

LADY GAGA

Jazz & Piano Enigma

STEVE JENNINGS

Lady Gaga's Las Vegas residency at the Park Theater at Park MGM brings together two separate and unique shows. The *Enigma* show is a full throttle pop/future theatrical set, with Gaga starting the show by descending from the rafters in a mirrorball outfit playing a keytar, delighting all her little monster fans, roaming the massive stage set. Then, for the *Jazz & Piano* show, she's leading the big band in a fun diva manner, Gaga style. We talked to LeRoy Bennett (production, lighting and set designer), Harry Forster (lighting programmer and director), Lee Moro (with Solotech's Touring & Special Events division) and the production manager of the shows, Chris Vineyard.



Two Separate Shows in Las Vegas

Photos & Text by Steve Jennings

behind the set. Key light positions on both the balcony rail under the proscenium and way out at FOH."

Forster says it's always fun programming a show of this size. "However, there are many moments when you think that there will be no way we can possibly tackle something of this size in the time given. And although we're never afforded the luxury of show "previews" in pop, we certainly make many adjustments throughout the first two weeks of the residency. Watching the first show come together and the excitement of the house lights going down is a feeling that will never get old. Massive thanks to the Solotech

team who not only were instrumental in building this monster the first time around but change it weekly into a completely different show and back again. Thanks to Dean Roney and Mickey Curbishley for their support and enthusiasm."

LeRoy Bennett

Production, Lighting & Set Designer

LeRoy Bennett had the initial meeting for Lady Gaga's Las Vegas residency last June 2018. It then went through a few iterations before the final design was completed. As Bennett will say, she knows what she likes and doesn't like. "Working with her for all these years I have a very good understanding of the worlds she wants to live in. She was looking to make the *Enigma* show something that combined her history with a new feel for her interpretation of a Vegas show. Every show that we've done has always had a storyline or journey that ran through it. *Enigma* has a very distinct personal message. The overall concept for the set was to create a post-apocalyptic punk environment that had various personalities that morphed into each section of the journey. A lot of this was done through projection, lighting, transparency, and layers.

"For the *Jazz & Piano* show, we wanted to create something that was an elegant big band look with a Gaga twist to it. We used a combination of a Swarovski crystal curtain upstage with a series of concentric metal bead swags downstage, and the band risers are dressed with stylized Deco music stands."

A lot of the design process for the show was based on time and budget, and Tait played a big part in keeping things on budget, notes Bennett. "Solotech manufactured the large oval shape lighting which was a little tricky, based on the way I wanted it to move. It somewhat got to where I needed it to be, based on time elements that I had to compromise, but such is the beast in these large productions. When it came to the giant pod, the overall look of the abstract city needed some sort of ceiling piece, so I came up with the oval pod of [Elation] Dartz fixtures. I wanted it to be its own character in the show. It could be a space ship, or a cloud. At one point it's used as a source of healing light that drops down over Gaga. This has been yet another great collaboration with Lady Gaga."

Harry Forster

Lighting Programmer & Director

Harry Forster notes that they did 10 days of previz in L.A. before programming on the lighting rig in Mandalay Bay for another 10. This time was meant to be full production, but there were various hold-ups, which meant it was just lighting programming. "The set list became pretty solid once Gaga left dance rehearsals; however final looks of each song were changing right up until the first show.

"I'm very lucky to have worked with Roy (Bennett) on many projects, and we have a good understanding of the aesthetic we are looking for in each show. Roy's attention to detail that even the sharpest of minds wouldn't catch, still blows me away. He always has a very clear vision of how he thinks it should look and will always let you know when it's not moving in the right direction. At the same time, there is freedom to explore things as you progress through the show."

About 95 percent of the show is locked to timecode. Loren Barton (video programmer) and Forster also have worked together numerous times, and Forster will add that Barton's precision programming means that when they eventually stitch the show together, the video runs seamlessly. "Now the show is all run from the one console and is very much on autopilot once the show starts. The show would be nothing without the skill of Loren and the absolutely stunning content created by [Michael] Figge [of L.A.-based Possible, Inc.] and his team."

Forster thinks the Dartz pod is one of the best things in the show. "It's a custom structure that was built by Unisson Structures in Montreal. It has 259 fixtures hung in 6x6 sections, with a few custom sections to make it oval. It's hung and automated using Tait nav hoists." The rest of the lighting is done by three main trusses that horseshoe the 'US' of the set. "After that, we had to get creative, because the set was so massive. The Tait built scaff structure that sits around the video has 110 Robe Spikies placed around it. There are toms built way offstage to side light band and dancers. There are lights in and

Lee Moro

Touring & Special Events,
Solotech Nashville

Lee Moro, with Solotech's touring & special events division in Nashville, along with Solotech vice president of touring Dean Roney (in Las Vegas) and Richard Lachance, senior vice president in development, in Montreal, have all played a role in supporting Gaga's shows with lighting, video, rigging and audio. "It was a natural progression to take care of the Vegas residency as well, from the design team to the production team," Moro states. "It's such an amazing show, with an impressive artist and a great team around her.

"The Dartz-filled pod was new to our inventory. A very cool element — it looks alive," Moro continues. "The massive Elation Dartz rig was a fairly quick build with Unisson, which Jack Richards supervised and put together for the first time in our shop in Montreal. It came together well and, after the first couple of shows, Roy [Bennett] requested some more movement to it. Unisson did some engineering evaluation and approved steeper angles and movements for it. Video came together with Adam Dragosin being on the Gaga team and working for us full-time. He really knows how to fulfill any needs they have. Loren Barton designed the system and worked with our in house video expert LP Gaudreau to execute it.

"It's been really great working with Chris Vineyard, Ky Cabot and all the Gaga family. It's a really amazing show done with great people. Without proper planning and teams talented enough to handle it this could not be possible. We have a ton of gear for that room and it goes in and out multiple times, from the gigantic pop *Enigma* show to the classy stylish *Jazz* show. Hats off to the team from the design group to the production team to making this show a reality."



The Pod sweeps into place.

Chris Vineyard Production Manager

Chris Vineyard says they started the first creative discussions for *Enigma* back in 2018. They had just wrapped up the *Joanne* world tour when he was told that Gaga wanted to do a "jazz and piano" night along with two nights of pop each week. "My first thought was how to make the transition between the two different shows as easy as possible given the space and limited time frame. The *Enigma* show had to be an all-out Las Vegas experience, and the jazz show had to be simpler, while keeping that Lady Gaga elegance."

Working with Lady Gaga, the creative development is ongoing, up until opening night. The production team tries to keep up and is the median between fantasy and reality. "No matter how much advance time we have, we are working up until the last minute to make sure the entire creative vision comes to life."

Vineyard says working with Brian Levine and Phil Mitchell and the whole team at Tait is a great experience. "Since they do these massive projects on a daily basis, they make you feel comfortable that they can deliver a great product. The Jet Sets team lead by Matt Pomerantz created the giant robot that rolls on and off stage during the show.

Their innovation allowed the prop to appear massive on stage, yet could also store in a small location on stage left. This is where Matt and the Jet Sets team earned their money! When the decision was made to incorporate a fly gag, the only choice in our minds was Flying by Foy and Joe McGeough, whom we had just worked with on the Super Bowl Halftime show. If they could make Gaga fly from the top of NRG stadium in Houston, we knew they could create an amazing moment for the fans at the Park Theater.

"Solotech has been amazing to work with," Vineyard continues. "They provided the lighting package, the video projection package, rigging and the supplemental PA that we added to the house PA. Working with their team — Dean Roney, Lee Moro, Adam Dragosin and Jack Richards — is a great experience. Adam is actually our stage manager as well, and he has done an amazing job getting both of these shows in and out of the Park Theater."

Vineyard says that what makes this residency experience truly unique is, one night has all these props, automation and effects for an over-the-top pop show, then all those technical elements need to get tucked away, a crystal curtain lowered, and you are transported to a Big Band jazz club overnight. "It has been a lot of fun putting together these two shows with Roy. Building them from the ground up with a great team has been a truly rewarding experience." **PLSN**



Pyrotek looked after all the pyro and lasers.



The massive set was built by Tait.



The swagged curtains make a statement.

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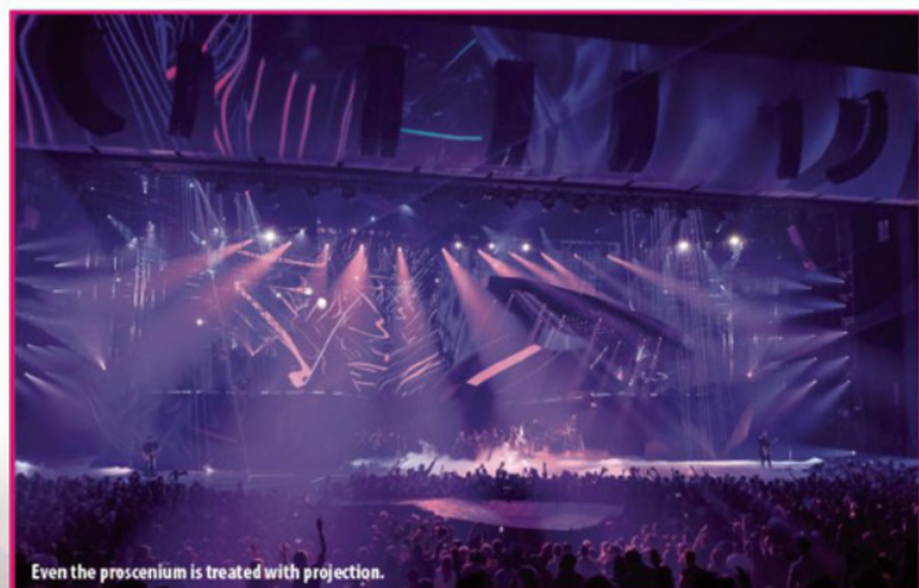
Enigma / Jazz & Piano Residency
Park Theater, Park MGM, Las Vegas



23 projectors were required for the show.



Solaris Flares turn the room red.



Even the proscenium is treated with projection.



The artist works the odd-shaped thrust.

Crew

Production, Lighting & Set Designer: LeRoy Bennett
Creative Direction, Co-Set Design & Visuals: Eli Linnetz
Lighting Programmer & Director: Harry Forster
Video Content / Creator: Possible Inc. / Michael Figge
Technical Advisor: Andy O'Toole
Lighting Co: Solotech
Solotech Reps: Dean Roney, Lee Moro
Lighting Crew Chief: Athan Antoniadis
Lighting Techs: Pete "Lil Pete" Cary, Brad Brown, James Kassabian, Simon Stabenau, Martin Laurendeau,
Tour Manager: Phillip Cabot
Production Manager: Chris Vineyard
Production Coordinator / Road Manager: Alicia Forster
Stage Manager: Adam Dragosin
Video Directors: Steve Fatone, Rob McShane
Video Programmer: Loren Barton
disguise Programmer: Benjamin Keightley
Projectionist: Joachim Martinez
Video Co: Solotech
Solotech Video Reps: Dean Roney, Adam Dragosin
Network Tech: Matheiu Robert
Pyro & Laser Co: Pyrotek/Reid Derne
Pyro Project Manager: Elise Luquette
Pyro Shooter/Crew Chief: Nigel Deslippe
Pyro Techs: Antoine Cholette, Nate King, Gary Bishop (load in)
Laser Project Manager: Victor Tomei
Laser Designer/Programmer: Brian Van Trigt
Laser Operator: Tom Nasarro
Rigging Co: Solotech
Solotech Rigging Reps: Dean Roney, Jack Richards
Rigging / Motor Tech: Yanick Blais
Riggers: Rosco Smith, Johnny Stebbing
Staging/Set Co: Tait/Brian Levine
Props Co: Jet Sets/Matthew Pomerantz
Carpenters: Lonnie Adams, Peter Will, Craig Pica, Erin O'Brien, Jonathan Cordova, John Streeter
Show Caller: John "Badge" Chidley
Flying Co: Flying by Foy/Joe McGeough

Gear

Lighting:
 3 grandMA2 consoles
 259 Elation Dartz 360 fixtures
 18 Elation ZCL's
 122 Robe Spikies
 2 Robe Followspots
 69 Claypaky Scenius Unicos
 10 Claypaky Scenius Profiles
 42 GLP X4 Bar 20's
 34 GLP GT-1's
 39 GLP JDC-1
 18 Vari-Lite VL4000 Spots
 32 Solaris Flares
 36 Solaris Flare LR's
 3 MDG Hazers
Video:
 9 Christie Boxer 30K projectors
 14 Barco UDX 4K Projectors
 6 disguise technologies 4 x 4 servers
 1 Barco screen management system w/ EC-50 controller & 3 E2 frames
 1 5.2mm LED video wall (78' x 34')
Pyro:
 2 5-Master Flame units
 2 5-Master Flame units inverted
 6 Single master Flame units inverted
 10 Salamander Quad pro Flame units
 20 Gerb Waterfall
 16 Multi-shot Red Falling Stars
 75 Assorted comets, Mines and Gerbs
 6 Low Smoke Generators
 1 Galaxis Firing System
 1 MA DOT 2 Control for DMX
Lasers:
 9 Kvant Spectrum 25 lasers
 10 Kvant audience scanning lasers
 24 Lightline Burner lasers (7W & 3.5W)
 1 Pangolin Beyond control software



Scenius fixtures wash the stage.



X Bar 20s stripe the backdrop.



Enough colors to satisfy a Pride parade.