

“Unbelievable” Ai V8 Autoblend proves invaluable for Phish and
DMDS7UDIOS

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USA - American rock favourite Phish recently played a string of dates at Miami’s American Airlines Arena to ring in the New Year. The prolific band wanted to really make a statement for the shows that tied in with their iconic imagery.

Enter DMDS7UDIOS, brought in to projection map the building’s huge curved exterior with custom content using Ai and its new headline feature, Autoblend. The feature has been lauded by DMD Principal Scott Chmielewski as “unbelievable” for its speed and accuracy in making a perfect blend on a difficult surface that looked to threaten the success of the project.

DMD are the first company to have been allowed to projection map on the AA Arena, and as Principal Scott Chmielewski explains, “the arena is a complex building with very unusual throw distances and angles.”

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In order to accomplish the task, DMD used eight 40k Barco projectors to create two 4k images on the north and south sides of the building. DMD created all of the content for the project using the band's logo and assets as a basis, with some of the more interesting elements created using Ai's tools and effects on site.

“Despite the complexity of the building we were able to use our normal process with Ai to create an accurate model and UV map, and to work with the proper photometrics for the projectors well enough in advance that there were no technical concerns about accomplishing the goal,” Chmielewski continues.



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On arrival, however, the DMD team found that one of their four projection towers was significantly closer than expected, as well as a much steeper curve to the projection surface.

As Chmielewski recalls, “While we were able to quickly account for the changes in the software, the very unusual angles made the blend very difficult and very visible, even to the naked eye. We exhausted every one of our known tricks and techniques, with very little success. We then remembered that the Ai Version 8 feature ‘Autoblend’ had just been released and fortunately, we had updated all of our servers to the latest version.”



Prior to this project, the DMD team had very little experience with Autoblend, except for a quick demo at LDI, but after a speedy run to a nearby electrical store to purchase a USB webcam for the camera-based software, they were quickly in business!



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“With two quick ‘trial-and-error’ runs of the new feature and a few small adjustments, we were able to run the process successfully in about 20 minutes,” Chmielewski notes. “It was almost unbelievable how quickly and cleanly the software made a perfect blend and accounted for the unusual shape of the building.”

The benefit of the revolutionary feature did not go unnoticed by DMD, with Chmielewski noting that “because of the last minute changes, I don’t think the project would have been a success if we didn’t have access to Autoblend.”



“It was very intuitive, and if you’re familiar with the processes of Ai and the use of its patches, it acts and functions exactly the same. We found it very straightforward, requiring very little time to learn, use and manipulate.”

“This is an invaluable tool and resource to an already powerful software and hardware set.”

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