Robe Makes A Trip Thru Time Fantastic with Pretty Lights

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Pretty Lights (Derek Vincent Smith) is a visionary artist who lighting designers aspire to collaborate with – offering a bold, rich experimental canvas, incredible music, and an eagerness to think out-of-the-box. However, this fantastic creative scope also ramps up the pressure to deliver, explained lighting designer Robert Fuller, who is currently engaged in an extended festival run with the performer and music producer.

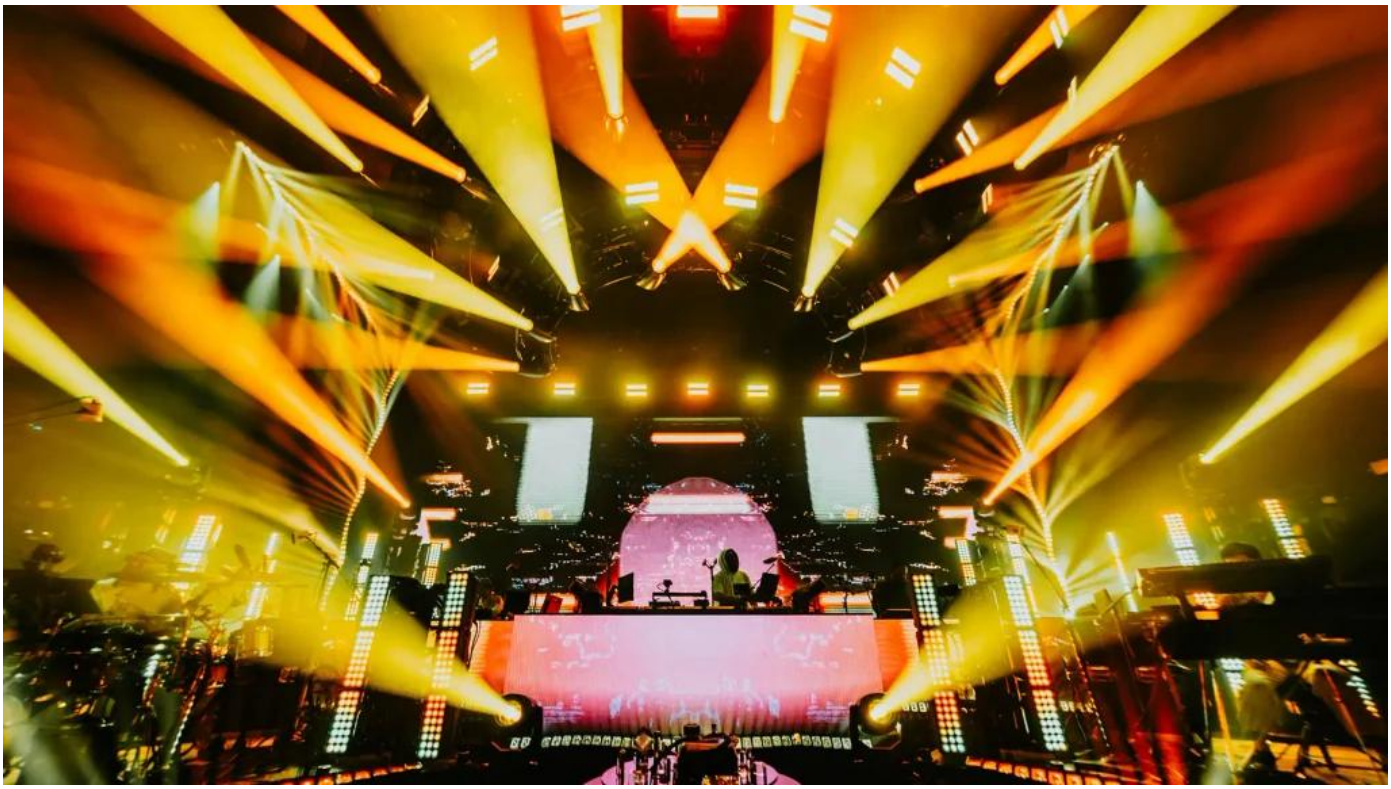


Photo By Brittany Teuber

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Creating a completely new lighting design for this tour, Robert chose to work with Robe moving lights – 34 x iFORTES, 49 x WTF!s and 12 x MegaPointes – which are being supplied by ON Services, among other lights on the rig.

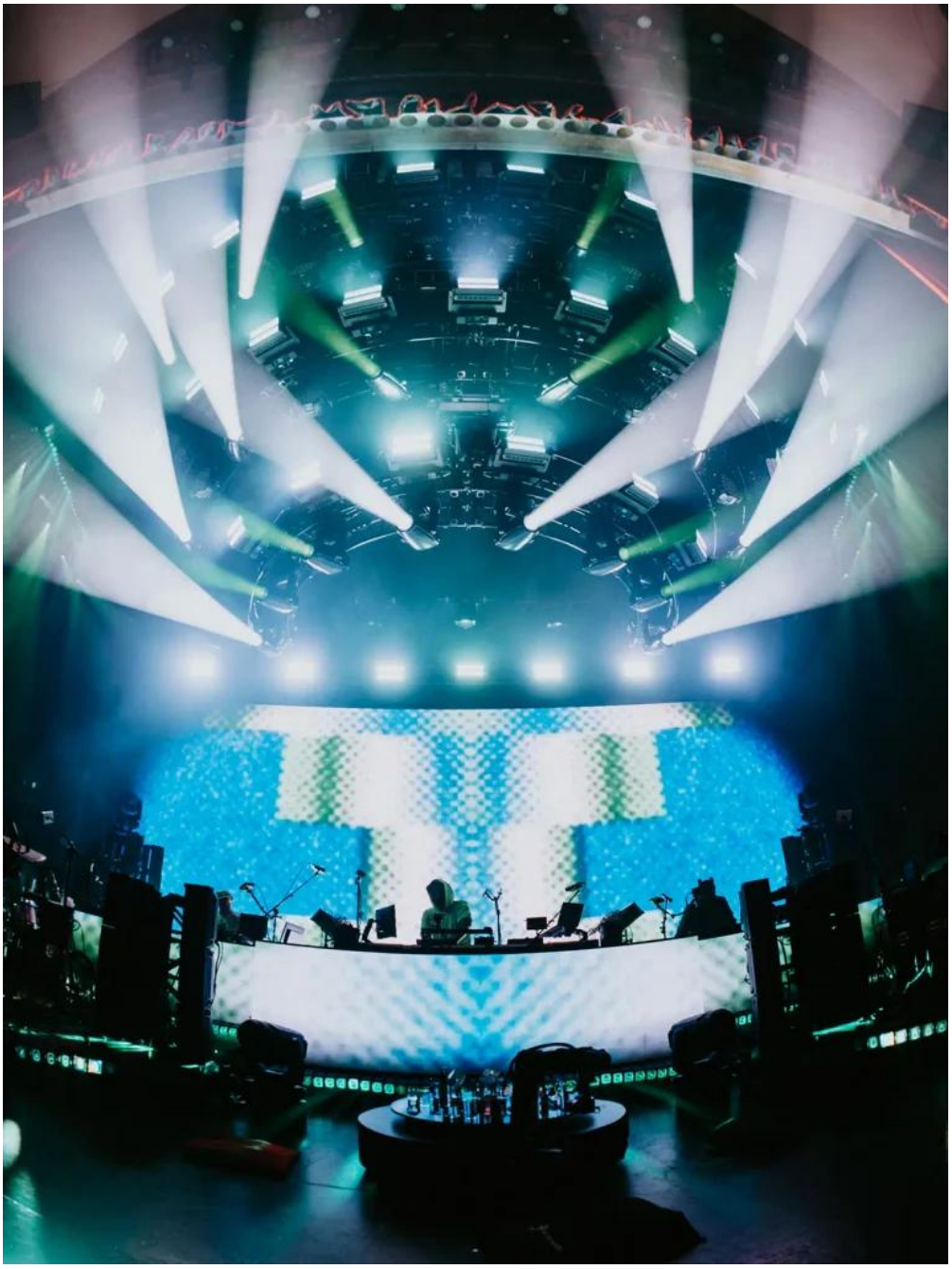
Robert had been wanting to produce an aesthetic based on the flow and energy of spheres for some time, and the perfect opportunity presented itself with this tour.

The overhead lighting rig is based around three striking overhead circles – created by circular trusses of 40, 30 and 20 ft diameters respectively, hung chandelier-style concentrically one beneath another, with the largest at the top.

This extremely busy and imaginatively stimulating environment also has something of a spaceship vibe!

iFORTES were chosen as high-output, fully-featured waterproof moving lights that would have the power and flexibility needed to support Pretty Lights' highly dynamic live performances.

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Robert had used both iFORTES and MegaPointes before and knew they would be excellent fixtures for the task in hand.

WTF!s were new to him, but even before he saw the product for real, watching the product video, Robert immediately saw the potential for Robe's mega-bright, turbocharged moving strobe, wash, and blinder fixture.

He knew that this fixture could produce an "astronomical" range of atmospheric and other effects anywhere onstage or out in the audience.

For him, WTF! was a fixture designed exactly for a Pretty Lights show, which is a constantly evolving piece of visual and kinetic art, pushing into new sounds, rhythms, experiences, and headspaces.

The 49 x WTF!s were rigged around the front of each circular truss in a 12-9-6 formation, with another row of 6 on an upstage straight truss above a 40 x 20ft ROE Vanish V8T screen, and the balance of the WTF!s on the downstage edge of the stage.

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“We are squeezing absolutely as much as possible out of them!” declared Robert, relishing the idea. He has a massive passion for lighting and for being a part of this show, which is delivered 100 percent live, with lighting operated on the road by programmer / operator Jake Roeber.

The iFORTES are also a major part of the show.

They are wrapped around the front edges of each trussing arc, with 10 on the downstage, 6 on the mid-stage and 18 on the upstage circles, where they are used to create high-impact scenes and for spectacular architectural and structural looks highlighting the form of the rig.

MegaPointe is a fixture that Robert has used and loved for years, and it is still among one of his favourites for effects lighting.



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Six MegaPointes were deployed on the downstage edge of the stage, with six sitting on top of six (out of 12) different height ‘pixel towers’ positioned around the stage in a semi-circle. The towers complemented the shape of the rig and evoked a cityscape effect.

With everything surrounded by WTF!s, iFORTES and MegaPointes, creating the overall show visual embraces multiple layers of complexity, including NDI mapping, automation, Notch real-time rendering, TouchDesigner, their custom Crescent Sun video server etc., with the artist also taking control of the fixtures at points via his modular synth.

All of this integration has entailed Robert working closely with his colleagues – Jake Roeber (LD), Pedro Pradenas (crew chief), Chris Sommerville (LX1), Peter Schmidt (LX2), Roy Bowling (LX3), Mark Lockett (engineer) and John Adamo (concepting) – to build a fully immersive environment, with video overlay often running simultaneously through every lighting fixture in the rig, plus 18 or more cameras also involved in the mix together with lasers.

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Everyone seems happy with the design, including artist and management, reports Robert, saying that it is “fantastic” to collaborate with an artist willingly embracing creative freedom across all the disciplines. He describes the team as “next level creative” who take the art of creation into new and stratospheric levels of inspiration for the ultimate show.

“All of us work in our own worlds yet harmoniously together so everything lines up and flows for the show – it’s a truly beautiful thing!” he concludes.

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