

Meet the Hippotizer power-users of Green Hippo's Key User Support Group (KUSP)



Jorge Toro of JMT Show Concepts.

Haines City, FL, USA – From an early age, Jorge Toro, owner of Florida-based JMT Show Concepts, has had a knack for technology and a head for business. In his 25 years in entertainment production, he has constantly moved forward, letting nothing slow him down. In recent years, however, a fruitful partnership with Green Hippo has certainly contributed to that forward momentum.

Jorge's links with entertainment began in his teenage years, when he started helping out a DJ friend with his audio equipment in their native Puerto Rico. "I started working with him, carrying equipment, setting up," he recalls. "He taught me how to do everything – and I was good at it."

He progressed to mixing sound for bands in Puerto Rico, and after buying his own PA system, spent several years both renting and mixing. "It was good time," he says. "I grew up a lot as a person, as a technician and as a company, until I decided to sell up and move to the States."



To cement his audio knowledge, Jorge headed to Florida's renowned Full Sail University to study a degree in Recording Arts, before returning to wider freelance opportunities in Puerto Rico. But Jorge is also good at recognising opportunity – and a change of direction was on the horizon. "A friend had bought a lot of LED screen, and asked me to be production manager, and look after all their gigs. I didn't know anything about video, but I said yes."

He learned fast, and successfully oversaw screen and content requirements for tours and festivals throughout Latin America. "We did a lot of shows – David Guetta, Rihanna, the *Festival Presidente* in the Dominican Republic, which is really big over there – a lot of things."

This success led to a call from the production manager for Wisin & Yandel, the hugely popular Reggaeton duo, who wanted Jorge to manage the supply and setup of the video elements for a show in the Dominican Republic. He agreed, but it was a tough gig. "We put all the gear on a ferry from Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic, but the ferry broke down, so 80% of my gear arrived the night before show day. We had to set everything up and test it. But at the end of the day, we did a great gig for 60,000 people."



Next, Jorge left the rental company to join Wisin & Yandel's touring crew. Before long, he also became video director for Enrique Iglesias – a role he continues to fill to this day – and various other artists. Finding his services much in demand, he founded JMT Show Concepts in 2015.

By this time, Jorge had a freelancer's broad experience of media servers, but was increasingly intrigued by Hippotizer. "I met Kate Leahy, who taught me a lot about Hippotizer. I really liked the platform because everything was there. And once it was set up, everything ran smoothly. I asked a lot of questions: What about this? Why that way? How does that work?"

He encountered Hippotizer again on a Bruno Mars tour, and finally decided to invest after Enrique Iglesias's co-headline tour with Pitbull, when Pitbull's crew were using Hippotizer. "It's a brand, like Mercedes or BMW," says Jorge. "I researched different products, but decided on Green Hippo because the brand was so strong and the product so good. We knew we would always get work with those systems."

He invested initially in two Hippotizer Karst+ Media Servers, in May 2018. He recalls, "I opened them up and started playing with them, and on the same day I was like, 'OK, I'm ready to do a show here!' The user interface was so good."



Hippotizer's ease of setup and integration also impressed. "Sometimes I programme in ChamSys, but often the worst thing about media servers is that it's such a pain to hook up to the console. So I plugged it in, moved a fader and it was there! I just fell in love with it. A week later I was doing shows with them."

Discussing the software, he says, "Hippotizer is the easiest software to use. You have so many ways to manage your session, from the console, from ZooKeeper, from the Timeline into the ZooKeeper, from cues – it's so easy. Sometimes, producers or creative people come to me and say, 'We want to do this . . .' – and from the way they explain it, you know they think it will be really difficult. And I'm like, 'OK, give me five minutes!'."

He adds, "Green Hippo has the most powerful computers on the market to handle the big stuff. You have everything in one box, and all the support you need. With some systems, you have the software, and maybe a computer you bought someplace, and it's very easy for a company to say, 'No, it's the computer's fault'. But if I have any issues with Hippo, I will always resolve everything in one call."



Among the powerful features that Jorge singles out for praise is PixelMapper. “We did the *Premios Tu Música Urbano*, the big Latin Music Awards show, in March. We used PixelMapper to map everything, tile by tile, and it was easy. The computer ran really smoothly, everything was great. I wanted to do it that way so we could highlight if a tile went bad during rehearsal or setup – we could say ‘OK, tile number 29 is bad’. Also, from my side, I could go to any tile and adjust the colour or brightness, or whatever was needed.”

Hippotizer’s intuitive interface also makes great sense from a rental operator’s viewpoint, as Jorge has easily been able to train his own techs to a high level of ability. Just two years after that first purchase, JMT now owns six Hippotizer systems – three Karst+ and three Boreal+. Jorge concludes, “Since we had the Hippotizer name, our gigs have grown, and we have done more important and bigger gigs as time has gone on.”



Captions:

Hippotizer Boreal+ Media Servers at the *Premios Tu Música Urbano* awards show, broadcast live from Puerto Rico to an estimated 80 million people on March 5, 2020.

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