

## Lady Gaga ArtRave: The Artpop Ball Tour

by PLSN Staff • in Designer Insights • Created: September 11, 2014



LeRoy Bennett's resume of clients is any designer's dream. In just the last few years alone, his work as production and lighting designer has included the likes of Beyoncé, Paul McCartney, Bruno Mars, Nine Inch Nails, Katy Perry and Kelly Clarkson, and that's not even the full list. Returning to the stage on her *Artpop Ball Tour* of 2014 is Lady Gaga. Bennett's first venture with

her was back in 2010 on her *Monster Ball Tour* and, since then, handled visuals for her DVD and iTunes Festival shows. Along with a few words with Bennett, *PLSN* touched base with touring lighting director Whitney Hoversten about the latest Gaga extravaganza.



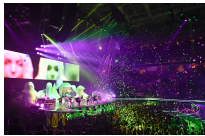
#### LeRoy Bennett, LD/Production Designer:

"Having worked with Lady Gaga in the past, I know how she works. Every artist has their own unique ways of doing things. For the *Artpop Ball Tour*, we started the process back in November and December of 2013, and I gave her my initial concept in February 2014. This was a rave concept as far as she was concerned. I took that and made it into an intimate yet full audience experience. It was a combination of immersive audience interaction — within the budget and, of course, logistics. Art and commerce.



"[It was] a very interesting experience. We made it through in the long run. We had some newer fixtures on this tour — the Clay Paky B-Eyes — which were the main change in the equipment on this tour. A great fixture, very diverse live. As lighting director, having Whitney (Hoversten) has been an immense value, he is rock solid and will do what it takes."

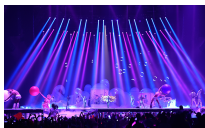
#### Whitney Hoversten, Lighting Director:



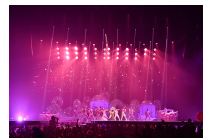
"This show is extremely cue-heavy. I would say about 95 percent of the show is time-coded, and the rest is manual. However, the band is playing live, and they do have a bit of fun with it, so we struggle sometimes with consistency (in a good way!) So some of the accents that I have programmed on the road



I usually like to take on the fly, because it's a bit different every night, and let's just be honest — it's more fun to do it that way! Jason Baeri programmed the lighting and Loren Barton programmed the video. I handle the programming while on the road as the show evolves and changes. We had about three weeks for production rehearsals in Hoffman Estates, IL. Then we moved down to Ft. Lauderdale, FL and loaded in three days before our first show and continued production rehearsals. The set list evolved and changed from the first day of rehearsals right up until doors on the first show day, and still, to this day, it continues to be tweaked and changed almost weekly.



"We're using the new Clay Paky B-Eyes. They have been extremely cool to play with, and they make up a large majority of the look of the show. We are using them in their maximum mode which, at 169 channels apiece, eats up a lot of universes. However,



it is so worth it in this particular application. When trying to come up with new fresh looks and different ways to accent musical nuances, it has been so beneficial to have control of each individual cell, and there are seemingly endless looks and variations that we can come up with.



"There are 72 B-Eyes that form one giant "Mega Pod," as we call it on the tour, which hovers just upstage above our set. We have decided that this "mega pod" is our signature lighting look, and we will bring it everywhere in the world that we are not



bringing full production. It really provides a ton of punch, and I can't imagine the show without it.

"I'm on the grandMA 2 (full size) console. It's an amazing board and an essential tool for lighting a show of this size. I really love the interface and how it is so customizable (which can frustrate a lot of people) but I like it because it allows me (the programmer/operator) the ability to dictate how I see the information that I feel is relevant for the task at hand. Everybody likes to do things differently, and no one way is right or wrong. I think that people need to see information in a different way, and the MA allows every operator or programmer the ability to fully customize to their particular style.



"Working with Lady Gaga has been a very fun and rewarding experience, and she definitely knows how to keep us on our toes. My first opportunity



to work with Roy in this capacity was on Beyoncé's *The Mrs. Carter Show* world tour back in January of 2013. I would say we hit it off immediately, and I think Roy really appreciated my demand for perfection even in the imperfect world of "rock and roll." Working with Roy is an incredible experience, and I am very fortunate to call myself a member of his team. Roy gets me involved in every aspect of the process, from the overall design and look of the show to meeting with the artist. He has been extremely trusting and given me a lot of freedom to dictate how things go once we are out on the road. When we are in production rehearsals, I try to get involved as much as I can, however there are definitely moments when it's just best to sit back and let the magic happen between Roy and the programmers.

"The lighting crew [from PRG] has been fantastic! They have the rig up in a hurry, which is so beneficial when trying to program and take care of show notes in the afternoon and I really need all the time I can get. They've done an amazing job with keeping the rig working and looking great."

### **Lady Gaga *Artpop Ball* World Tour 2014**

#### **PRODUCTION COMPANIES**

- **Lighting:** PRG
- **Video:** Solotech
- **Lasers/Special Effects:** Pyrotek
- **Staging:** Tait
- **Trucking:** Upstaging
- **Rigging:** PRG
- **Sound:** Eighth Day Sound

#### **CREW**

**Production Designer/Lighting Designer:** LeRoy Bennett

**Lighting Director:** Whitney Hoversten

**Lighting Programmer:** Jason Baeri

**Lighting Techs:** Oli James (crew chief), Alex Peters, Mark Pritchard, Mike Rothwell, Leif Le Page, James Jones III, Matt "Skinny" Le Roux, Chris Bartlett

**Production Manager:** Jason Danter

**Tour Manager:** Ky Cabot

**Stage Manager:** Brian Wares

**Stage Manager/Show Caller:** Chris Organ

**Video Director:** Bert Pare

**Video Engineer:** Tim Brennan

**Video Programmer:** Loren Barton

**Video Techs:** Vincent Cadieux (crew chief), Maxime Dube-Morais, Erin Lynch, Patrick Vaillancourt

**Hippo Media Server Tech:** Eric Simard

**Laser Operator/Programmer:** Hayden Hale

**Special FX Techs:** Reid Schulte-Deme (crew chief), David Harkness

**Automation Operator/Programmer:** Robin Henry

**Carpenters:** Todd Green (head carpenter), Lonnie Adams, Kirk "Rockit" La Rocco, Erin O'Brian, Corey Proulx, Ernie Wagner, Scotty Waller, Carl Young, Ryan Snyder

**Riggers:** Mike Farese (head rigger), Danny Machado, Kenny "Skippy" Ruhman, Rick Wilmot

#### GEAR

2 grandMA 2 full size lighting consoles

108 Clay Paky B-Eyes

83 Clay Paky Sharpys

66 Vari\*Lite VL3500 Wash FX fixtures

37 PRG Best Boys

104 Martin Stagebar 54s

3 Lycian M2 short throw followspots

4 DF-50 Hazers

For more Lady Gaga Artpop Ball tour photos from Steve Jennings, go to [www.plsn.me/Gaga2014Extras](http://www.plsn.me/Gaga2014Extras).

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