

# Magic & Mischief in the Park for grandMA3

Posted on October 18, 2023



Singapore-based lighting designer Gabriel Chan chose to run lighting for an innovative production of A Midsummer Night's Dream by The Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) for the 2023 season of Shakespeare in The Park (SITP) on a full grandMA3 system.

AMSND is one of Shakespeare's most brilliant, popular, and complex comedies. This production was staged at Fort Canning Green within Fort Canning Park, ran for four weeks, and was directed

## Magic & Mischief in the Park for grandMA3

by Guy Unsworth, featuring a stunning industrial inspired 'Athens' set design by Richard Kent.

Gabriel's starting point for lighting the show was the impressive cityscape set, which comprised 17 scenic chimneys and resembled a giant industrial complex with flourishes of futurism and some nods to classicist architecture, and, naturally, the special outdoor location.

With approximately 226 lighting fixtures on the rig, 6321 parameters of control plus five smoke and haze generators, Gabriel chose a grandMA3 light console complete with a grandMA3 processing unit M to run everything.

"I chose grandMA3 for the streamlined design workflow it offered in conjunction with Vectorworks, and with the use of MVR and GDTF," stated Gabriel.

A grandMA3 onPC was connected in a multi-user session so console operator Derrick Wong could run lighting cues while Gabriel was still building the show during technical rehearsals. The onPC also served as backup when the show was handed over to SRT for daily running.

A QLab controller was interfaced to the MA console via OSC for sound related lighting triggers, and for receiving linear timecode running complex music / lighting sequences.

Both Gabriel and set designer Richard worked on Vectorworks, and the entire set, including his lighting rig, was designed in 3D.



This 3D plan was then exported to MVR and directly imported into grandMA3, so when the 3D information was fully ported over, he could visualise precisely how the light would fall on the set in grandMA3 3D Stage View.

The grandMA3 specific feature that he found the most powerful in building lighting for this show was Camera View to Selection Grid.

70 x Astera NYX Bulbs were rigged on the chimneys in arrays across multiple rows and columns, so the Camera View aspect of Selection Grid allowed Gabriel to apply colour or dimmer effects along whichever XYZ axis he preferred.

This saved some serious time. If he had still been working in grandMA2, he would have had to create multiple Groups with Selection Order information.

## Magic & Mischief in the Park for grandMA3

For AMSND character Nick Bottom – a weaver who provides comic relief throughout the play, and is famously known for getting his head transformed into that of a donkey by chief mischief maker Puck – Gabriel wanted a rainbow colour palette across the entire lighting rig, regardless of fixture type, in a seven-step colour wave moving from audience left to right.

With the Camera View to Selection Grid, it was just a simple selection followed by tapping of the colour presets for each Phaser step, so the entire process to create and finesse the effect took about a minute!

“My time coding workflow was also streamlined with the use of the MAtimeshow.com interface between Reaper and grandMA3,” he explained.

Gabriel notes that grandMA3’s modular approach of handling information, i.e., Recipes in combination with Selection Grid, is a “very potent tool for adapting one show to the next, especially useful if the production is touring”.

He also looks forward to expanding his knowledge of Recipes and their huge potential the more he uses the grandMA3 system.

He worked closely on lighting AMSND with associate lighting designer Genevieve Peck, assisted by technical manager / Chief LX Peter Chi and console operator Derrick Wong, plus a team of 6 follow-spotters.

Creatively, the physical scale of AMSND was one of its major challenges for the lighting department, in particular ensuring that audiences could clearly see who was speaking, and to whom, whilst maintaining all the narrative atmospherics. “If people can’t follow the dialogue, they lose attention, a situation compounded by Shakespearean English, which is not always easiest to process in the first place!”

From a technical perspective, being staged outdoors, the biggest challenge was to design and specify a lighting rig that would withstand Singapore’s famous humidity and dampness throughout the month of set up and the 4 weeks of performances.

All of this was achieved with spectacular results, reigniting the SITP concept last seen in 2018, with a resounding bang of success and much critical acclaim for the artists, production, and creative teams.

## Magic & Mischief in the Park for grandMA3

Gabriel has been using grandMA3 since version 1.4 and previously grandMA2 for around 10 years.

He believes that the MA Lighting brand has built its reputation as a solid, reliable lighting control system through “listening to and canvassing its community for user feedback,” adding that he’s been fortunate to receive direct support from the local distributor, Total Solution Marketing.

“grandMA3 is a complex lighting control software that can achieve very complex lighting effects with relatively simple user input, and I am sure it will achieve the same level of success as MA2 if the team continues to listen to the experiences and needs of its user base,” he concluded.

Photos: © Crispian Chan