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OCTOBER 2019  
LIVE #15

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**SHAWN MENDES**  
The Tour

**BOSTON BALLET**  
**EUROVISION 2019**  
**BILLIE ELLISH**



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# GHIBLI SHINES AGAIN

for Las Palmas Carnival spectacular

Text: Julie Harper  
Photos: © Tony Hernández



The Canary Islands boasts one of the most spectacular and outstanding annual carnivals in the world, where the streets explode with colourful parades, outdoor parties and music events on every island. This year was no exception with around 600,000 people coming to enjoy the exuberant display of colour and light.

One major highlight was "Una noche en Río", a show directed by Israel Reyes with set designed by Carlos Santos, and lighting design and technical direction by Jonay Díaz, partner of RGB Canarias S.Coop. Díaz's lighting for this glorious show, which ran for 21 performances, was bolstered by 40 Ayrton Ghibli LED moving heads, supplied by GAM Eventos.

The Carnival has gained a global audience and Díaz is very aware of how the eye-catching event transcends the borders of Spain: "The Drag Queen Gala is seen everywhere in the world with spectacular audience shares," he says. "For this reason, our choice of lighting equipment must be done carefully."





Díaz decided to rely heavily on LED technology for his design, and chose to use the versatile Ghibli as both back and front lighting. "I have deeply researched the products offered by the market in 2019 to light a show like this and it is indisputable that LED currently outperforms conventional equipment," assures the show's lighting designer and technical director.

Ayrton's Ghibli has many advantages in addition to reduced energy consumption and greater creative possibilities. "The projection of gobos is much more homogeneous," he continues, "they offer unprecedented qualities in colour reproduction, and have a better image quality, especially for TV, by almost completely eliminating annoying hotspots!"

Ayrton's quality and reliability were also deciding factors when choosing fixtures for a show of such a magnitude as "Una noche en Río". "As a designer I look for fixtures that are very versatile and as compact as possible since we do not always have a lot of space

in the scenery," says Díaz. "As an operator and programmer, I look for fixtures that are 100% reliable. I want everything to be seen throughout the show as it appeared when I programmed it."

In the midst of the technological revolution that the lighting sector is experiencing, some brands are beginning to make a difference, and Díaz is convinced from his professional experience that Ayrton is going to have a lot to say in this whole process.

"I could count on the 40 Ayrton Ghibli we had in our rig," he says, emphasizing the confidence he feels working with equipment of Ayrton's quality. "They offered the greatest versatility and the best light output. We used 30 from the back of the stage and 10 at the front. They are the best spot lights I've ever used and I think we're going to see them a lot in all the big events."



# LOUIS OLIVER PICKS KHAM SIN, BORA AND MISTRAL FOR

Shawn Mendes: The Tour

Text: Julie Harper  
Photos: © Ralph Larmann













Shawn Mendes: The Tour hit the road at the beginning of March on a 9-month, 105 date world tour under a lighting rig which comprises Ayrton Khamsin-S, Ayrton Bora-S and Ayrton Mistral-S fixtures as the major components.

Lighting designer, Louis Oliver, avoided the use of follow spots or remote tracking as part of his design intent for the show, choosing instead to work with Ayrton fixtures to provide key lights for the young Canadian singer, and carve out dramatic backdrops with creative back, top and side light.

The performing area is a 40ft wide circular stage with steps downstage left and right leading to wide, open 26ft-30ft wings. This gives a 280° line of sight to audiences in most venues, and the front seats curve around the stage to bring them as close as possible to the artist. The set is overhung by a large disc shaped video screen and echoed by five curved sets of trusses hanging in a massive

upstage void, all of which move on Kinesys motors.

"We wanted to keep the performance space organic, allowing the technology to hide in the background," Oliver says. "With the design, we wanted to craft bold environments for Shawn to perform within. We tested the new Ayrton fixtures and found they could compete with anything on the market. Ayrton has created a range of LED fixtures you can use without compromise."

The 78 Khamsin-S profile units are the workhorses of the show, rigged on three motorised trusses upstage of the performance area, and on the curved front- and B-stage trusses, in addition to five units strategically placed around the stage. Each of the upstage trusses and the front truss carry 15 to 21 Khamsin-S units which are used as key light and to create a multitude of atmospheric looks, effects and gobo textures to frame and enhance the performance space.





"Each song has its own colour tone and is very identifiable by this and the looks created by the position of the trusses and lighting / visual arrangement," says Oliver. "The songs are musically and visually complementary with varying pastel colours. It's great that the Khamsin and Bora can produce these subtle colours."

Overhead, a rectangular mothergrid supports a circular framed LED screen and two Khamsin-S fixtures located in the centre - the only lighting directly above the stage - which are used solely for back pick up. Three additional Khamsin-S are located at stage level - one at the bottom of the central staircase to light Mendes' big statement entrance, and one on the far edges either side of the stage to provide harsh cross light on Mendes.

Sixteen Bora-S wash fixtures are treated as floor package but are actually rigged on floor-based pre-rig truss upstage of the main stage, from which position they are used as backlighting and for aerial effects. "The Bora are extremely versatile," says Oliver "They provide a very noticeable source of backlight for Shawn and the band. Where the units are positioned allows them to remain out of sight until outputting. They are a

fantastic complement to the Khamsin, with a larger lens and varying frost filters. Using them both provides a cohesive lighting rig."

Nikita Jakovlev, Oliver's assistant lighting programmer agrees: "To have a fully LED rig from a single manufacturer definitely made things easier. The colours were the same for every type of fixture used and the LED source meant there was no need to compensate for different lamp hours. I was very impressed with how bright the Boras are. They are mostly used as a band backlight/glow, and during pre-programming we had them at around 70%, but settled at 10% on site because they were so bright...which is impressive considering Bora is an LED fixture!

"I thought the shutter system on Khamsin was also very fast and efficient, and was useful for minimizing spill in the big gobo looks. And the Mistral-S proved impressively bright and super wide, managing to go wide enough to engulf the whole of the B-stage, but small enough to operate in the limited space."

Ayrton plays a large part on the circular B-stage in the centre of the arena which is





overhung with a circular truss. From this, four Khamsin-S are individually attached to lightlocks which can then move through vertical space via custom winches to create shapes around Mendes. In addition to this highly original key light on Mendes, these Khamsin also serve as additional audience lighting and add dynamic interest during the VT breaks, helping to create a mysterious vibe and draw the audience attention during transitions. "The winches allow us to quickly change the physical position of the individual lights, giving us a new box of creativity to compliment the simplicity of the B-stage," says Oliver. "It is also exciting for the audience as the Khamsins can float a few meters above head height."

The B-stage set-up is completed by 8 Mistral-S spot fixtures sited on floor shelves to deliver effects and textures on the floor during Mendes' piano break, acting as additional lighting on the audience and during VT moments as a more subtle alternative to audience blinders. "The whole look is more organic to match and complement the spirit of the show, and involves the audience without detracting from the action on onstage," says Oliver.

The B-Stage's spectacular centre-piece is a giant LED rose sculpture which reflects the album cover artwork. "We discovered early on that Khamsin has a rose gobo as standard. This was a welcome surprise as the rose is the icon of tour," says Oliver. "It was the most used gobo in the show and we didn't need to make 80 custom gobos!"

The move to LED lighting, which accounts for approximately 95% of the rig, was a conscious decision by the tour's creative team which was confirmed after a successful shoot out hosted by Ambersphere, Ayrton's exclusive UK distributor. "We all knew we wanted something new and sustainable for this tour and I was keen for us to move to LED," explains Oliver. "We didn't think the technology and output was quite there yet with what was on the market, then Christie Lites (the tour's supplier) introduced us to Ayrton's new wash and spot fixtures and we saw they could stand up against anything. They are great for all purposes and you don't have to compromise on any features.

"From the aesthetic point of view, Ayrton is a joy to have in a rig – they are a plain black fixture with no obvious branding, super clean lines, a nice shape, and uniform in appearance across all versions. When they are not on, they are almost invisible, but if





ambient light hits them (such as the light from 10,000 audience smart phones!) they still look fantastic!"

A major deciding point for Oliver was the ability for Ayrton fixtures to remain true to their original design and programming, in terms of focus, brightness, colour temperature, etc for the whole duration of the tour. "With these fixtures I know when the show will look just the same at the end of the tour as it did at the start," says Oliver.

Glyn O'Donoghue, CEO of Ambersphere, comments: "This is due to Ayrton's superb design concept which keeps the front and back halves of the fixture separate from each other. This means that the circulation of air does not pass over the optics so the lenses remain much cleaner and the appearance of the beam remains the same as the day the tour

started. From a technician's point of view this also means a significant reduction in maintenance and man-hours on the road and in the rental house as the optics need less cleaning and the LED source does not need regular changing. This isolation is a true signature of the new generation of Ayrton fixtures which makes them unique."

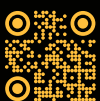
Oliver agrees: "Ayrton has always been at the forefront of LED development with their effects lighting, so they've been continually ahead of the game – setting standards that other manufacturers note and take inspiration from. Now they remain ahead of the game, creating a new range of LED spots, washes and multifunctional lights that truly compliment everything else in the rig. LED has come of age with these fixtures, allowing us designers to design a more sustainable, environmentally conscious show."



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one name  
two characters

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# WILDSUN K25-TC PREMIERES WITH

## Boston Ballet in North America and Paris

Text: Julie Harper  
Photos: © Angela Sterling



Ayrton, and its exclusive US distributor, ACT Lighting Inc, in conjunction with lighting equipment supplier 4wall Entertainment, were delighted to support Boston Ballet's 2018-2019 spring season with the provision of Ayrton WildSun K-25 TC LED fixtures for Full on Forsythe, a trio of works from prestigious choreographer William Forsythe. The programme comprises the World Premiere of Playlist (EP), Forsythe's first world premiere to be created with an American company since 1992, the North American premiere of Blake Works I, and the return of Pas/Parts 2018.

The lighting for each piece was designed by William Forsythe and Tanja Rühl, while the equipment specification was the responsibility of Boston Ballet's lighting director, Brandon Stirling Baker, who explains why he chose Ayrton WildSun K-25 TC: "As the lighting director of Boston Ballet it is my responsibility to maintain the work of over 100 international lighting designers in our repertory. I am always looking for creative tools and lighting equipment that allow the designers to create their vision but, most importantly, find equipment that is efficient and reliable enough to endure a month-long season.

"For over twenty years, Boston Ballet has used HMI 4K Fresnels for the work of William

Forsythe and many other important choreographers in the world of dance. The HMI Source provides a beautiful quality of white light but not without its own unique consequences. Each HMI Fresnel requires a DMX douser or shutter to 'dim' the light during the cues but, more often than not, this outdated technology fails and the fade to black is no longer 'black' and results in an unwanted light leak on the stage instead of a clean blackout. For this reason I have been searching for the perfect HMI replacement. Ayrton is a company that I have greatly admired for many years and when I heard about its WildSun K-25 TC, I immediately knew that this could be a great replacement and solution to the HMI problem."

Ayrton WildSun™K25-TC (True Colour) is an evolution of the WildSun K25, specially geared to shooting and broadcasting in high-definition. It produces an extremely high-quality light of up to 63,000 lumens without flicker, a colour temperature perfectly calibrated at 5700 K, a CRI greater than 92, and a zoom range of 12° to 60°. Its luminous intensity can be fine-tuned using the precision electronic dimmer, and the user can control each concentric circle individually to adjust power or create dynamic effects. WildSun K-25 TC is the only LED luminaire capable of measuring up to the classic Fresnel HMI 4,000W and 6,000W lights in terms of pure output and is particularly suitable for



meeting the stringent lighting demands of sporting events, fashion shows, car shows or any prestigious events requiring high-quality light and perfectly rendered colour.

"The intensity of the Wild Sun is incredible," confirms Baker. "After conducting many side-by-side tests with manufacturers from all over the world, we found the Ayrton WildSun K25 TC was the only fixture that could compete with the HMI 4K, not only in terms of intensity but also clarity."

For the premieres of *Full on Forsythe*, two WildSun K-25 TC fixtures were hung directly over centre stage from where they were used to directly mimic and re-create the clean, cold white light that was created with the classic HMI Fresnel. "We were also able to utilise the WildSun's ability to change focus, zoom and intensity easily," says Baker, "to create dynamic visual looks that are completely unique to each dance, without a delay in the creative process."

"A traditional 4kW HMI Fresnel in a ballet repertory light plot limits us to a single lighting focus for the entire run of the ballet. Any focus changes would involve a genie lift and electricians crew to make adjustments which is an expensive and time-consuming process to change a very small focus detail. Replacing the classic 4kW Fresnel with the

Ayrton WildSun not only eliminates this old-fashioned re-focus process, but also allows the designer to create a custom focus and zoom range specific to the surrounding scenic environment. This ability to change focus remotely was used in many variations during the cueing process." The WildSun K-25 TC fixtures were programmed by Jon Gonda from Boston Ballet using a grandMA2 console.

"Ayrton WildSun has an aesthetically beautiful design," concludes Baker. "It has a clean, elegant look for a theatrical lighting fixture that not only provides a beautiful quality of light but also, visually, can be used as a scenic idea in any live performance."

"Boston Ballet is unique in being the only major ballet company in the United States to have over fifty moving lights in our standard repertory plot. My hope and dream is that the Ayrton WildSun will become a permanent solution to replace the HMI White Light effect that is required, not only on the many ballets that we perform here in Boston, but also on our international tours."

*Full on Forsythe* ran from 7th -17th March at the Boston Opera House with WildSun K25 TC fixtures supplied for the world premiere by 4wall Entertainment, before transferring to the Theatre des Champs Elysees, Paris, France from 9th -11th April where the units were supplied directly by Ayrton.



# AYRTON PLAYS MAJOR ROLE AT

Eurovision Song Contest 2019

Text: Julie Harper  
Photos: © Ralph Larmann







Ola Melzig, Head of Production for the Eurovision Song Contest 2019: "For the second year in a row, we've had a close cooperation with Ayrton (for Eurovision). Their fixtures are extremely reliable and innovative, and add fantastic - and very important - layers to the production."

The Eurovision Song Contest 2019, globally one of the most widely-viewed entertainment extravaganzas, was hosted by Israel at the Expo Tel Aviv and boasted over 700 Ayrton fixtures in its massive lighting rig.

The audience of nearly 8,000 was just a small reflection of the many millions around the world who tuned in, in a spirit of global unity, to watch and listen to 41 countries Dare to Dream they would be the winner.

Each entry had just three minutes to impress the international juries and audience, during which time each of the contestants needed to be presented with a totally different, yet spectacular look, all of which were created by set designer, Florian Wieder, and Tel Aviv-based lighting designers, Ronen Najar and Dakar Azulay.

Wieder, who has designed for Eurovision many times before, devised an iconic stage design based on triangles and the number 12 - important symbols for Israel - and incorporated many LED screens, triangle motifs on the floor and in the ceiling, moving lights, pyrotechnics and automation.

Najar and Azulay matched this with a large number and variety of lighting fixtures which allowed them to create enough





unique looks to handle a show of this size and diversity. Key to their enormous and extremely adaptable design were over 700 fixtures from official Eurovision partner, Ayrton.

"Our main idea was to maintain the special stage design developed by Florian," explains Najar. "We therefore chose to use a significant amount of Ayrton MagicBlades to create new geometric lines as a backdrop that enforced the triangular motif and allowed us to be innovative and create multi-dimensional art."

330 MagicBlade-R and 206 MagicBlade-FX were rigged on ladders at regular intervals across the massive back wall and side walls, and interspersed with 100 Khamsin-TC profile fixtures. These were used to create a multitude of looks from subtle backdrops, to strong colourful visuals, and brilliant aerial effects.

"There were more lights on the back wall than you would have on

your average tour," says Melzig, "and the power of the MagicBlades was truly a sight for sore eyes!"

"The MagicBlades took a major role in our lighting set," continues Najar. "We used them for the dominant moments, as well as a background to support the LED screen. When you have 500 pretty identical fixtures on the back wall, you definitely can create exciting looks and mixtures!"

We had many big moments with the MagicBlades: one of the most significant being the opening number for the very first broadcast - the host nation's song Toy by last year's winner, Netta."

Najar and Azulay also chose 46 Ayrton Ghibli profile fixtures to outline the downstage edges of both the main stage and the catwalk which looped out into the arena, from where they were used to create stunning, striking aerial effects.









44 Ayrton Bora-TC wash fixtures were chosen for the Green Room where they were used as the main key light fixtures for the delegations from each country. "The Bora units definitely met the expectations we had for them, providing us with great colour and brightness for our purposes," says Najar. "All of the Ayrton fixtures provided an impressive range of colours and intensities that were perfect for broadcasting conditions."

48 MagicDot-R units completed the inventory from Ayrton and were used for the Israeli entry, Home by Kobi Marimi, to give it a unique look.

In addition to the performance values of the Ayrton fixtures, the LED aspect also played an important factor in Najar and Azulay's choice, both in terms of size and cost savings. "We took into consideration the venue's weight limits, which were much smaller than that of Eurovision 2018, and preferred to use the smaller LED fixtures," explains Ronen.

"The fact that all the Ayrton fixtures are LED driven generated savings of over 100,000€ in diesel for the generators," adds Melzig.

Ayrton fixtures have become a major part of the Eurovision experience over the last two years and proved themselves the ultimate in versatility, creativity and cost-effectiveness.

"I'm looking forward to the next opportunity to team up with this great company," concludes Melzig, "and yet again pull something amazing out of the hat on the absolute highest level of performance within music entertainment."





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# MAGICDOT-R IS A DREAM FOR

Billie Eilish World Tour

Text: Julie Harper & Jane Cockburn  
Photos: © Jonathan Kingsbury  
and Todd Kaplan



© Jonathan Kingsbury



Dreams and nightmares are the main themes of the Billie Eilish When We Fall Asleep world tour – the first major tour for this young internet sensation whose career is experiencing a meteoric rise. Helping this seventeen-year-old, Indie pop phenomenon to dizzying heights is the tour's wonderfully creative set design, the central motif of which is a flown bed, inlaid with 24 Ayrton MagicDot-R lighting fixtures supplied by PRG.

Erik Anderson of Cour Design is the creative director behind this incredibly dynamic show. Anderson and his partner, Gordon Droitcour, have been working with Eilish since late 2017 and on this occasion, collaborated closely with production and lighting consultant, Nick Whitehouse at Fireplay, alongside lighting director and programmer, Tony Corporale and lead programmer, Dominic Smith.

The stage design is an intricate structure revealing a forced perspective with a diamond-shaped raked video floor and an overhead truss to match. Midstage there

is the main feature of the flown bed which is iconic to much of what the singer has to say, and dramatically brought into focus by the novel lighting beneath. Anderson explains: "The MagicDots are rigged to the underside of the custom scenic bed piece (built by Gallagher Staging Nashville), and are utilized during three specific automation moments during the show.

We needed a compact, fast-moving light that could be rigged in a grid formation, to act as a sort of custom chandelier when the bed underside was raked out toward the audience. At one moment we use this look to silhouette the guitar player for a solo and at another moment we use the MagicDots to represent the 'monster' living under Billie's bed."

Eilish herself is very involved and invested in the design process, in particular with the use of certain colours to denote the mood and texture of a song, and having the lighting and video highlight the musical intricacies, so getting the right lighting

© Todd Kaplan





fixtures was imperative. Anderson is already an advocate of Ayrton. “Ayrton has a reputation for high-quality, innovative lighting fixtures,” he says. “We have used Ayrton products on many of our other tours, typically as the ‘eye candy’ fixtures that we use to create special moments during the show.”

The MagicDot-R proved the ideal fixture for the bed centerpiece and Anderson found them to be extremely versatile: “MagicDots offer unique programming options because of their continuous pan/tilt ability, and this is best shown when you can utilize many of the fixtures in a tight grid formation. Since they are lightweight and very compact, we were able to use 24 of them on the bottom side of what was a relatively small automation piece in a manner that would not be achievable with a larger fixture.

The MagicDot-R aesthetics were also a distinct asset being on full view of the audience. “Ayrton fixtures always have a sleek look to them, as opposed to some other fixtures that might provide good lighting functions but are an on-stage eye sore,” concludes Anderson.

Eilish’s exciting, extensive tour kicked off in May 2019 in San Francisco, for the USA leg, and has encompassed, Australia, New Zealand, mainland Europe, and England, (notably Glastonbury Festival), and is due to finish in Mexico City in November. There’s still time to catch the magic!





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# MISTRAL AND DIABLO-S ENJOY BROADWAY

and Off-Broadway runs with Ken Posner

Text: ACT Lighting Inc  
Photos: © Matthew Murphy



Tony Award-winning lighting designer, Ken Posner, selected Ayrton Mistral and Diablo-S fixtures for the Broadway musical, *Beetlejuice*, and the Off-Broadway one-act play, *Long Lost*. *Beetlejuice* opened in April at the Winter Garden Theatre and has achieved hit status; *Long Lost*, by Pulitzer Prize-winner Donald Margulies, made its New York premiere at The Manhattan Theatre Club's Stage I with a six-week run.

Posner has many notable credits on Broadway, Off-Broadway and in American regional theatre. He was the lighting designer for two of the most highly-regarded musicals of our time, *Wicked* and *Hairspray*.

Posner's use of Ayrton's Mistral on *Beetlejuice* marked his first deployment of Ayrton fixtures. His associate lighting designer, Anthony Pearson, and moving light programmer, David Arch, collaborated in the decision to use the 300W spot luminaires after ACT Lighting, Ayrton's exclusive North American distributor, demo'd the fixtures for them.





"For its compact size Mistral is a very diverse and bright fixture," says Posner. "I was especially enthusiastic about its size since the fixtures are built into the scenery, the interior of the house where the majority of Beetlejuice is performed."

Eight to ten Mistral fixtures light the entire large scenic unit while additional Mistrals fill in FOH in the light plot. "Mistral solved the power limitations we had," Posner notes. "Using an arc source was not an option due to electrical requirements. I also liked Mistral's great colour mixing and customized templates."

Posner reports that Mistral has become 'a reliable fixture' for Beetlejuice where there have been no equipment failures. "The Mistrals have held up really well even though they're subject to some rough treatment: the scenic unit they are in tracks up and down the stage with some speed," he reports. The Mistrals were supplied for the musical by PRG.

For the Manhattan Theatre Club's production of Long Lost, Posner chose a pair of Ayrton Diablo-S 300 W profile luminaires especially designed for stage applications.

The scenic design by John Lee Beatty comprised of three turn tables which transformed the space into five different realistic interiors. Posner found the Diablo-S units to be "the right tool for helping to change the lighting for each location."

"Given its compact size, the variety we could get from the fixture was great," says Posner. "The colour mixing, template indexing and quality of the edge are all very good. The shuttering was accurate and consistent."



# LIGHTING DESIGNER ALEXIS DAVID, 18, ON TOUR

with French balladeer Daniel Guichard

Excerpt from webzine SoundLightUp  
Text & Photos: Monique Cussigh







French singer-songwriter Daniel Guichard recruited an unusually young lighting designer, Alexis David, to handle the stage design and lighting on his latest tour. Going by the rules of the art of stage lighting, Alexis used tried and true fixtures but also the new AYRTON MISTRAL-TC, an ultra-compact LED spot with outstanding performance capability.

We met with him at the Paris Olympia. He is arguably the youngest LD ever to work this concert hall.

**SLU:** Alexis, how did you come up with this stage design?

**Alexis David:** I was looking for an elegant design concept, so I immediately thought of using curtains upstage to create an intimate décor that would be right for Daniel.

He is a charming singer and I envisioned him in a warm atmosphere. I also wanted to add a slightly vintage touch to the stage design by using pantographs.

So I have ten curtains on three rows. On one row I installed six curtains with one side pinched in a landscape orientation and the other side straight, which allows for openings. I have a row for the external parts of each side of the stage and a white curtain for the shadow-play intro that I create using a single Mistrall-TC. I adapt the position of this curtain for each concert hall on the tour. Behind I place small LED wash fixtures to add depth to the stage to create certain effects.

**SLU:** And why the MISTRAL-TC? How do you use it?

**AD:** I started off wanting to install the same lamp spots for the direct backlighting, on the floor and on truss hooks as the ones I used for the front lighting, but I realized, using wysiwyg, they would be far too big on the stage floor in front of the risers. I asked Alive, [the French service company providing the gear], for a more unobtrusive product that was still powerful, fast and nice visually. They suggested MISTRAL-TC, which was just added to their inventory. I was a little worried about balancing it with the multiple-source wash lights I chose because it does generate



## Alexis David

### A promising future

At 18, Alexis represents a new generation of lighting designers who learn the trade in their bedroom with the help of simulation and visualization tools, promoting their virtual shows over the social media. With a geek streak and a passion for software, he has an even greater passion for light, and one essential goal: illuminating the performer and creating a custom universe for them.

Alexis has successfully brought the artist — Daniel Guichard, a popular, charming and virile singer who began his career in the 70s — into the present while keeping landmarks of the past: stage curtains certainly but multiplied and shaped to achieve the elegance, effects and stage depth; highly saturated colour visuals but lightened with a careful dose of background effects. The modern touch of the unique MISTRAL gobos creating volumetric effects and stage projection has enhanced the décor and brought life in his lighting.

With a rare maturity for his age, Alexis resisted the temptation of using too much power and carefully chose his luminaires, like the AYRTON MISTRAL-TC. He adapted them to the tour, the lighting crew, the size of the concert halls and the budget, without compromising on the essentials. He learned what his luminaires were capable of after spending a week testing them and discovering stunning new effects. Powerful arc lamp spotlights offered impeccable front lighting; backlighting installed accordingly.

He brought his paintings to life using slow zoom transitions, pixel mapping, carefully projecting the gobos onto the curtains, adding small warm lights to focus on the musicians and accentuate the relief effect, all so tastefully. The artist sang in a serene, dark and intimate ambiance, occasionally shimmering with colours, and went all out to delight his audience.

This young lighting designer has already a lot of talent, showing an unwavering passion and great respect for the artist. SoundLightUp hopes to see him again soon with a new artist.



a lot of light. I knew that in any case I'd have to go easy on the wash. I had access to the MISTRAL and the wash light for a week, which allowed me to program my colours and effects, and work the balance between the two fixtures. Ultimately, the MISTRAL-TC turned out really well. I'm still using the weaker wash.

Early on, when I started thinking about my gear, I imagined using very simple profile spots with CTO, CTB and CTP gelatine, etc. With the MISTRAL, I do use gobos and mostly in pastel colours that are magnificent and very uniform.

So for backlighting, I only use MISTRAL-TCs and I never had a reliability issue with these machines.

**SLU:** What do you think of the gobos on this little spot luminaire?

**AD:** I use almost all of them. I find them all really excellent. They were designed by well-known designers and they are all really original and different both in terms of volumetrics and graphics. During the four days of my residency in Béziers, I was really amazed by this luminaire — by the power, precision and sharpness of its beam and the quality of its colours. I'm very happy with it.





**SLU:** Do you think it will be powerful enough for bigger size venues like Zeniths?

**AD:** Yes, most likely, because we will use it in the smaller Zeniths configurations with 2000 seats maximum.

**SLU:** Today there is kind of a race for power. So weren't you thinking of your job security by using the most powerful luminaires on the market?

**AD:** I'm not into the battle for maximum illuminance. I favour precision and colour quality, which is remarkable in the MISTRAL-TC. For background spots I wanted small-sized, lightweight units that you can move around without needing two or even three people to turn them upside down. That's one of the advantages of using MISTRAL. One person alone can turn it over, hang it and move it. This saves time because ultimately without a big crew you can spend twice as much time with heavy fixtures. Considering the power of MISTRAL, on this tour it was really not necessary.

## Virtual generation

Alexis David, 18, has an unusual background. Self-taught, with a passion for light, he built his career without going through the rite of passage from being assistant console operator to successful lighting designer.

**SLU:** How did you get into lighting and how were you hired for this tour?

**AD:** I was born into the audiovisual industry because my father is a sound engineer.

At the age of 11 I asked for some LED fixtures for Christmas. I learned to control them with Freestyler software, in my bedroom. It made me want to keep going.

At 13, certain lighting designers advised me to start using grandMA on pc and MA-3D. I finished training myself using tutorials, and especially had a lot of exchange on the social media with groups and lighting designers, in particular, that I am thankful to. I posted simulation videos on YouTube that I created using grandMA 3D.

When I was 15, I had the opportunity to do a weeklong internship (as part of French education system) on the Solidays festival at Concept K.



Plus, I liked watching all kinds of concerts online to see what could be done with lighting. Then I discovered wysiwyg which allowed me to create 3D representations of the ideas I had drawn on paper and see if it was actually possible and visually attractive. I posted a few shows on YouTube.

That was how Daniel Guichard's co-producer Didier Vanhecke of the company Divan Producteur asked me to come up with a design for the tour.

**SLU:** When did you finish school?

**AD:** I quit school at 18 after graduating with a baccalaureate [French high school diploma] majoring in engineering.

**SLU:** You realise you've landed a job coveted by experienced lighting designers?

**AD:** Yes, I realise I'm lucky for an 18-year-old. Still, I don't let it go to my head because nothing should be taken for granted. Plus, I stay in contact with certain people who help me out and give me their advice based on experience in the field.

## Both feet on the ground

**SLU:** How is it working out with this artist? Did you collaborate?

**AD:** Daniel Guichard gave me carte blanche for the design. I worked for about three months on the singer's universe the year I took my baccalaureate exams. When they hired me for this tour, I programmed in my ideas on wysiwyg. In September well before the residency, I saw Guichard. He gave me his set list for the tour. I showed him my design work on wysiwyg: I coded some titles to show him the possible visuals in 3D, like the shadow play for the concert intro. He loved it. Later on, he was even surprised to find there wasn't a big difference between 3D and reality. Like, for example, the curtains I created with SketchUp.

We really worked hard for one or two weeks, listening to all the songs. He explained the atmosphere and colours he wanted for each song. Then we saw what it would be like in 3D.

The rig with the Mistrals was officially validated only two weeks before my residency and that's when I was really able to fine-tune my visuals.

Then, during the four-day residency I put on the finishing touches.





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# GHIBLI ENTERS A STATE OF TRANCE

with The Art of Light for ASOT 900

Text: Julie Harper & Jane Cockburn  
Photos: © Jorrit Lousberg



Andre Beekmans, lighting designer with The Art of Light, used Ayrton's Ghibli LED spot fixtures to create a unique lightscape on and around the main stage at A State of Trance festival in The Netherlands this year in celebration of ASOT 900.

A State of Trance (ASOT) is the weekly radio show of award-winning 'Trance Royalty' Armin van Buuren, the Dutch DJ, record producer and remixer who has been ranked No1 DJ by DJ Mag no less than five times. ASOT is the largest trance network in the world and the show is web-streamed and broadcast on radio stations globally. Every year the 50th episode is celebrated with an enormous live concert in The Netherlands, with smaller satellite events in other countries around the world.

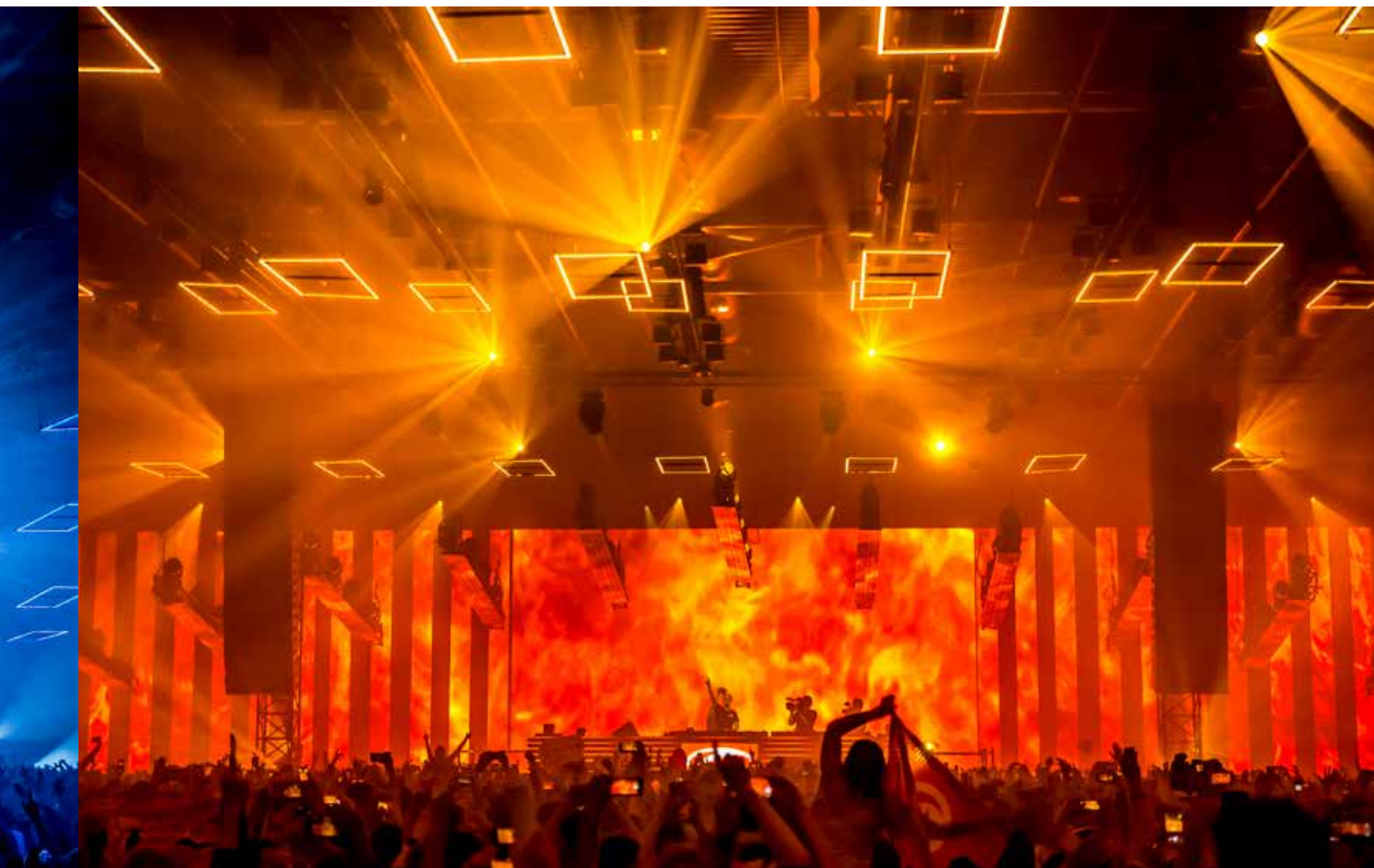
This February marked the 900th show, which was celebrated in front of a 35,000 capacity audience at the Jaarbeurs Centre in van Buuren's hometown of Utrecht. Themed as Lifting You Higher, the ever-popular event sold out in seven weeks. The Utrecht date is the largest of all the shows with five stages, all of which were lit, designed and operated by The Art of Light and promoted by Alda Events. The Art of Light has been working with the ASOT network for the past eight years and handles Armin van Buuren's shows worldwide.

Lighting designer Beekmans chose 65 Ayrton Ghibli, supplied by Ampco Flashlight, as the main spot fixture for the mainstage at this huge celebration. "ASOT has a policy of working with local suppliers wherever the concerts take place," says Beekmans, "and we are extremely lucky to work with Flashlight which, as the exclusive distributor for Ayrton in The Netherlands, has an extensive rental stock of their fixtures."

The team at The Art of Light is very familiar with Ayrton, having used MagicPanel fixtures many times in the past, but this was their first time using Ghibli. "For A State of Trance we were looking for a great effects spot which could give us lots of scope for mid-air effects and big picture stuff, rather than key lights and the like," says Beekmans. "Flashlight presented us with several options and so we had a shoot-out. We found that Ghibli had it all for us! We were really happy with what we found – Ghibli has a great gobo setup, and the light output was also superb and fitted the budget! It was just what we needed as the main spot for the main stage."

The Art of Light team had a grand vision for the visual element of this special occasion: "Multiple beams are popular right now, but to create the right feel for a trance music show, we felt we needed a good strong spot with excellent gobos to create texture,"





says Beekmans, “and, most importantly, a wide zoom, which is really important.

“The output needed to be bright enough to cope with the large expanse of the main stage which measured around 120m deep x 60m wide, but we also wanted to fill, not just the stage, but the whole room with light. We wanted there to be no differentiation between the lighting on stage and off.”

“We rigged the Ghibli units at all levels - on the floor, hanging over the stage area, and also in the hall where they were rigged on trusses leading out over the audience area - and used them to create wide spreads of light and texture from every angle. On stage, steps concealed a number of Ghibli which shot out beams from stage level to give depth to the design, while the Ghibli units in the grid were used for mid-air effects above the heads of the audience so we could involve them in the full experience.

The main space at Jaarbeurs is very challenging being only 10m high so we needed a large number of fixtures because the lack of height makes it more difficult to fill the room with light.”

Expanding on The Art of Light’s ideas, Beekmans explains: “When we design for a show like this, we don’t like to create separate set ups for the stage and venue, but combine the two so the venue and the stage become one. Whatever we do on stage, we like to fill the room with the same look and make a smooth transition from stage to room. It must encompass everybody in the same atmosphere, so that everybody feels like they are on the stage with the artist and very much part of the experience.

“Ghibli was very important in helping us to achieve this, using the gobos for mid-air effects and the zoom for the big looks, with enough power to draw everyone in. Several times during the evening, Armin would shout out ‘Are you in a State of Trance with me?’, and it is our job to create that exact vibe both on stage and in the wider room, so everybody feels like they are ‘on stage’ and part of the performance with him.”

Michael Seeverens, who travels the world with the Armin van Buuren shows, and Koen van Elderen were The Art of Light operators responsible for the light show at the mainstage during the performances. “The design obviously succeeded because we had to restrict access to the show during the main acts which were so popular, we quickly reached capacity!” confirms Beekmans.

# DREAMPANEL TWIN INCREASES VIDEO SURFACE

area at the Amnesia

Excerpt from webzine SoundLightUp  
Text: Monique Cussigh  
Photos: Amnesia & Monique Cussigh



You don't have to go to Ibiza to check out the world's best-known techno DJs. They appear all summer long at the Amnesia, an ephemeral club in Cap d'Agde in the south of France, that attracts some 4,000 clubbers nightly from June to September.

With its footings virtually steeped in the Mediterranean, Amnesia is arguably the most popular electro club in France. It operates in an open-air structure decorated in the style of the thermal baths of ancient Greece. A fountain is replaced by the majestic DJ booth, which makes up the stage area surrounded by tiers of seats and topped by a wall of LED screens. The big screen in the centre bears the futuristic club effigy. It is framed by DreamPanel Twin fixtures arranged in lines and columns like a matrix broken up by totems with screens.

The Amnesia's owner, André Boudou, has satisfied the gods of electro who wanted a giant screen for projecting their media yet complied with the building's weight restrictions that prohibit hanging a continuous screen against the back wall of the club interior. The idea of separating the screens while maintaining continuity of the images was thought up by the technical crew at S Groupe (supplier of sound, light and video equipment) and put to use by console operator Nicolas Galloux, lighting designer for musical events. This was his first design job at the Amnesia. We then met with him.

## A trend in electro

**SLU:** In the electro world, is there a particular design trend?

**Nicolas Galloux:** I think clubs are focused more on design using graphics with video and luminous objects rather than light per se. You see a lot of LED screens and a lot of motion

design being used. DJs want to work in a more graphic atmosphere.

**SLU:** So this is what the Amnesia management wants?

**NG:** Yes, they want a very visual and grandiose design, definitely with light, but more.

**SLU:** What are the restrictions in this venue?

**NG:** It's an open-air space, so the equipment is exposed to the wind and salt of the sea close by. It's subject to extreme temperatures – sometimes as hot as 55° C under the crystal tent. This called for solid fixtures that could withstand three months of outdoor use, from June 1 to September 2.

**SLU:** How did you build the design for the club?

**NG:** First I got the modelling of the room in 3D. There are two parts to it. First you have the DJ's stage, extending to the back with the VIP patio, 13 m below the trusses, and then there's the dance floor only six metres below the grill. This explains the complexity of the project – with these two separate entities that had to come together in the design. I had to use fixtures of different power to achieve almost the same effects. For example, the lamp projector beams we used in the VIP area would have been overkill and even dangerous to use above the dance floor. So I looked for LED equivalents adapted to the low ceiling above the dance floor.

## A video rig with the largest possible surface area

**SLU:** How did you decide on the video rig?

**NG:** There was a weight limit we couldn't exceed and also a requirement to use a screen of the widest possible surface area for the rear of the room. So I extended the centre screen





with 18 Ayrton DreamPanel Twin fixtures that allowed me to increase the video surface with distributed loads. To provide a graphical link between the two spaces I hung 21 DreamPanel Twin luminaires on trusses and used a screen at the stage borders above the dance floor.

**SLU:** Do The DreamPanel Twin fixtures and the video screen have the same pitch?

**NG:** Not exactly. It's 6 mm on the video side of the Twin and 4.8 mm on the screen, but given the viewing distances the difference isn't noticeable. There was a lot of mapping work to synchronize the video screen with the DreamPanel Twin luminaires on the ceiling and around the screens.

**SLU:** Do both types of screens always render the same images?

**NG:** Not necessarily. We have a switching system that can send the video signal to different places.

**SLU:** So you chose the DreamPanel Twin also because it has a beam projector side...

**NG:** Yes, its beam projector side is a real plus and this is the DREAMPANEL model with the most pixels (7 x 7), which works for us considering the smoke. On evenings when the wind is blowing hard, we lose the smoke. The beam projector side projects a tight beam that can bathe the club in colours, like a wash beam. It has the power required for this kind of place.

**SLU:** What gear do you use for the stage space?

**NG:** We use conventional lamps for beams and DreamPanel Twin as wash lights. We have some moving-head spot lights to project gobos with graphics and volumetrics when we manage to keep the smoke in the space, and they are also used to light decorative objects depending on the night.

**SLU:** What about the dance floor?

**NG:** To balance the tight-beam conventional lamps in the stage area, I chose 16 AYRTON MAGICDOT-XT luminaires. It's a powerful enough fixture for that height, especially since we needed a fairly thick beam that was visible at night to compensate for the lack of smoke on windy evenings. It makes for a good compromise. As wash lights we use eight AYRTON NANDOBEAM S6 luminaires, similar to the beam projector side of the DREAMPANEL, for the solid colours on the dancers, and we have four moving-head spot lights to either illuminate the décor or project gobos onto the dance floor.

**SLU:** Do the colours from different brands of fixtures coordinate well?

**NG:** The wash lights are all from the same manufacturer, Ayrton, so they have the same colorimetry.

The whole rig is fairly uniform in terms of power and colour. We've found a good compromise. I didn't have too much calibration to do, since we are less picky in a club than at a concert. We use pretty raw, saturated colours.

**SLU:** What protocols do you use to control DreamPanel Twin?

**NG:** It has two separate inputs: an HDMI to control it in video, and the RJ45 for the beam projector side and the motorised pan and tilt head.

Then we have an Art-Net network with switches positioned in the ceilings for the beam projector side and an HDMI network for the video side. The conventional LED screens use a proprietary protocol through the RJ45 sockets. Everything else in the rig is controlled via DMX. The physical DMX outputs from the console are close to the dance floor and we have an NPU on the VIP side that handles the universes on the grandMA.



© Monique Clouston

An Arkas media server routes the signal into the Twin and/or the screens. It is also used to add effects to the video media, including strobe effects controlled through the GrandMA using Art-Net in the MediaMaster. The club media are handled by Resolume and sent to the Arkas via a capture card. We built this system because the Twin configuration is pretty complicated. We needed a simplified system for the VJs. When they come in, we add two HDMI connectors to connect to the Arkas. If they don't want to use the DreamPanel Twin fixtures, we'll only send their media to the video screens. If they do want to use them, we suggest either sending different media or putting their image inside. For them it's transparent.

## Totally personalised light and video direction

Nicolas used MIDI pads and a pedal to quickly access the various parameters and automate some of them.

**NG:** I have one first MIDI pad to manage the colours – one line for each type of fixture: beam, wash, spot, strobe lights, video, and a column for each colour (white, cyan, blue, UV, magenta). Basically all saturated colours.

My second Midi pad controls position by the same principle.

It's MIDI programming via CopperLan software, which is a MIDI router.

The pad's MIDI signal is input into this software and routed into the grandMA. The Launchpad does not have a MIDI DIN output and the grandMA doesn't accept the MIDI via USB, so I was forced to convert the USB into a DIN connector. It allows interaction with the video. Whether it's the colour pad or the position pad or the video controller, all the MIDI notes enter the grandMA. So I can program any type of interaction, like lowering the GrandMaster when the screens flash, for example. I created this system to deal with specific requests or just to try out ideas during the season without having any technical restrictions – be able to play media with a specific colour in the DreamPanel Twin at any time. Everything is connected, so anything is possible.

I also have a MIDI pedal that frees up my hands and with it I can set off the CO2 jets, smoke jets, cold spark jets... recurring effects that we need to have readily available.


**SLU:** Did any of the fixtures fail?

**NG:** Yes, we had a few malfunctions and it's not surprising, because the specs say the maximum ambient temperature for the machines is 35° C. The thermometer has gotten up to 55° under the ceiling in the crystal tent. In the daytime it can get very hot in the south of France. There are lamps and ballasts that blew, small network problems due to vibration, a short circuit on an RJ45 socket – but not really any serious failures."

It was dark when we returned to the club after dinner. The incredibly long queue outside was waiting for DJ Snake. The bouncer checked each customer carefully. The room filled up slowly. The first clubbers rushed to the seats around the lighting desk to get as close as possible to the DJ. The building that was showing signs of wear and tear in the daylight was now marvellously adorned by night with the images and lights from Nicolas's powerful luminaires. Unfortunately, the night was windy and though the fog in the VIP room accentuated the beams, the smoke on the dance floor had been blown away. The colourful projection from the MAGICDOT luminaires painted the dancers with little strokes of light. The surface area for the screens was used effectively in this wide space.

The tryptique making up the central screen, DreamPanel Twin and truss totems lit up the evening and blew our mind. The DJs could thus transform the club according to their own image. Nicolas used of the double-sided DreamPanel Twin brilliantly, with a wash light on the audience, to backlight the wall behind the stage platform and display graphics on the beam projector side, flashing characters and media on the video side. The ambiance that started off smoothly with one Amnesia DJ playing in the purest electro style, quickly heated up when Dombrosky took over and reached fever pitch with DJ Snake, who tuned CO2 and spark jets and strobes to the rhythmic bursts. Nicolas was in perfect live sync with the artists and the house was fully packed and super reactive.





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