



HOMENEWSROOMCURRENT ISSUEGEARPLSN TVRESOURCESSUBSCRIBEJOB BOARD

3F ENTERTAINMENT  
FABRICATION

New leg inserts and  
accessories for  
theater decking



HireTrackNX Rental and Staging Management

21 years of experience means we know the crap you put up with

NOVA STAR

infocomm

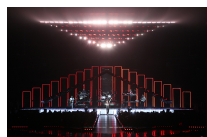


## Maroon 5 "V" Tour

by PLSN Staff • in Production Profile • Created: May 12, 2015



"The whole idea of the show is essentially building from zero," says lighting programmer Jason Baeri. "It begins without giving anything away — just a simple stage. Then as the show unfolds, there's a little bit of Magic Blades, and then video, and then we lower the 'V' trussing, and then we push out to the B stage. It's a linear progression upwards and forward, expanding in the space as the songs go by."



Maroon 5's 2015 tour has completed its February-through-April North America leg already. This month, the band starts it all over again in Europe for a series of shows running through mid-June. They are supporting their album *V*, a reference to the Roman numeral that's already incorporated into the band's logo. It's also the band's fifth album, and the predominant shape of the show visuals on stage.

unique approach, and concertgoers expecting a conventional arena rock show were no doubt mesmerized at the 17-song show's design, which made use of a deceptively simple set that seemed to be in motion constantly. "Every song is a radio hit that everybody knows, so the pressure is on not to let the energy ever lull," adds Baeri. "We push to make the whole thing grand, as alive and vibrant as possible."



### Saber Rattling

Brian Jenkins is the lighting director out on the tour and programmed the show alongside Jason Baeri. It's his 13th year running consoles on the road, and his third working with Bennett. "Once again, I have nothing to complain about!" he laughs. "I'm blessed to get to work with the best and brightest. We all sit together and hang out in a room where there is no ego. Whether we're discussing ideas and/or programming, everybody has an equal say at the table. I've been in some not-so-welcome environments, where things are restrictive and run amok, but this is a fun and respectful environment. It's a dream!" The console of choice is a grandMA2, and Jenkins says while he's tried out others, for the kind of work a Bennett/Maroon 5 commands, it's the best fit.



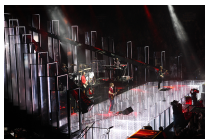
One of the eyebrow-raising aspects of this show is the number of new toys being used. "Every department has something new and cool," Jenkins says. "We have new panels, new proprietary fog systems, new products from Upstaging, Robe, Ayrton and Clay Paky ... even the audio department is working with the new EAW Anya system."

"Roy Bennett is an über creative who takes big risks, and it pays off big in this production," says John Huddleston of Upstaging, who supplied the lighting gear for the show. The challenge to the creative team is that with this band, every song had to be big. Huddleston says they've worked with Bennett on a few tours before, and this one resulted in the new Saber LED strip that's already out on several other tours, including Neil Diamond's just-launched world tour. "This is something that Roy envisioned, and so we took the concept and made it a reality," he says. They worked out the idea and took it to Aboutshow, a China-based manufacturing company with an office in Orlando. Upstaging next brought in U.K.-based Brompton Technology's processor, which he calls "elegant." He adds that "we had six weeks to go from concept to creating 600 sabers for the show. We made some extras, but it turns out we didn't need them, as they came right from China and worked perfectly with very few glitches."



Working in tandem with those to great effect are 216 Ayrton MagicBlade-R RGBW LEDs. Other new equipment includes 10 Robe BMFL Spots used for key lighting and 108 Clay Paky Mythos fixtures. "The Mythos are extremely bright — much brighter than anything else in that range of fixture," says Baeri. "The ability to use it as a beam, spot, or wash fixture makes a valuable, highly functional tool," he adds. "It's extremely quick for a fixture that size too."

Jenkins credits A.C.T Lighting's support for all the new Clay Paky gear they have out with them. "It can be a little edgy using fresh and new gear, but with great products from solid, reputable companies, it's not a problem," Jenkins says. "And everybody wants to support Roy and make sure things are perfect for him and the client."



### "See-Through" Staging

Baeri, an independent lighting programmer, has been working with Bennett for the past four years. This is his first tour with Maroon 5. "Adam [Levine] and the guys wanted to get closer to the audience with this show, and the stage reflects that," says Baeri. The stage features a 120-foot thrust ending on a B stage shaped like a triangle, making the walkway resemble a giant arrow. "Adam gets right into the audience, just 20 feet away from FOH, and it's part of a whole staging concept Roy put together that really plays with your perception." The designer used more than 100 Robe Robin CycFX fixtures to line the runway.

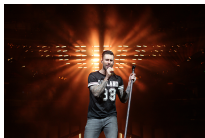
The Tait-built stage does look remarkably clean, even "empty." Downstage, there's bassist Mickey Madden, Levine, and guitarist James Valentine; behind them on clear risers are drummer Matt Flynn flanked by keyboardists P.J. Morton and Jesse Carmichael.



The stage floor is also clear, with Clay Paky Sharpy Wash 330s uplighting the band. (The opening number actually has the band crawling out of a trap door in mist and fog to kick the show off with current hit, "Animals.") Cupping the band are 19 simple Plexiglas pieces, the tallest being 20-feet in the center, and then nine each cascading down to three feet tall at 45° angles. "When you're looking at the band, they look like they are standing on an empty space. Then you shine light through the Plexiglas with Upstaging's Sabers mounted on it, and it becomes a really dynamic space," Baeri says. These hollow columns are filled with different amounts and different densities of fog throughout the show. The show starts with a clear, open frame, and goes through various configurations as it progresses. Combined with the various lights and video element, it becomes a constantly changing set.



To make it work, though, Pyrotek Special Effects had to not only get the fog into the chambers — but out as well. Pyrotek's Bob Ross says the creative team contacted him, and right away the challenge was extracting the fog from the panels and stage. "We had different types of projection and experimented with different smoke and hazes, and we started with a variety of high-powered evacuation fans similar to what would be used to extract smoke from a burning building," he explains. But those were just too slow getting the fog out. The solution ended up going with Venturi valves, something typically used to put fresh air into sewer systems for maintenance workers. "We were looking to suck fog out operating at 1,500 PSI, with 15 Venturi valves placed into the upstage wall of the stage and controlled through Pyrotek's control system. It took less than 30 seconds to clear the stage." Realizing that they also had to inject fresh air into the chambers to balance the negative pressure being created, Pyrotek worked with Tait project managers in creating a unique special effect.



"It's always fun to be part of something new, and we appreciate Roy bringing us in and being able to contribute to something that is visually different," Ross says. The fog is a custom mixture of a new fluid and liquid Co2. They also used

Pyrotek's new proprietary extraction system, eight Le Maitre LSG units for the main stage and more than a dozen additional High End Systems FQ-100 foggers for the main stage and panels.

Hovering above it all, moving in and out with dramatic flair, is a giant "V" made of special truss pods designed in specific widths. Each of the 14 truss pods is affixed with two rows of MagicBlades, and a Navigator System controls the motion on each one, says Baeri. "After the first five or six songs, the roof comes alive and pulls itself into the stage action, and it becomes this visual addition that suddenly makes the stage very full. It's a great look." A little more than halfway through the show, the rig lowers and straightens out, creating the effect of a roof over the band and suddenly making it seem as if the audience members are all in an intimate club. Various V shapes are formed over the course of the show.

## Seamless

"We try to erase the line where lighting ends and video starts," says video programmer Loren Barton, who has been working with Bennett since 2011, handling video programming and assistant design for Seven Design Works. For this tour, he uses both the grandMA2 and Hippotizer v3 units to drive all of the different video elements, including Sabers, projection and the pixel-mapped MagicBlades. PRG Nocturne supplied two Barco 26K and four Barco 40K projectors for the panel projections. Two Barco 20K projectors were used for I-Mag. Working with Bennett and Seven's co-partner Tobias Rylander, Barton says the approach to this Maroon 5 tour was to incorporate aerial effects against the 19 Plexiglas columns.

"We pick out the parts of the song rhythms and specific sounds as motivation for visual elements however it seems it is best to do it, whether with video or lighting," Barton says. "Whatever brings out that part of the song — we tried to match the intensity of the sound with the visual impact of the lighting or video component so everything stays balanced."

Barton also speaks highly of the Sabers, with 92×2 pixels per meter-long Saber and half that for the half-meter-long units. This production uses them end-to-end to "create the LED outlines of the panels. They were easy to work with, very bright, and a key element to the show." He adds that in pre-production, the team developed a kind of library or cookbook of different ideas to

that in pre-production, the team developed a kind of library workbook of different ideas to apply to songs. "We stayed away from anything literal and did a lot of geometric and pattern treatment, and the way the Plexiglas columns were, we were able to create a prism element in light rays. We had a good time with that!"

These Sabers were crucial in creating the "Fishbowl" and thus a 3D LED effect, Barton continues. "The design called for the Sabers standing up vertically, arranged in a grid across the stage and front to back. We programmed some songs to take advantage of this and create different 3D shapes like a plane or a wave."

In explaining the philosophy behind the Seven Design Works approach, Barton says the goal is to create a performance environment that lets the music come alive, "As opposed to lighting music as a separate element and doing video as a separate element ... our whole goal is to make one big picture at all times that visually represents what the audience is hearing. We spend a lot of time looking at the way something feels, and programming accordingly. We work to make every performance as close to the previous one as possible, but still let the band have the freedom it needs to make each show unique. That's a big component to this tour, and something [Seven's third co-founder] Cory FitzGerald makes sure is incorporated in all his shows."

The seemingly bare set is a bit of sleight of hand, because it changes so much without scenic elements being wheeled on and off. From the shape of the Plexiglas to the various V-shapes the flying pods form, the stage continuously morphs into new forms of V. "Everything we do is right there," Barton says. "There's one piano lift, and that's it. Otherwise we're just morphing space and taking advantage of what is already there — and that's all Roy. Roy likes to push boundaries, like the irregular shape of the pods and how they fit into the V. That was fun to do because we had to work with different-sized pods."

Fun with a capital "V."

#### **CREW**

**Lighting/Production Designer:** Roy Bennett

**Lighting Programmer:** Jason Baeri

**Lighting Director:** Brian Jenkins

**Lighting Crew:** Mike Green (*crew chief*), Paul Mundrick, Chris Dries, Thomas Walls, Wade Cotton, Chris Keene

**Lighting Co:** Upstaging

**Upstaging Rep:** John Huddleston

**Video Co:** PRG Nocturne

**Video Programmer:** Loren Barton

#### **GEAR**

**2** MA grandMA2 consoles

**108** Clay Paky Mythos

**24** Clay Paky Sharpy Wash 330s

**10** Robe BMFL Spots

**95** Robe Robin CycFX 8's

**8** Robe Robin CycFX 4's

**53** Vari\*Lite VL3500 Wash FX's



