

Tim Goodacre Talks Astera

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Photo by Tim Goodacre

Tim Goodacre is a busy and in-demand freelance gaffer and lighting specialist based in Sydney and working all over Australia, primarily on TV dramas.

He has invested steadily in Astera to help drive his business over the last two years, most recently purchasing one of the new LeoFresnel products from Astera's Australian and New Zealand distributor - ULA Group, which is added to his existing stock of AX3 Lightdrop and NYX Bulb kits and workhorse Astera Titan and Helios Tubes.

He immediately utilised the LeoFresnel on season 2 of the award-winning Netflix *Heartbreak High* reboot, specifically for a forest night scene shot on location with the Heartbreak High students camping out under the moonlight.

In a different scenario, a moving light might conventionally be used, however the practicalities of the location essentially demanded a wireless lighting solution! Tim rigged 16 x Titan Tubes on a 'Moon Box' with the LeoFresnel positioned in the centre, which was hoisted above the action pointing right down with the LeoFresnel acting as a spotlight.

Controlled through the Astera app, the need for a board operator or a complicated and cumbersome setup to run the moon-box was averted thanks to Tim's foresight and inventive application of the kit. He created different cues and looks which provided excellent moonlight and a cost-effective way of lighting the scene with a clearly defined central lightsource surrounded by shimmering light from the softened tubes which combined brilliantly to produce the effect wanted by director Neil Sharma and DoP Campbell Brown.



Photo by Josh McDowell

For Tim, the biggest benefit of having all this Astera kit to hand is the speed and flexibility with which he can create a solution on set, on location, in the studio or anywhere.

“There is always a need for last minute lighting adjustments as a scene develops or to get light into quirky and challenging positions, and where running powered lights would be lengthy and difficult, so the Astera fixtures emit a great quality of light and are ultimately handy for exterior work!” he stated.

He has also used them for night scenes along roads, in the bush and other ‘run-and-gun’ situations without needing a generator, PD, cables and extensive prep time.

He recalls a night beach scene on another project, always a galvanising place in to find lighting positions for soft sources, which in this case were needed to back-light three people. Here his water resistant LeoFresnel was rigged on a stand with an 8x4 bounce reflector attached that facilitated the creation of a beautiful and ideally matched soft source in exactly the right place.



Photo by Tim Goodacre

He’s also used the LeoFresnel on comedy drama *Ladies in Black* shot in Adelaide, so it’s been an extremely good investment so far.

He was itching to get his hands on a LeoFresnel as soon as it was launched last year, and the team at ULA Group then leant him a demo fixture so he could properly evaluate it on set with excellent results, after which he went ahead and made the purchase.

He appreciates features like the long battery run time and the relative light weight of the fixture compared to other battery powered products. He also comments on the good quality of light from Astera products generally as well as the excellent engineering and robust build of the fixtures. “You can see that real-world usage has been thought about in the fixture design,” he confirmed.



Photo by Josh McDowell

Tim will often use his AX3 LightDrops for quick deployment and architectural requirements, together with AX5s and AX9 LED PARs for general purpose lighting of buildings, sets and structures.

The NYX Bulbs are great for a myriad of set practical applications. Also, for cityscape effects like bokeh dots and twinkling lights in the background, run in festoon style in the distance with authentic and random looking 'living, breathing' colours and looks dialled in ... just like a real city!

Tim first encountered Astera around 4 years ago initially via seeing other gaffers and lighting professionals using the lights and hearing them talking up the brand. Through these recommendations he started trying the products and was so impressed that he soon moved to using Astera as his preferred tube LED source.

Photos: By Tim Goodacre & Josh McDowell - please see filenames