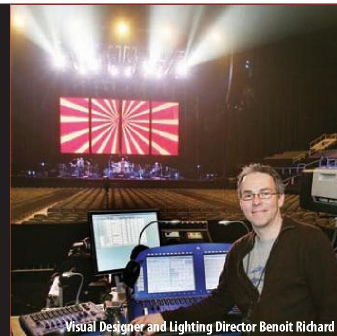


MATCHBOX TWENTY

EXILE IN AMERICA TOUR

Photos & Text by Steve Jennings

In 2000, Benoit Richard was working on the Matchbox Twenty *Mad Season* tour with lighting designer Marc Brickman. When Rob Thomas struck out on his own in 2005, he brought Richard along as the lighting designer. From his experiences with the band and its front man, Richard has compiled quite a knowledgebase about the band's likes and dislikes. "For this tour," he said, "our goal was to top what we had done in the past. When I showed my concept to the band, they were very excited. One band member (Paul Doucette) actually participates in the creation of the show cues with me and we worked well together this time around."



Visual Designer and Lighting Director Benoit Richard

HOW DID THEY DO THAT?

"I was very pleased to put the (High End Systems) Showgun on this tour. The fixture was a perfect fit for the look we were going for. The (Martin) MAC 700 Profile also impressed me a lot. It certainly has a lot of output for such a small fixture. The Martin LC panels are awesome," Richard added. "I figured they would look even more amazing if we were able to move them up, down, sideways and also track them to the front of the stage and all the way to the back. I have to say the whole motion control side of the project was as smooth as we could ever imagine, right from the start. We had to drop the side-to-side motion but we still ended up with a special concept that made the fans wonder, 'How did they do that?'"



A VIRTUAL VIRTUOSO

According to Richard, "I'm a proud user of the (Flying Pig Systems) Wholehog III console. This time I also decided to use the Hippotizer V3 media servers. The key to the whole puzzle was to build the system in virtual reality and pre-program most of the show prior to our rehearsals in Florida. I was able to use my ESP Vision system to pre-visualize the whole show including all the lighting fixtures and the video content as well as the different positions of our Martin LC Panels. I spent about one month in the virtual world and only four nights with the real equipment before the first show!" Dimmer tech Blake Rogers seconded the notion that it pays to be prepared. "As far as the dimmers and the motion control, from the get-go, proper prep was the key to powering this monster moving mother grid. We've had no problems. The Showguns held up well. It's nice to see that High End is back in the game. And the Martin LED panels are awesome. The run was great!"



"AWESOME" VENDOR SUPPORT

"We had a great crew, awesome production and great support from vendors," Blake Rogers said. "Show Distribution was great, and we really have to thank Kevin Forster from Ed & Ted's. We seem to test him a lot. He usually gets the plot and looks at us with a funny look and says, 'You want to do what?' No matter how off-the-scale we go he always gets us what we want." Richard agreed, noting that "Ed & Ted's Excellent Lighting has been the touring vendor for Matchbox Twenty and Rob Thomas since 2003. As a matter of fact, Kevin Forster was involved with the band even before I came on board in 2000. They're a great company with a bunch of wonderful hard working guys!"

"WILD" BUT WORTH IT

"Ben and I go back a few years," said dimmer tech Blake Rogers. "We have done just about every type of gig in all four corners of the earth. It's great working with Ben again. We tolerate each other well. I pretty much know what to expect when he pulls me into a gig — it's going to be something a little wild, but look great. I'm really proud of what we achieved out there. I feel I've witnessed Ben grow from the tiny things we've done to these awesome productions. It's been a fun ride."





GIVING THE CREW THEIR DUE

"I had a great lighting crew on the North American leg of the tour," Benoit Richard said. "Wayne Boehning (crew chief), Blake Rogers (dimmers), Jeremy Knight (moving light tech) and Greg Wood (lighting tech). Blake and I go way back to our High End Systems days in the 1990s and I always try to drag him out on every tour I do. *(They will be on the upcoming George Michael Tour — ed.)* For motion control and rigging, I was very lucky to get Tom Cusimano back. Tom and I worked together on the previous Matchbox Twenty tours and also with Dream Theater. In the video department," Richard added, "I had a chance to have three great crew members; Kevin 'French Fry' Stoeckle, Luis Castillo and Rudy 'Tig' Pena — he deserves a medal for switching from sound to video without missing a beat!"



CREW

(North American Leg)

Lighting Company: Ed & Ted's Excellent Lighting (Kevin Forster, rep)

Visual Designer/Lighting Director: Benoit Richard

Crew Chief: Wayne Boehning

Dimmers: Blake Rogers

Moving Light Tech: Jeremy Knight

Lighting Tech: Greg Wood

Motion Control/Rigging: Tom Cusimano

2nd Rigger/LD for Alanis Morissette: Chris Maeder

Video Company: Creative Technologies North America (Stephen Gray, Eric Wade — reps)

Video Crew: Kevin "French Fry" Stoeckle, Luis Castillo, Rudy "Tig" Pena

Set Company: B&R (Brian Sullivan, rep)

Set Carpenter/Soft Goods: Dave Russ

Soft Goods: Sew What? (Gerilyn Gregory, rep)

Rigging & Motion Control: Show Distribution (Jacques Tanguay, rep)

Production Manager: Mark Hogue

Tour Manager: Dave Licursi

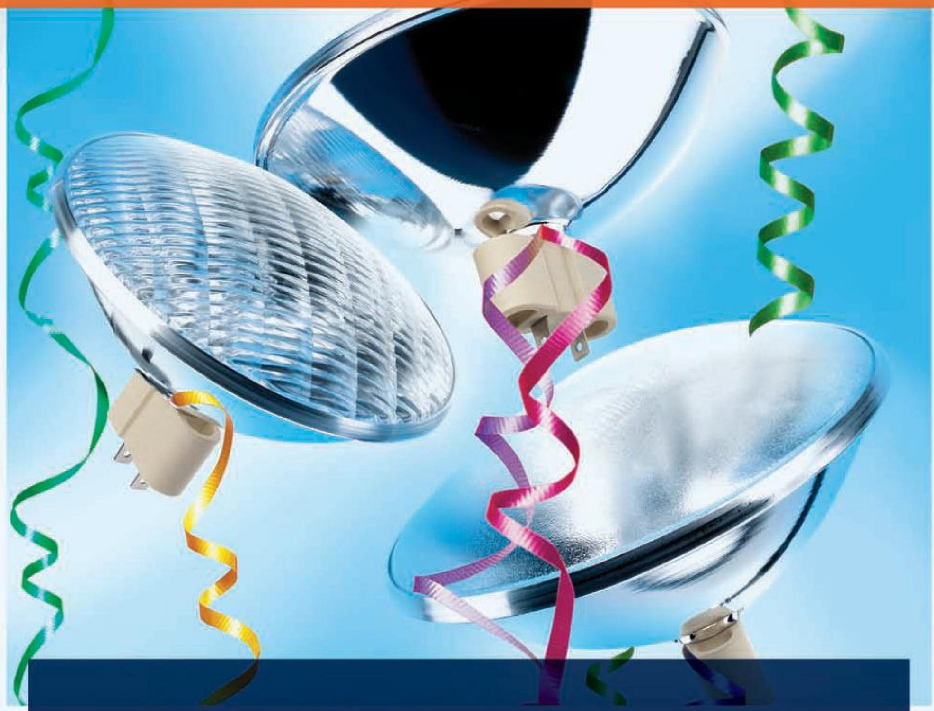
Stage Manager: Donny Floyd

GEAR

Lighting Console: Flying Pig Systems Wholehog III w/ Playback Wing (2)

- 4 ChainMaster Vario Trolleys
- 8 ChainMaster VarioLift Hoists (½-ton)
- 12 High End Systems Showgun
- 2 Hippotizer V3 Stage Media Servers
- 1 Lighthouse 10mm LED wall (18 foot by 36 foot)
- 1 Luminys Softsun 3.5kw PARs
- 5 Lycian 1.2kW Truss Spots
- 4 Martin LC Panels 1140
- 36 Martin LC Panels 2140
- 28 Martin MAC 2000 Wash fixtures
- 12 Martin MAC 3K Atomic Strobes w/ Color Changers
- 22 Martin MAC 700 Profiles
- 34 Martin Stagebar 54 LED fixtures

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