

AND THE LOVE KICK STARTS AGAIN...

CHART TOPPING RAPPER, EXAMPLE, HAS PROGRESSED FROM CLUB WARMER TO ARENA STAR. HIS LIGHTING DESIGNER, GRUM LEESMITH, HAS BEEN ON TOUR FOR THAT JOURNEY AND RECENTLY SHOWCASED PIXEL RANGE'S SMART TECHNOLOGY LUMINAIRES ON A BESPOKE-COMMISSIONED TRUSS. TPI'S KELLY MURRAY SAW THE REVEAL.

Next up for the live show's of Brit rapper Example is his first ever UK arena tour which commences in April. The hit maker's Lighting Designer and friend, Grum Leesmith, reflected on how the rapper geared up for his arena stint by filling Apollo theatres and large academies in preparation.

"I've known Example since he was touring in an estate car," explained Leesmith. "Now seeing him sell out 5,000 capacity venues, being in the middle of the crowd as they have a great night out and getting to be a part of that is a real privilege, seeing my mate on stage entertain the crowds is really rewarding."

Leesmith has worked for Example since September 2010, and in that time has managed three UK headline tours, one UK arena tour supporting dance legends Faithless, a very busy summer of festivals, a trip to Australia and is now preparing for the BRIT Award nominated artist's first headline UK arena tour.

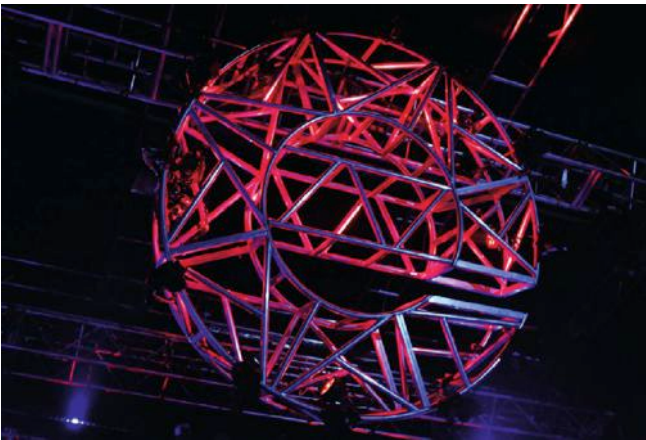
Leesmith is part of an innovative pro lighting collective called Next Level Lights, founded and owned by Lighting Designer, Ed Warren, in 2006. Leesmith elaborated: "It is a team of like-minded friends who love to put colour to music. Ed personally picks every designer and invites them to become part of the Next Level team. The company now represents artists such as Example, The Strokes, Mumford and Sons, Mogwai and many others.

"Ed Warren had seen my work at Spanish festival Benicassim and made a note that he wanted to use me when something suitable came up. Ed's company, Next Level Lights, had been approached by Example to supply the lighting for his forthcoming tour. The Example job came up at exactly the same time the artist I was working for announced an end to their live show, so Ed invited me to become part of the Next Level Team. I guess it was meant to be," he smiled.

The Lighting Designer was recently able to



Opposite: Example took to the stage and met another sold out crowd. Below: Lighting Designer, Grum Leesmith, lit the tour; the new range of luminaires worked perfectly for the desired bold colours; the bespoke truss “glowed” thanks to Pixel Range; the lighting rig in all its glory.



showcase Pixel Range's new SMART technology luminaires on the *Playing In The Shadows* tour. The rig included six PixelSmarts and six SmartLines from the new innovative intelligent range.

Leesmith stated: "I was very lucky to be approached by Pixel Range and given the chance to help prototype some of their new fixtures."

There were actually several suppliers for the *Playing In The Shadows* tour, who helped to make the big and bold look become as accurate as Example's request. From Pixel Range, four SmartLine 4's, two SmartLine 6's, six PixelSmarts, 12 QLites, and six QPars were used, utilised with 14 GLP Impression 90's. Clay Paky supplied 10 Alpha Spot 700 HPes, 10 Sharpys and six Alpha Wash 700's. Martin Professional meanwhile secured some Atomic 3000 Strobes and some MAC 101's for the tour, whilst the kit was further aided by a ShowTec Sunstrip Active DMX.

Leesmith continued: "What Pixel Range supplied was perfect for the show, I was really impressed with everything, the new RGBW LED unit they're using is brilliant, giving me great colours at low intensities and it became a perfect match to my tungsten fixtures when I used them as blinders.

"The PixelSmarts were really impressive, and the individual control of each LED allowed me to

give a bit of animation to what would normally be a static wash while the warm white LEDs gave me a more traditional ACL look from the same fixture. The QLites are great little things too; really punchy for their size and perfect as truss toners, the truss didn't glow, it shined!"

INCREDIBLY IMPRESSED

"The new PixelSmart is unique," he claimed. Being able to take control of every cell on the PixelSmart allowed me to give texture to what would normally be a flat wash. The addition of the narrow beam, warm white LEDs gave me an alternative to a traditional ACL, two lights in one fixture, saving me weight and space both on the truss and the truck.

"I was also incredibly impressed with the SmartLine, having used PixelLine many times I was keen to see how Pixel Range would improve on the design. The RGBW colour mixing blew me away, I was able to get a really nice warm white that worked together with my tungsten lights perfectly. Only at very low outputs were you ever aware that it was an LED."

Leesmith also used Pixel Range's QPars and QLites as truss warmers, which featured on a custom built 'e' in the centre of the truss and on custom built keyboard stands. For such a compact colour wash unit, the effect was punchy and really made an impact. PixelSmart

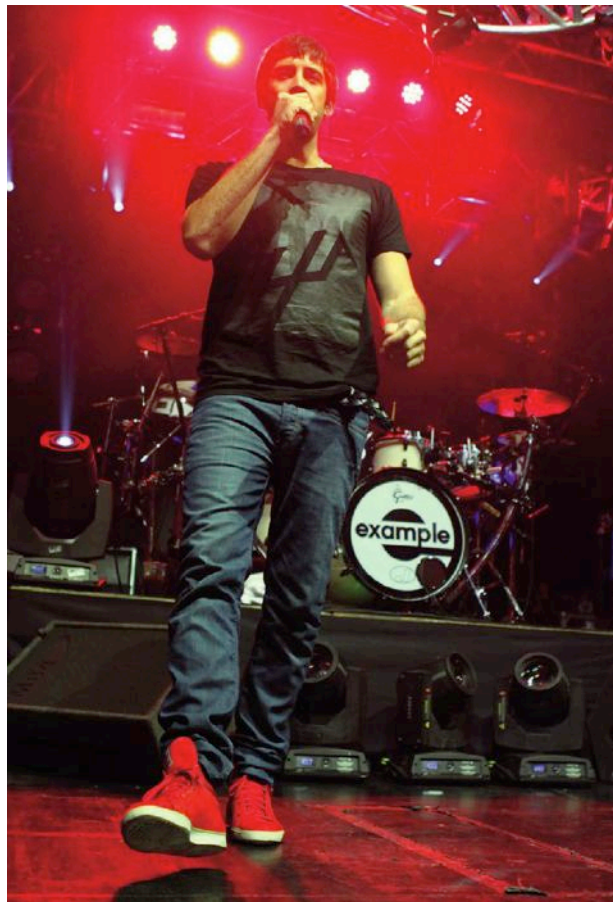
is the first in a range of intelligent luminaires, featuring 12 Cree quad RGBW LEDs and 13 Cree XPG warm white LEDs (or any XPE required). It has 61 individually addressable channels and 40 internal chase effects.

A CONTINUED EVOLUTION

Example's touring rig has been a continued evolution of the design seen on his first tour. Initially a small floor package, the rig has since evolved into three small arches, and then into two larger arches for festivals, and finally one rather large arch. The addition of the custom 'e' truss was a solution to a request from Example's management team to strengthen the Example branding for the live package using something more innovative than a traditional backdrop and without going down the usual video screen route. LEDs, blinders and strobes have featured heavily in the touring design from the start but as the show has grown, the theme has in fact remained the same, allowing for progression and creative tweaking to still enable a trademark look for the London rapper.

Said Leesmith: "The SmartLines were all on the rear arch used both as blinders and the some Pixel mapped effects, The PixelSmarts are great fixtures - two lights in one - a wide angle RGBW wash light and a warm white narrow beam similar to an ACL. I used the QLites as truss warmers on both the 'e' shaped truss and

Below: Leesmith's Chamsys MQ100 Pro2010 desk handled the lighting control; a range of top names helped make the tour possible including Clay Paky, GLP and Martin Professional; Example's logo was turned into a giant truss symbol as well as making an appearance on the drum skin.



the custom keyboard stands. The GLPs have been a part of the show from day one; they're small, lightweight, reliable and responsive perfect for the really fast strobing effects or quick movements. The Alpha Spots and Sharpys supplied the crisp beam effects.

"With all the LED fixtures I had, I needed spots that were bright enough to cut through and these fixtures were perfect." The MAC 101's were all rigged on the e. "I first used these on the *Changed The Way You Kissed Me* video, they're bright and the narrow beams were perfect for the effect I was trying to achieve. Their small lightweight construction meant that they didn't hide the custom truss too.

The 'e' truss was a bespoke commission supplied by Le Smurf Lighting. Leesmith noted: "It had to keep the same ratio as the Example logo but be more impressive than a normal set piece."

THE CONSOLE OF CHOICE

All of the lighting control was handled by a Chamsys MQ100 Pro2010 desk with the help of an extra fader wing and their audio interface. The pixel mapping ability of the MagicQ lends itself perfectly to LED fixtures, the built in media engine allows creative effects in minutes. Said Leesmith: "I own several Chamsys systems. I've been using them for around four years now. I first used their PC wing on a one-off show

I did for a friend, the next day I ordered one for myself and within a couple of months I'd ordered the MQ100. Since then, I've added to the collection with a Maxi Wing as a compact back up or for fly-to gigs and this year I plan to add at least two more consoles to the collection. I just love the software, the features it offers are better than desks that cost twice as much and the support I get from Chamsys is unreal, they couldn't be more helpful."

Leesmith chose not to save much on cues, preferring instead to create in the moment. He elaborated: "I've come from a theatre background and the one thing I hated about theatre was that during a show the operator just sits there pushing the go button. I could have timecoded the show but that wouldn't have given me the flexibility I wanted. I break each look down across several faders giving the ability to maintain a consistent look throughout the show but retain a live feel."

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TOUR

Although Leesmith had a clear understanding of his own role during the tour, he commented that teamwork was the key to handling sold out shows. "There's no point in having an amazing lighting rig if the Monitor Engineer can't see the band or the Guitar Tech can't get to the guitarist quickly. Being flexible enough to adapt the rig to take everybody's jobs into

consideration is the only way to work," he said.

The overall look was a definitive collaboration, "Strong colours, lots of strobe and plenty of beams was what Example asked for. I think I fulfilled that brief." said Leesmith. "LED technology allows for fast colour changes and incredibly fast strobe effects. Fewer moving parts means increased reliability, it also has the added advantage of using less power which frees up more Amps for strobes. Also, the weight and space savings allow you to get more fixtures both on the rig and in the truck."

Going off the atmosphere the Brit rapper is able to generate at his gigs, Leesmith believes that playing arenas is the ideal next step for the young star.

He concluded: "Example doesn't really give the audience much time to slow down and take a breather! There's only two slowish songs in the set, every night I find myself surprised that we've arrived at the final song.

"Judging by the state of the audience at the end of the night, I'd say they enjoyed themselves. It was another successful tour with a great bunch of people and looking at the diary, it looks like there's plenty more good times to come."

TPI

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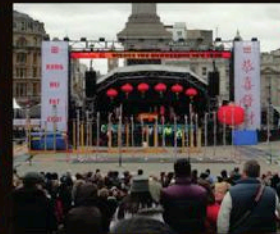
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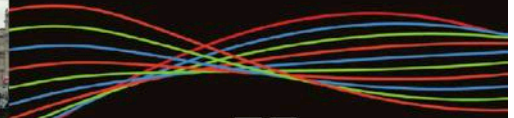
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