

iPointes for GlasGLOW3 Event



GlasGLOW3 was a truly magical illuminated trail event, full of fun and fantasy, conceived and produced by event specialist itison and staged at Glasgow Botanic Gardens. It ran for two and a half weeks in October and November featuring a fully Covid-compliant 1.5 kilometre socially distanced walking trail featuring numerous highly imaginative lighting works, installations, and adventures!

Lighting designer Grant Anderson was one of a core creative team comprising itison's Oli Norman, set designer Kenneth Macleod and composer Kevin Murray who wrote and compiled a unique soundscape for this unique and invigorating project that captured the hearts and minds of the city during very challenging times.

With a superhero central narrative to the trail, Grant chose 60 x Robe iPointes to be key 'hero' luminaires within his dynamic site-wide lighting design for GlasGLOW3. iPointes were chosen for their brightness and ability to create super-strength beams of light that would be visible from across Glasgow in the right weather conditions.

2020 was the third year of the event. Grant also lit last year's GlasGLOW and this year it took on new significance and resonance for local communities as so many public events have been cancelled due to the pandemic.

The current Glasgow Botanic Gardens is in the vibrant West End area and has occupied this site since 1842. It features several impressive glasshouses, most notably the Kibble Palace which was moved there by barge in 1873 from Coulport on Loch Long, and now houses a forest of tree ferns.



GlasGLOW 2020 was the most advanced yet in terms of integrated guest experience. Every illuminated piece around the trail – which took about 60 – 90 minutes to complete via a one-way system – was related to “The Power Within”, a world of darkness from which heroes could rise up and discover the light. It offered the chance for every participant to rail against the gloom, become their own superhero and discover their ‘power within’ ... including meeting and defeating their nemesis!

The trail site was divided into five zones, with a central music theme running throughout, with stems from this used to create individual soundtracks for the different display / installation areas.

Grant designed lighting for the entire trail, which was slightly shorter in the previous year because it was not possible for guests to go inside the glasshouses due to Covid restrictions.

The principal area for iPointes was the ‘UFO crash site’, a staged area and key part of the story – even alluded to during the 2019 event – and the location where the audience could use their powers and inner strength to defeat their nemesis.

The lightshow here was designed around a complete two-and-a-half-minute looped audio sequence played out with full illumination lighting including a 'call & response' segment during which people realise the UFO is evil, engage in a fight, defeat the invader and assume 'The Power'. It was the place where everything happened!

The iPointes were arranged in two concentric trussing circles – to mimic the shape of the elaborate UFO set piece – the inner circle measuring 10 metres diameter and rigged with 15 x iPointes and the outer at 15 metres in diameter, loaded with 30 x iPointes.

This 360-degree configuration of equally spaced iPointes gave Grant the chance to programme a myriad of beautiful, fluid geometric shapes and transitions that impacted across the whole site, becoming an effective visual epicentre.

In fact, people across the city could see the beams reaching across the sky, like a beacon of positive energy and playfulness with iPointes dancing across the clouds! It was particularly effective on damp foggy nights proliferated with low cloud – characteristic late autumn meteorology in the city – generating lots of Twitter chatter and interest!



The lighting had a real resonance with citizens of this normally vibrant, friendly, and lively community "It was a great morale boost to so many people to see an event like this happening," stated Grant.

His overall decision to utilise iPointes was an easy one, having used them before on the 2019 GlasGLOW event in smaller quantities.

"Initially I chose them having used Robe's MegaPointe on many occasions indoors," he explained, "I wanted the razor sharpness of the beam and the quality and brightness ... but in an IP rated housing." He very specifically didn't want to use lights that needed to be in domes for that section of the event for aesthetic reasons.

"There's no other light like it ... iPointe is in a class of its own for creating those massive searchlight effects." As one of the five types of 'hero' fixtures, they were non-substitutable confirmed Grant!

The iPointes and all the other lighting futures involved in the event were supplied by Hawthorn, project managed for the rental company by Stephen Reid.

The UFO was further lit with LED PARs and a field of custom LED pixel tubes surrounding it, all controlled via a

grandMA2 light console in a central control cabin which was hooked into a fibre network running site-wide incorporating general lighting, CCTV, point-of-sale areas, etc.

In addition, the UFO, four iPointes were positioned around the entranceway and used for sky-tracker searchlight effects, and five sat on the roof of the Kibble Palace with another five around the front of the structure.

Twelve Robe BMFL Spots were positioned inside the Kibble Palace which was closed to the public this year to ensure that people kept moving along the trail.

The famous wrought iron-framed 19th-century structure covers over 2000 square metres and was much enlarged after its move to Glasgow with the addition of a 150 ft diameter circular dome and the extension of its transepts to form an impressive front elevation. When it opened in 1873, the interior was lit by 600 gas lamps which could be coloured for effect.

Fast-forward 147 years, and it took only the 12 x Robe BMFL Spots – also on the ‘hero light’ list – to achieve a spectacular effect!

The final four iPointes were rigged on a run of truss at the ‘back’ of the gardens, and they were positioned so Grant could complete an animated network of beam effects emanating from all areas of the park shooting out across and above the city.



Grant combined his skills and experience gained from working in multiple lighting disciplines – theatre, concert, club – to create this exciting and invigorating environment which was a huge success generating lots of positive feedback.

Staging GlasGLOW3 involved a massive planning and logistics operation by the itison team, who were challenged further to ensure it was fully Covid-compliant, in the process offering much-appreciated work to a large team of industry freelancers.

Grant was extremely proud to be part of the event “walking around, watching people’s faces, and hearing their comments as they interacted and responded to the lighting, the story and the whole experience was incredible!” he stated, “It was joyous to watch people engaging in a shared experience once again.”

Hawthorn’s Stephen Reid added, “We were delighted to be involved in this project which offered so many people an outlet and something to look forward to in the current environment! It also showed just what can be accomplished in the most challenging circumstances!”

Photos Carlo Paloni