced with the Kinesys automation system so video is re-sized in real-time and fitted exactly to the LED panels as they open and close for entrances and exits.

Working closely with the German manufacturer Coolux, Painting With Light has developed a completely new bespoke interface allowing the Pandora's Box to sync the character's voices, embedded in the soundtrack, to the mouth movements of the animatronic characters.

Painting with Light's two programmers were Paco Mispelters (lighting) and Jo Vaas (video and animatronics).

Peumans concludes, "It was a very nice experience evolving this show and I enjoyed working as part of this great team of well known creatives. I think we have succeeded in producing a series of magical and emotional moments. It felt a bit like making a movie, but with real characters playing in it. That's an advantage of theatre over movies you can let your imagination do all the rest! The audience get to see the characters they love up close and become immersed in the story with them".

