MA3: The Next Step in Blessing’s Journey

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“It’s about time,” says Ndumiso Blessing Vilakazi with a smile as he takes delivery of his new grandMA3 onPC command wing from DWR Distribution.

Blessing works as a freelance lighting designer and operator, both in South Africa and abroad. “I got the grandMA3 onPC mainly to spend more time learning the software and developing my workflows,” he said. “MA3 is now the standard everywhere I go, whether I’m working locally or overseas. When I work abroad, the environments are high-pressure, and you have to be quick and know what you’re doing. I bought this so I can use it every day and get to know it better than I do now.” He has also attended MA Lighting training hosted by DWR Distribution.

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(Above): Ndumiso Blessing Vilakazi with Duncan Riley and Callan van Zyl from DWR Distribution.

“I began as a DJ in the early 2000s and fell in love with sound,” he recalls. “Around that time, concerts like the 46664 Concert were being broadcast on television. Seeing those massive productions lit something in me. I realised there was this whole world behind the scenes. While doing my Media Studies Diploma in 2007, I had a few months’ stint with Prosound’s hire department as a casual worker – cleaning equipment, sweeping the warehouse, helping with preps, loading trucks and helping with setups- through a classmate I had met in college. This

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exposure to the industry solidified the passion.”

What followed was an unexpected turning point. “It’s actually a funny story because I started as a sound guy. One day, I posted a picture of a Vari-Lite VL1 back in 2012. That’s when Duncan Riley of DWR Distribution reached out to me on Facebook and said, “Hey dude, what are you doing? Come to Mediatech and introduce yourself to people. If you don’t have the means to come, I’ll pay for your transport and accommodation.’ And yeah, I came to the expo, introduced myself to some people and then started from there.” In November 2017, he started freelancing as a lighting technician.

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“I want to keep learning and use the console to make a living, and hope that it will also help me find more opportunities. Before COVID, I was busy, but things have slowed down since then. Now, I’m hoping this will help me reconnect with people in the local industry. The wing is available for rental, complete with a touch screen pc and an operator, me.”

Duncan Riley is proud of Blessing. “It has been a privilege to watch Blessing grow in the industry, not only dreaming but building a life that turns those dreams into reality. He is an inspiration. Thank you, Blessing, for your support over the years.”

The new granMA onPC completes Blessing’s home set-up. He already has a viz-key and preview set up, so it will be a matter of plugging in the new console and starting to play with the hardware.

The grandMA3 onPC command wing is a mobile control solution for the grandMA3 onPC software. If you have a computer or laptop with the grandMA3 onPC software installed, connect your onPC wing via USB, and you are ready to program. The command area looks the same as on the grandMA3 consoles, including the five dual-encoders and 40 separate playbacks to directly control 4,096 parameters.

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