

Robe Illuminating Shawn Mendes



UK based creative design practice Okulus “James Scott and Louis Oliver” was asked to create a production design the first major production world tour for rising Canadian singer / song-writing star Shawn Mendes.

This followed their work for the launch of his second studio album, “Illuminate” at Madison Square Garden in September 2016, and Okulus™ penchant for bringing fresh and interesting visual perspectives to a show.

Thirty-nine Robe Spikies are incorporated into the lighting scheme, crafted with Okulus dexterity and imagination in close collaboration with the show’s creative director, Paul Caslin and 24/7 Productions. The overall stage look is clean and definitive with attention focused on the artist.

The set is built from a multi-layered fixed riser system with curved frontage and a high-gloss black floor, fabricated by TAIT. It keeps the band positions balanced across the upstage area, creating a geometric flow for the performance. Under-lit by strobes, the set also becomes like a lightbox at certain moments.

A 60ft wide LED screen at the back ran stunning content produced by Sam Pattinson from Treatment.



There are 8 overhead trusses including a distinctive 20ft diameter circular truss flown directly above Mendes™ central marks “dubbed the “halo”™ by the creative team. Two of the trusses are upstage of the screen for blow-through lighting effects and another two “wing”™ trusses extend the stage sideways into the arena.

Sixteen Spikies are rigged around the halo truss, with the other 13 in the footlights position around a circular B-stage, positioned just in front of the FOH mixer platforms.

James & Louis first thought of using Spikies after the "Illuminate"™ album launch at MSG, where they used another product to create lots of tight beamed effects. After this, they saw the Spikie in action and decided that the fixture offered a lot more options – so Spikies earned their place on the plot!

“They are seriously small, lightweight and have numerous very useful features,” stated James.

The halo truss Spikies are sometimes used to create a cage around the singer as well as for other architectural looks. For the ones around the B stage, their use is more textural.



Mendes is playing the piano whilst in this position in the middle of the audience – so the punchy Spikie beam is perfect for close cover or special effects which include some eye-catching aerials.

“We love the split and dual color effects and the texturing looks that can be programmed are very cool,” commented Louis – “There’s no other fixture around right now that could do what we needed in these vital positions”.

The show aesthetic is diverse and free-flowing. It moves along quickly, embracing a range of styles and sounds from soft ballads to catchy folk-pop with the odd rock – n’ – roll power moment – it’s all extremely accessible and fast-fueling Mendes’ soaring career trajectory and chart successes.

Ryan Nixon is the Okulus touring lighting director. Starting in Europe, the tour now embarks on the first US leg, and is scheduled to continue until at least spring 2018.

All lighting and video equipment is being supplied worldwide by VER, who have invested heavily in Robe Spikies over the last 12 months. Small is certainly proving beautiful and Spikies are out on other high profile tours including Bruno Mars, The Weeknd and Martin Garrix.

Photos : Kris Goodman, the Flying Lampie