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# Michael Bublé

Live at Newcastle's Utilita Arena ...



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# - AN EVENING WITH - *Michael Bublé*

With a big band and big visuals, the Canadian showman's new production dazzles the Newcastle Utilita Arena. Steve Moles meets the crew . . .

Now this was a class act. Bublé is one of those singers I'd always liked but never seen. I was expecting good, I just wasn't expecting *this* good. He had the crowd in the palm of his hand by song two, but it was the eighth number that convinced me I was witnessing something exceptional. "I need someone to sing with me," he said. He spotted an 11 year-old girl down the front and, engaging in a little chat, slowly encouraged her to open up - reassuring and charming - then asked what her favourite song was. It was *Never Be Enough* from *The Greatest Showman*. Here, Bublé showed his class. The spellbound audience watched on the IMAG as he riffed through the song in his head. Then, instead of getting the rhythm section to gently play the song in, he, unaccompanied, went straight for the money shot - the

soaring chorus - and then fed it straight to the girl. She didn't hesitate and never faltered, the fact she could sing was the icing on the cake. So Bublé took a chance and pulled it off. And as the night progressed, this lofty standard was sustained - looks great, sounds great, and the man has a voice like warm honey.

#### LIGHTING

"We started this production back in February 2019," opens Kurt Wagner, lighting designer and show director. "In 2018, we had two important shows - Croke Park in Dublin and Hyde Park in London." That was quite a warm up, with more than 60,000 attending each show, and followed Bublé's career hiatus when his son was seriously ill.





"The UK is one of his bigger markets," continues Wagner. "We've played about 40 concerts here and around Europe. It's a big show: there are 38 people on stage plus him; a brass section stage-left and string section stage-right, with his five-piece rhythm section across the front row with the three backing vocalists."

Does touring so many performers make for an expensive show? "We generally pick up the string players locally in each city," he explains. "That's 16 people right there, though for the UK leg, we tour with the same musicians everywhere, and they each get a single room. So yes, there is a cost. The string parts are easy to rehearse, however; we normally have them on their own for an hour before soundcheck to get them on form. The advantage of touring

the UK string section is that, with our encouragement, they take the visual cues to stand and dance with the horns when the song affords the space. That's nice; they don't have to do that, but they are enjoying themselves and it shows. That's a bonus for the audience. We've been lucky with the strings everywhere we've been."

The musicians are arrayed in a classic stepped band shell that wraps the stage. In line with the big band era, the set design - created by Stufish's Ric Lipson and Rachel Duncan - exaggerates the rise of the steps to make the wrap tall and bring the musicians in the view of the audience. "We started off thinking about simple risers for the strings and horns, but this is much better, more coherent; the audience gets a lot of energy from the band."





Photo: The Fifth Estate



1 From top: The video team - Sebastian Cousineau (servers), Kevin Carswell (video director) and Serge Bergeron (robo cams)

Monitors: Louis-Philippe Maziade (foreground) and Marc Depratto

Left: Kurt Wagner, LD and show director

Right: Craig Doubet, FOH sound

Wagner continues: "Ric and Rachel have created something elegant - there are no gags, no pyro, this show is all about the music. Michael wants his audiences to be visually engaged and the band shell idea really delivers. From concept to production rehearsals, this came together quickly - it was just four months after those two 2018 outdoor shows that we went into production rehearsals. The show is completely live, there is no timecode for us, though I know the strings take a track for obvious reasons."

Beyond the main stage lip, there is a small arc of forestage 5m out, from which a long walkway extends out to the B Stage on the arena floor. "The arc forms a corral for the VIP audience. These people might pay a bit extra, but being that close provides Michael energy to feed off." A feature that worked really well, ensuring there was always a lively audience on view when the IMAG cameras drifted across the front of the stage as they followed the performer.

"The B Stage is for Michael, he wanted to be able to reconnect his audience to his early days when he worked small clubs. It's a simple stage, no lifts or gags here either. Doughnut-shaped, it's divided by the walkway, a segment each side 2ft lower than the main deck is just large enough for his rhythm section, three horns and the BVs. It's the clubs where he learned to be such a great entertainer."

Bubl  is direct and intimate, he breaks the fourth wall and connects with his audience in emphatic fashion; thus the contrivance of 'club' is enhanced and

gains greater plausibility than many a B Stage performance I've witnessed over the years.

"For IMAG, I wanted to avoid the conventional look," says Wagner. "Out on the B Stage, we have two roll drop screens that we can project onto as and when the song demands; this benefits the more distant seats. Equally, the screens are rolled up for when he's out on the B Stage, so that they don't invade the space or spoil the club effect he wants to achieve.

"On stage, we have what we call the Puck, a circular screen of LED that moves from horizontal to vertical, with stations in between. That gives us a variety of surface looks for IMAG and content and avoids the images becoming static and tired. Vertically, it provides a dramatic window to the band on stage. Behind the band shell, we have a more conventional LED backwall made up of light-through panels. This wall and the lights behind it are on the TAIT Navigator motion control system and are raised and lowered to suit the varied stage looks.

"While we are on the subject of LED, we also have what we call the Gems out in the house. Built by TAIT, they are slender crystal-shaped chandeliers sized around 1m each and enclosed in clear plastic, with LED RGB ribbon inside and one more powerful LED fitted at the top aimed downward. The Gems serve as a mood effect that can be dropped in for the B Stage performance, and as part of the houselights when the audience first arrives."





Wagner's lighting design includes two lighting trusses running almost the length of the arena that, as well as the Gems, hold moving lights used primarily to augment the main stage lighting and to light the B Stage. For the audience walk-in, these lights provide an acceptable level of illumination in the house, negating the need for harsh industrial houselighting.

"I've worked for Michael for 15 years now and in that time most of our vendors have stayed with us. Christie Lites provides the lighting rig; Solotech - the PA and video; the stage set and automation comes from TAIT. We stick with the vendors because this is very much a family tour. Michael eats with the rest of us in catering, there is no 'us and them', and that continuity nurtures a good work ethic. We frequently get the same people in our crews and it makes for a very efficient workplace."

I later thought about this. It was certainly the case that the tour was rolling calmly through Newcastle Utilita Arena. There were 21 trucks lined up outside (Trans Am and EST trailers, as well as a fleet of Phoenix busses for all the musicians). By most standards, that's a lot of gear for an arena, and as stage manager Craig Finley explains later, scheduling the use of arena floor space during in and out is very tight. It was thus very noticeable how casual and at ease the crew was; I never once had to wait to interview someone, and all were relaxed, open and expansive. Partly I put that down to the largely Canadian contingent in the crew; a generalisation I know, but they are just calmer than most. Don't get me wrong, I've toured with many US crews and loved every minute of it, but somehow the Canucks seem to have a touch of Zen about them. Wagner's lighting crew chief, Conrad Dew, is a typical example, not just interesting to talk to, he was good company and obviously loved his work.

So, what about the lighting? "Martin Professional Sceptrons are probably my favourite light on the system - you'll find them everywhere. They outline the band shell and are uplights in front of the musicians, hidden behind their leg boards. All built into the set, they travel well and work perfectly to provide a little emphasis when needed. The rest of the rig is mostly Martin because that is the core of Christie's inventory. Besides their great crews, the reason we stick with Christie is much like the reason Neg Earth has such a good name - the gear is really

well-maintained, everything is working as it's supposed to. These days, consistency is everything."

He adds: "One other light that has really pleased me is the [Ayrton] MagicDot. I needed something small for a bit of architectural effect around the band shell and they fit the bill physically. There are 41 of them up there and, for their size, they have really impressed me. I use GLP impression X bars to line the walkway out to the B Stage. The key to those lights and the Sceptrons is the paint treatment on the set. I asked Ric [Lipson] to give me a surface that would take colour easily; not plain white or grey, but textured and soft to the eye so the set doesn't appear as a sharp-edged solid. Other lights include Vipers around most of the rig, and GLP JDC1s, which you'll find almost everywhere."

Looking up over the main stage, the rig can appear sparse at first glance: there are no lights on the structure of the Puck and the circular truss a couple of metres farther out, plus trusses to the rear and sides are indeed thinly populated. So Wagner's description of "everywhere" is accurate in that the gear is spread out. In effect, he works the rig very hard in terms of selecting instruments to light moments, especially for Bubl  as he traverses the stage, plays to the apron arc outside the VIP enclave, and the walkway into the house. Meanwhile, the mix of Sceptrons, Vipers and JDC1s gives him ample horsepower to pull and push the musicians as required. It's Wagner's careful use of the wider rig that keeps Bubl  in the key at all times; it's a bit like the whole rig is on the Robe RoboSpot system, but of course, it's just good programming.

"We were 13 days in pre-production: seven days to build the show, then six days with the band and Michael at Feld Studios in Florida. The rig *just* fit the studio, so it wasn't like rehearsing in a full-size arena. It worked great for programming and gave us a good starting point, but you couldn't get a perspective on the look the audience will see. For that reason, the show grows organically - even now we are making changes as Michael has chosen to add a couple of Christmas songs to the show."

He continues: "For followspots, we use the Robe RoboSpot system with 11 BMFLs in the rig - three upstage, the other eight





↑ From top: Craig Finley (stage manager)

Conrad Dew (lighting crew chief, Christie Lites)

Rick Berger (automation)

on the audience trusses. We have just two operators to do the tracking - Robe really helped us with this by using its calibration mode to trim grouped lights to the room each day. Works really well and you don't need a tennis court backstage to locate 11 remote spot operators. Jamie Davis, my FOH programmer, runs the spots while I trigger the lighting and video cues and cue all the automation." Wagner's rig is controlled from a grandMA2 full-size console.

"As I said earlier, gags are absent. Well, almost. The band shell prohibits walk-on stage entry for all practical purposes, so a slip-stage portal downstage centre allows the musicians to access the shell via a staircase (neatly concealed by the Puck being dropped into vertical position so the band just magically appears). As the Puck rises, Michael enters via a stage lift to the top step of the shell."

As show director, Wagner deserves credit for a beautifully balanced show. Lighting looks fall into two main schools, the big band songs, where the multitude of musicians pop out from the band shell bright and brassy, and a more subdued look where Wagner will blend IMAG from the variety of destinations, with subtle treatments to the shell via gobos or projected content. There are many shades of emotion in between. Take, for example, the fact that the B Stage has no overhead lighting system, sources all reside in the audience trusses to the sides or the floor, a positional choice that does much to enhance the desired club-like atmosphere. And of course, there's the man himself; my favourite song of the evening was *When I Fall In Love*, the old Nat King Cole classic, here rendered with a starfield projected across the band shell and appearing to cascade down from the Puck, while we were treated to a close-up of Bubl  in black and white on the rear screen. As ever, less is more, and Wagner certainly knows how to wield restraint.

## SOUND

The system for Bubl  is entirely founded on elements from the Meyer Sound catalogue. Despite his French-sounding name, Craig Doubet is an American sound engineer; he hasn't made this presentation easy for himself, but never appeared phased by anything.

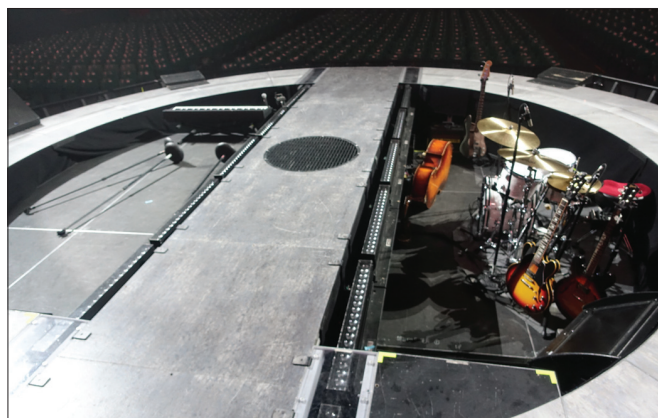
He explains the main rig is out in the house 360  around the B Stage, with L/R mains for the band shell end, and fills everywhere; then there's the barrel-vaulted roof of the Newcastle Arena to contend with. All that said, this was a nice piece of work by Doubet, great to listen to, plenty of detail from the band, and then there's Bubl 's voice to enjoy. It was scary to watch sometimes - there was Bubl  stood in front of a 13-piece horn section and he had his microphone at waist level. He must have the lungs of an elephant seal, yet he can raise a honey tone on the turn of a phrase. Lucky Doubet, I say - I haven't seen a performer work a mic technique like that since the hey-day of John Farnham.

I asked him how he deals with all the musicians on stage. "The horns divide naturally, 4, 4, 5 trumpet, trombone, sax. Same with the strings - first and second violins, violas, and there are three cellists. The core band is a quintet: two keys, drums, guitar and bass. The band shell means all the musicians are widely separated, but there are hard surfaces all around them - to the sides and in front - so a lot of reflections. One big advantage is the height of the shell - the trumpets are way above Michael on the top row. I use DPA 4099s for the brass; there's nothing better. And DPA 4060 on the strings: that's a little omni Lavalier-style mic that tucks in nicely on a rubber mount behind the bridge. That positioning between the strings and the body gives me great pick-up. Overall, the strings are the most sensitive to pick up sound from the room, so as a rule, if the strings are up in the mix I'll reduce his direct reverb."





- ← The Gems are dropped in for B Stage performances
- ↓ The B Stage up close



There's an abundance of Meyer cabinets in the room; what's the division of labour in terms of delivery? "One advantage of the B Stage is that I can use that system as my mains and treat everything else as a fill; that makes moving his vocal out with him along the walkway and onto the B Stage much easier to manage. We've taken that approach because he wanted to sing out there in front of the [stage] system. Despite him being on IEMs, that's about the slap out in the room, and using a PA system centred on the B Stage overcomes that problem. Meyer gave me a beta version of a software they've written for the Galaxy controller that basically allows me to move him back and forth between main and B Stage on a single fader; the beauty in this is that the transition is completely invisible to him.

"The downside of all that is we end up with about 200 Meyer speakers around the room, we are based on Leo with a fair bit of Lyon as well, some Mica, and 1100-LFC and 750-LFC subs. You'll also find some Leopards around the backside of the B Stage pointed toward main stage."

"I've been with Michael for 13 years and we've always used Meyer from Solotech," Doubet continues. "That's worldwide, we take the whole system with us. It's a neat system, for example Solotech have taken dummy sub cabinets that fly at the top of the B Stage sub array and filled them with the power and signal distro. The feeds run along Kurt's audience trusses to the main stage. There's generally 60ms difference between the two stages, depending on the room and the rigging positions that might shift +/-3ms."

As with so much of Bubl e's production, many of the musicians are time-served. "Some of the horn players have been with him since 2003. The core band has three members who've been with him the last seven years. It's a great band to mix, very steady and predictable." What about that very noticeable row of wedges arrayed across the main stage? "He has a big voice, close to baritone, and the wedges are there purely to transmit a touch of flap against his pants. He does also pop an IEM out occasionally, but much less so these days. So, although it's mostly his voice that the guys put in his wedges, there is also a little drum, bass and piano. That's right across the stage, he even has JM-1P side-fills. Nearly everyone is on wireless IEMs; it just makes them easier to manage as wireless groups, and it means they can all do a pre-show check below deck just before they go up on stage to play." A nice touch to calm nerves for shows when it's a visiting string section just for the day.

Going back to the system, does Doubet have any preferences? "I'm very happy with Meyer systems. I made my career on vocals, I believe Meyer to be the best representation for any voice. It's very neutral, what you put in sounds just like their real voice. I've thought that for years. When I first heard Leo, I said to John Meyer that it was the first line array that sounded like his early point source systems. I liken it to a Neumann mic - warm and bright, but not too bright." Readers will not be surprised to learn that Doubet has been using Meyer almost exclusively since 1995.

What about the console? "I'm using an SSL L500+. There's so much to mix and I've been using this board for three years now. When I started out as a recording engineer back in '86, I was working with the old B Series. I've always liked them and they've been good to me. SSL approached me in 2013 to test their live console and in 2016, I used the production model for Selina Gomez. There are only a couple of desks large enough to handle what we are doing here, and I'm using around two thirds of the 230 I/Os. It's the pre-amp that gets me though, it's just superclean. That's my ethos - I'll always try to find the cleanest path. That way I know if it's screwed up it's me, not the desk." Somehow, you knew that was never going to happen . . .

"In the end, the secret to Michael is the vocal: intelligibility is everything. You could say his audience comes here to hear him talk." That's almost plausible, he is a very engaging performer with great wit and timing, so the whole room being able to hear his gags is very important. But of course, it's also the singing. "All the arrangements are done to his vocal - big sound, small sound, he will work his vocal very skilfully to the song. With, say, the horns following him as he ups the power in his voice, I regularly see a dynamic range of 30dB between peak low and high, and that might be in one song."

It's a funny thing, as an audience member you do get a sense of that wide range in delivery: 30dB is a lot, yet the show never



sounded too loud. Those arrangements are good, his MD is to be congratulated, as is Doubet.

**MONITORS**

With such a large number of musicians on stage, a division of labour is clearly called for and it's no surprise to find two monitor engineers stage-left. Marc Depratto looks after Bublé and the core quintet, whilst Louis-Philippe Maziade the strings and horns. Both use a DiGiCo SD7 Quantum. I spoke to Depratto first.

"The SD7 really suits the monitor workflow for both of us," he says. "Everything is readily to hand and the desk also has lots of faders. That's a strong point as it's important to be able to instantly access many things. We are taking 130 inputs from stage. Everyone is on IEMs, the Shure PSM 1000 system with all using Ultimate Ears plugs, just a few are hard-wired. We use the Albatros Audio boxes, a headphone pre-amp out of Montreal, it has the depth and dynamic of a [Midas] XL4 preamp; that has proved important for the drummer and especially the MD, who is taking a very full mix.

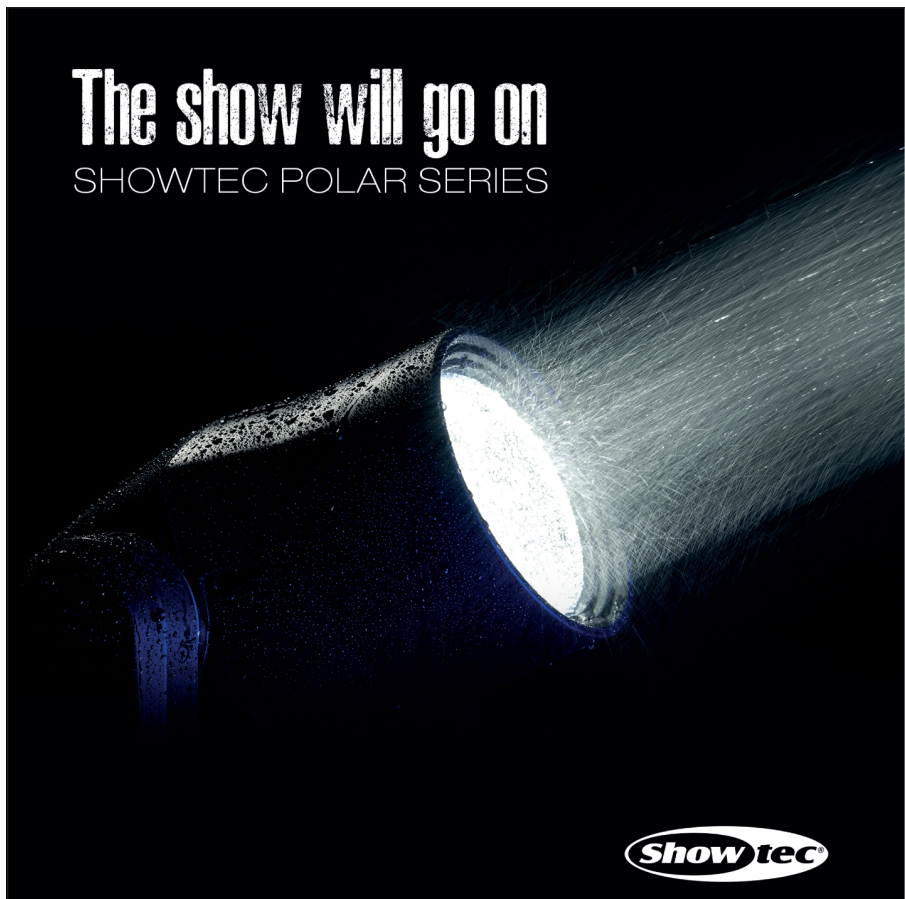
"Musically, we have to deal with a big dynamic range - anything from pop through jazz to big band. This is not the

sort of show where you can just press 'Next' from song to song. Choosing the DiGiCo is also about familiarity; for me, it's something of a reference point. The tone I get from the desk gives me all I need to mould what I want to get for the artist. For Michael, I give him something very similar to a full FOH mix. That's why I want so many faders, it's not just his vocal with a bit of piano. If the song is violin-heavy then he wants to hear that in his mix. He likes it organic and natural; if he pops out an IEM, he wants to hear the same sound from stage. Michael has a Sennheiser microphone with a Neumann KK 204 capsule. He moves around the stage a lot, he will wander in front of the horn section, even right to the top by the trumpets, or just hang by the rhythm section. He has a Sinatra mic technique, keeping it low to the chest or waistline, so despite his vocal power, leakage is an issue. I use a Rupert Neve Portico 5045 on his voice to manage. If you set it correctly, it will bring down the spill. In every room we play and with every song he sings, I have to reset, but the Portico is very good and easy to use. You just have to keep in mind that, basically, it's operating as a gate, so be very careful where you put your threshold. In operation what that means is you get it wrong and what Michael hears in those

opening milliseconds could be dampened by maybe -5 or -6dB. So you must be careful." All that said, Depratto has only been using the Portico recently. "I introduced it maybe 30 shows ago, a process that was carefully managed. I used it with my show recordings to try it for myself, so I was really at ease using it before I used it live. He now gets a much more direct mix and he really likes it. Now that I'm using the Portico, I'm barely having to move his VCA; that gives me much more latitude to work his mic. Thank you, Rupert Neve."

Over on the second SD7, Maziade has more musicians to watch, and it should be noted that neither man can see their charges on stage due to blocked sightlines; they both rely on CCTV.

"There are 32 musicians in total - horns, strings and three backing vocals - and I split the strings into the three groups: violins, violas and cellos," says Maziade. "They all like to hear something different, the cellos tend to like it super loud. The big challenge with the strings is that the instrument body acts much like a microphone, so I'm riding their inputs all the time; it's either that or you'd lose clarity. That can be tricky to manage; if we just have local strings for one show,



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Photo: The Fifth Estate

there's no opportunity to build any rapport, so I start them with my basic mix, with which most are happy; they also tend to like a bit of piano, and the click needs to be loud. Typically, guest musicians in these situations like to play with one bud out, so I mix in mono." What about the conductor? "He takes a full FOH-style mix - another fader I have to watch as I need to ride the strings in the conductor mix."

How about musicians communicating with monitor world? "Every musician has a talkback system to us, then there's all the backline techs, one for the radio guy below stage, one to FOH. Kurt [Wagner], our show director, can also talk to the conductor, some cues come direct from him FOH."

Apart from the amount of traffic management he has to deal with, is there's anything else of note? "The trumpet players need some particular help as the show progresses. They tend to blow so hard that very quickly their ear canals start to close up and they lose HF sensitivity. That's one of the great advantages of the SD7 - I can use the nodal processor to assign another channel strip just to add some HF, so I'm not modifying the bedrock EQ, just something specific that affects just that musician. But it's easy to get lost when you do that, so listen and remember what you added." Lots of concentration then? "Yes, but I find this show very rewarding to work on. In a very lively room like this, it's like a little cat and mouse game with the strings. Keeps me on my toes."

#### VIDEO

In simple terms, Kevin Carswell cuts cameras while Wagner out front triggers all the content. However, but with roller drop screens out just beyond the B Stage that trim to both square and portrait size, a circular LED screen (the Puck) that flies in both horizontal and vertical orientations, plus the ever-popular backwall (which raises and lowers to give its own area of manoeuvre), Carswell has a fair bit of framing to keep in mind. None of which seemed to suppress his innate enthusiasm for his trade.

Dealing with the hardware first, Carswell is nothing if not well-prepared. "We've got two 20K Barcos on each of the roll drop screens, plus four 30K Barcos projecting across the stage

set with largely abstract content from the disguise server [tended by Sebastian Cousineau]. We project for almost the entire show. The Puck is all Saco 6mm, the backwall is 12mm, 96ft by 24ft of it. We are generally feeding IMAG to the backwall throughout, normally a single image, the occasional dual frame, typically one of Michael, one of the strings. We're just telling the story writ large across the back. Cameras are all Grass Valley LDX 86, two down the house with Fujinon XA99 lens, and a UA107 out front centre. Wide angle in the pit, two POVs on the drums and piano, plus three Panasonic AW-HE130K robocams. Serge [Bergeron] runs the robos for me. The content off the server that projects onto stage also runs to the Puck when it's overhead, its function is to alter the texture of the stage."

He adds: "Sam Pattison developed all the content. Kurt leads with the content ideas, Sam produces. He does nice work. Of course, it's more flexible than that, Kurt has always run a loose, open way with the work routine when it comes to show design. It might be textural projection onto the band shell, but the Puck images tend to the more figurative."

How tightly-routined is Bubl e's performance? There's a lot of real estate out there for him to explore. "As a performer, he's really off-the-cuff," says Carswell. "He might suddenly stop and deal with the audience, which keeps me on my toes. Or he'll interact with the band - Serge does a lot of work for me there. Most of the crew on the video side are familiar faces who've toured with Michael before, but the two guys we have in the pit are new to the tour. Even so, they really picked up the role quickly and understand the different framing angles I need. Busy, yes, but it's a great show to work, because Michael freelances so readily - there's plenty to hold my attention and plenty of fresh things for me to use."

#### AUTOMATION

For a show that has almost no gags, the automation control desk of Rick Berger is busy enough. "The lift that takes Michael up onto stage at the top of the show is the first thing. It's a TAIT lift, the whole stage is TAIT and we use Navigator to control everything. The lift is short travel, just 5ft. Michael enters the lift on a mezzanine above the stage deck, so he's just popping up from directly below the top level of the band shell. Over the



stage, I have three lighting trusses on six Nav' hoists; the back screen weighs 16,000lb and is rigged off 16 hoists; it moves up and down. The Puck hangs from 11 hoists, effectively it's off four points: two top, two bottom. Delta plates tie multiple hoists together at the top, so when it's in vertical altitude, it's hanging off two points, six hoists. The 11th hoist is for cable management."

Berger continues: "The Puck is a typical TAIT piece of work. Instead of a circular truss with LED modules attached, TAIT engineered the LED back frame to be the structural element that forms the circle. Fast and easy to rig, it breaks down into 12 pieces. Finally, there are the two roller-drop screens out beyond the B Stage, and the nano winches." Everything else had been self-evident, what were the nano winches for? "There are 16 of them out along the audience trusses, each one supports one of Kurt's gem lanterns. Kurt actually controls when they move via DMX from his grandMA, but they are tied to the Navigator system, which effectively gives them the 'approval' to move. That's quite important; their movements in the show are not necessarily a fixed cue, so Kurt can respond to the audience. Outside of Navigator, he has direct control of their colour. The other important function of the

Navigator system is to give positional data about the Puck to the disguise content server in video world, so the image can modify accordingly." Slick in action but probably unrecognised, the audience would only notice if such an interconnect between motion control, potential keystoneing and video were not there."

**STAGE MANAGER**

Craig Finley last appeared on these pages in our Coldplay tour coverage a while ago (see LSi September 2016). A man in demand, he got to wrestle with the crew-stretching Beyonce/Jay-Z tour since we last saw him, but appeared undiminished.

"The stage is the key to this show in terms of load-in," he says. "Once we sorted out how to get it in position, everything else fell into place." Yet, it's not quite as simple as that: the stage is built out in the house and the lights and video go together in the main stage position. Then, the stage set is wheeled in afterwards. "I have Ryan Kell as my #2, power guy and all around troubleshooter. He takes care of the floor flow while I supervise the load-in and roll the trucks. Sequencing is key, especially when you're in a venue like this with limitations to your unload and storage

options and the trucks onto arena floor 'dance' to be choreographed. We have 21 trucks of gear; there's not a lot of stuff in the air, though there is a lot of truss and about 120 points, many of them out in the hall."

"The stage set build is staggered because of its scale," Finley continues. "It's not huge, but we need to be able to manoeuvre the parts into place, rather than push in the completed whole. It's not as onerous as that might sound - we start at 9am apart from the riggers who come in usually two hours earlier, and we are generally ready to take over houselights and get Kurt into visuals by 2pm, and commence soundchecks and rehearsals by 4pm. No support and no intermission also makes for a reasonable evening. We then comfortably get out in two and a half hours."

Bubl  is ubiquitous on the kind of radio stations I listen to, so much of his show was instantly familiar. But it's the music you don't hear so often and his deep connection with his audience that maketh the man. He does good schmaltz and that's what we hear on the airwaves, but man, does he have some chops hidden in the darkness. Guess what I bought myself for Christmas? ✕

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Black Quartz by ROE Visual sports an integrated wind-bracing system, providing a safe screen solution. With its cutting-edge common cathode technology and black LED for unrivalled visuals, Black Quartz is the perfect all-in-one solution.



**RUBY R2.3**

The Ruby LED panels comprise off the latest technology, equipped with features that are beneficial from build to performance. The exclusive 4in1 LED with optimized black body, provides striking colors, reduced glare and perfect on-camera performance.

Visit ROE stand #12F80 at ISE, 11 - 14 February, and be the first to experience our innovative new products. Voucher code: 246026

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