

Less Than Jake fans get more than visuals with Hippotizer



UK – Floridian ska punk outfit Less Than Jake are touring with video at the heart of their performance for the first time, wowing fans with live feed footage and pre-made content displayed on three large LED screens driven by tvONE's Green Hippo brand of Hippotizer Media Servers.



Longtime Less Than Jake Lighting designer Nikki Dickinson, owner of Rig Lite Design Limited, teamed up with the band and Pete McCrea of Production AV to specify a kitlist of five Marshall CV255 and CV366 cameras to capture the antics of the five band members, live feeds from which were fed into a Hippotizer Amba Media Server. A host of content taking in home-shot footage, old TV clips, song-related imagery and stock effects from various effect sources and from within Hippotizer were handled by the Amba and fed to the three 8' x 6' Desay

M6 LED screens.



Ayrton Magic Blade R moving FX units were rigged around the LED screens, alongside an impressive array of powerful wash and effects fixtures, merging the worlds of video and lighting. Most of the lighting floor package was supplied by GLS Lighting. Dickinson controlled the 16 universes of colours and pixels via a Chamsys MQ500M stadium console and stadium wing. Supplementing the effects were four Chauvet Vesuvio II vertical foggers.



Dickinson worked closely with the band's trombone player Buddy Schaub, video editor Gavin Smith and saxophone player JR Wasilewski to compile footage, accessing hundreds of images and logos, cartoons and other graphics which she uploaded to the Hippotizer Amba and then manipulated using the on-board effects and controls. The five cameras were first fed into a Blackmagic Design Constellation ATEM 2M/E switcher, which

enabled the team to display two live feeds onto the LED screens at once, via the Amba and the Chamsys console.



“We set up the ATEM, which was to be switched via network by Bitfocus Companion software,” adds Dickinson. “This was running across two Mac Minis, each controlling a mix engine on the ATEM at the same time. I could then send Art-Net from the console to the Mac to tell it to switch the cameras on either mix engine of the ATEM 2M/E. I then sent a separate command via Art-Net to the Amba telling it which input on the capture card to look at. This then enabled me to have two separate camera feeds at the same time as well as an image or footage on the third screen. This signal was then fed into the Amba which was again controlled via Art-Net to allow me to send the signal to any or all of the three screens, as well as all the other content.”



Utilising Hippotizer V4 software, Dickinson programmed the show once all the footage and images were

compiled in the Hippotizer Amba, aided by colleague Anna Hammond, who set up all the various camera options that were needed on the MQ500M stadium wing. Once all these palettes were built and working, Dickinson went through the set list song by song, look by look, part by part to add the necessary footage or cameras into the cue stacks. Overseeing the video elements for the duration of the tour was Production AV Video System Tech, Joel Goulding.



“During the Manchester show, the Tour Manager for one of the other bands on the bill came up to me and said, ‘wow, the screens look amazing’, and it just went from there,” smiles Dickinson. “I had two of the band members’ mums sat with me at FOH during the shows and the look on their faces when we put the video in and then the cameras as well was truly awesome. To get told that you’ve raised the production level of the show higher than it’s ever been, and that they’ve never seen it look so good is a massive compliment. Those comments were echoed by the fans as well, who were amazed that we would put video into a show. It’s hard to impress the SuperFans, but we did it.”



Less Than Jake's 'You Asked For It' tour kicked off the UK dates in Manchester in February before visiting cities including Leeds, Glasgow and London. The band tour the US and Europe throughout spring and summer. The Hippotizer Amba Media Server was supplied by Rig Lite Design with backups from Production AV.



