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Speeding Bullet to Heaven with Kid Cudi

Products Involved

LEDWash 300™ LEDWash 600™ MMX Spot™

Kid Cudi, known for his distinctive atmospheric and emotionally-gripping live performances has just finished the first leg of a new US tour supporting his "Speeding Bullet to Heaven" tour , complete with a moody and evocative lighting design by Brett Lorins with Robe moving lights right at its heart.

Brett has worked with the artist for five years and coordinates both lighting and video aspects of his live performances. He's been a big advocate of Robe for the past 6 or 7 years and includes Robe products on his riders as often as possible.

For this one, the rig included 10 x MMX Spots, 12 x LEDWash 300s and two LEDWash 600s with the MMX Spots being the main workhorses. This core touring package was complemented by some house lights at each venue.

Six MMX Spots were rigged on 6 x 8 foot upright sections of truss onstage, three positioned stage left and three stage right behind a 26 foot wide brick wall set piece. Four more were mid and downstage, with 10 of the LEDWash 300s primarily placed to illuminate the set and double as aerial washes and effects.

The other two LEDWash 300s were downstage on the deck and used to side light Cudi - who's not a fan of follow spots or front light - and the two LEDWash 600s were also on the floor to cross light him from a low mid-stage position.

Brett has found a few tricks to help light Cudi subtly and tastefully in keeping with the oeuvre of the performance, including carefully selected gobos in well-positioned profiles, however the best way he's found to light and color him - and for him still to feel comfortable ... is side light.

The MMX Spots were picked for their versatility said Brett. "They do anything I ask - I can open up the iris, throw in a gobo and envelope the whole audience in a big sweep, or zoom down, remove the color and have a razor-sharp ACL style beam" ... all with one fixture!

Cudi's music is dynamic and dramatic, it's hugely exciting to light and texture and he likes it edgy, all giving Brett plenty of creative latitude!

He thinks the MMX Spots have great gobos for painting the stage and are excellent for creating the negative spaces that Cudi loves and plays into.

"He's very situationally aware and knows how to 'play the light' exceptionally well."

One of the visual notes from Cudi for this tour was to have a bit of a party atmosphere – he’s been referring to his shows as ‘the clubhouse’ – so the MMX Spots and their prominent placement above the wall has helped create this vibe as well as doing all the effects and punctuation, with the LEDWash 300s mainly used for the set.

Cudi’s request was to use as few lights as possible to light the set and keep them as hidden as possible, which needed some creative thinking and for which the tidy and unobtrusive LEDWash 300s were ideal.

The LEDWash 600s and 300s used for the side washes with their zoom were also able to wash the whole mid-stage area and produce some mid-air color effects in the haze. “The saturated colors of the LEDWash are exceptional, and it’s great that all the fixtures’ color temperatures match, so you can produce a uniform spread of beautiful, even color right across the stage,” explained Brett.

His perception of Robe at the moment is, “right there at the top of the game,” and one of two or three manufacturers who are “giving their clients solid quality products for a fair price and amazing performance.”

The initial set design ideas came from the artist himself together with tour manager Silbert Mani from Dmani Entertainment Group and Matt Robertson from Lakewood Creative. He’s keen on having the additional layer of visuals but also doesn’t want it to be distracting for the audience

Upstage a video wall sitting flush with a 6 foot mirrored tunnel gave an interesting infinity effect, and six scenic ‘televisions’ onstage were fitted with LED video panels.

Brett chose some of the video content. Having worked for Cudi for a while, he knows the style of material he wants for certain songs, while for others, Cudi requested specific footage. Video was stored and played back through a Resolume media server, mapped so different clips could be flipped onto the TV sets to ‘change channels’ during the show!

The lighting package was supplied by TERI Productions, coordinated by Jay Coatney and Jason Murphy.

Brett Lorins is a freelance LD who grew up in New York and was inspired to become a lighting professional initially as a child, by being transported into other worlds by the magic of lighting and visuals on Broadway shows.

Through summer camps and college he actively started taking opportunities to become embroiled in ‘the industry’, and around 1994 landed his first pro lighting jobs in the nightclub sector. He then progressed through a succession of other industry positions including working for rental shops and as house LD for The Ritz Theater in Tampa, Florida, where he met his mentor Alastair Bramall-Watson who introduced him to the rough-and-tumble world of touring in 2009! Other recent and current clients include – Akon, Jason Bonham's Led Zeppelin Experience, Ryan Adams and The Glitch Mob.

Photo Credit: Erika Reinsel



