New Life Worship Center in Chennai chooses grandMA3

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Integrated lighting control for broadcast and live events

The New Life Assembly of God (NLAG) Worship Center in Chennai, India, is an impressive 25,000-seat multi-purpose worship facility located in the south of the bustling city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Its conception and construction were a bold and highly successful project directed by

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executive pastor, Rev. Benjamin Mohan. He explained that they sought “efficiency, flexibility and scalability” when looking for the best lighting control options, including a platform “where scenes, cues and programming could be consistently saved and recalled without issues.” With around 180 lighting fixtures in the house rig running across multiple universes, a grandMA3 light console was chosen for control in the new space, picked for its power, versatility and reliability.



Powerful and flexible solutions

The venue’s large flat-floor configuration offers full flexibility with the potential of different stage and seating layouts, enabling NLAG to host church services and a variety of large-scale Christian

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events and conferences.

The grandMA3, together with third party network nodes and 28 DMX splitters, is right at the heart of all the lighting programming, playback, live operation, cue execution, and timecoded events which are used during services and events, explained NLAG's lighting director Theophorus Samuel. With the venue hosting different multi-faceted live events with assorted worship teams and production requirements, grandMA3's multi-user workflow option was another "must-have." The network system architecture is designed for scalability, redundancy, and smooth operation for both regular church services and large-scale live event productions.

The lighting fixtures – a mix of moving and static luminaires – are installed across five trusses. The first comprises primarily profile fixtures, used for key lighting and specials onstage, with the remaining trusses containing a combination of washes, spots, and blinders.

"We aim to create an immersive yet comfortable worship environment for regular services," explained Theophorus, adding that they intentionally avoid excessive or distracting lighting effects, so that the technology always supports the worship experience rather than vice versa.

Benjamin elucidates that in South Indian church culture, especially in Chennai, many churches are now using creative stage lighting as an essential tool for building pleasant atmospheres for worship and engagement. Churches are also now increasingly focusing on television broadcasting and digital streaming, so good lighting has become a "critical component in delivering high-quality productions," he states.

So, when they built the venue, a lot of time, thought and detail went into getting the right equipment and solutions in place for working with assorted ministry requirements like special youth gatherings or producing dramas, concerts, worship nights, and other event-style production-oriented performances where visual presentation is key.

Stepping up to a new era

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On NLAG’s previous campuses in Chennai, the team had worked with another brand of lighting control, however the consensus was that with this new state-of-the-art facility, a fresh approach was needed, so it was time to switch. It was a collective decision born from wanting the most adaptable and relevant visual control options. While the Worship Center was being designed, its AV and acoustics concepts, together with schematic designs, were developed by consultants Salas O’Brien and HouseRight in coordination with global design and architectural firm Populous, all collaborating closely with Benjamin and others from NLAG. The initial recommendation for a grandMA3 console came from HouseRight, and when Theophorus and Benjamin started looking at the MA Lighting systems and products in detail, they agreed it was the way to go.

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Franco Zaghini, MA Lighting’s director of business development who is leading the House of Worship efforts globally, based in Singapore, was instrumental in coordinating the project. During the implementation phase, the final decision-making also involved a Chennai-based lighting designer, Viju, who was working alongside Benjamin, Theophorus and Manuel Raj, NLAG’s media director.

The grandMA3 system architecture has significantly improved how NLAG can now approach lighting programming and teamwork involving multiple operators and volunteers being able to work on the same show file simultaneously. “Utilizing this structured and scalable workflow helps maintain consistency” across all types of production and is especially useful during pressurized live events, noted Theophorus.

Looking ahead

They use GDTF profiles for all fixtures and MVR for backup and setting up 3D visualization environments during pre-viz, so grandMA3’s integration with these has helped streamline the fixture management process and has improved consistency between programming and visualization.

Theophorus specifically highlighted the usefulness of grandMA3’s onboard help features and resources, especially when troubleshooting. He likes the structured workflow and sees how it is greatly benefitting the learning curves of volunteers and new operators. Recipes, Cues, and Sequences have all been major gamechangers for them compared to before, allowing faster and more efficient programming and implementing multiple fixture updates swiftly without having to rebuild entire shows.

The grandMA3 console was supplied through Hi-Tech Audio & Image, MA Lighting’s official distributor in India, who provided technical support for the project.

Now the new venue is up and running, Benjamin most enjoys seeing the successful realization of a whole production for Sunday services and events, with everything functioning seamlessly and people able to focus on the worship and messages, appropriately enhanced by the surrounding technology. “When people leave with joy and having had a meaningful experience, that is our goal and it is deeply fulfilling for us as a team,” he concluded.

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