

# PAUL MCCARTNEY

“Freshen Up” Tour Photos & Text by Steve Jennings

What 500 Dartz look like.

The man and his music are ageless.

We caught Paul McCartney's second-to-last date of his recently completed “Freshen Up” tour, with 39 shows performed in North America, Japan, Europe, South America and back in the U.S. and Canada from last fall through mid-July. For this latest trek, LeRoy Bennett once again worked with Sir Paul McCartney as his lighting and set designer. The former Beatle performed an epic three-hour show at each tour stop, with songs including his solo, Wings and Beatles classics. We spoke with longtime lighting director Wally Lees, who has been running McCartney's show for 17 of the 33 years he's been working with Bennett.

## Wally Lees Lighting Director

Lees runs the show on two active grandMA3 full size consoles running in MA2 mode. The setup also includes a grandMA2 full console for his system tech, Yoshi Shinohara, who tests lights during the day and can reset fixtures during the show. “All the programming for the show is done in previz from my studio at home before we go out. We only ever go into production rehearsal, say, for a few days before the first show of a new tour, mainly for production management to feel things out and take a look overall. When we hear that Paul wants to go back out on the road for some dates, the notice can be short, but usually a month or so in advance. Then I go back into previz, add any new songs, check the show file and do any fixture swaps that may be necessary, depending upon where we are touring in the world.”

Bennett has pretty much left this to Lees, as they've done this for so long as a team and are on the same page, so to speak. Bennett will get more involved in the video content side of things that have to be cleared by production management. “This can sometimes be a process of going back and forward a lot. Once that is cleared, I can program the video cues into my console.

“The PRG GroundControl Followspots run through my console as well,” Lees adds. “We also have an MA2 Light at FOH that Allison Sulock uses to monitor the content during the show in case of a system failure

at the disguise media server end of things. The left-and-right I-Mag screens are being directed by Paulie Becher.”

The key players at the nucleus of the production has stayed the same, which Lees says is great, but he notes the vendor crews change like a revolving door, as there is no guarantees when one leg ends and the next will start. “So that can be a challenge at times, but yes, it is nice when we all get back together. Seventeen years is a long time.”

The design will sometimes get a slight revamp between legs. As in previous years, this “Freshen Up” leg has been a new design, and Bennett was looking for a bold, clean look, hence the large pods. “Roy checked out many fixtures for the pod and decided on the Elation Dartz 360's, for many reasons. Size and weight are always a consideration, along with output, as we were trying to get as many as possible into a small space in order to create this big bold look. I think we did that with the pods and the frames of 360's behind the video wall. We are always trying to keep as many fixtures as possible in the trusses in order to speed up production. If we had to hang this many single fixtures, it would take all day, and the accuracy of the hang would get compromised daily.”

Although previz has been an invaluable tool for Lees, he notes that it's still just a tool that gives you a good head start, but everything still needs to be finessed once he sees it for real the first time. “Over the years, fixtures in general have become more reliable and accurate. For me, that's the biggest thing — programming is programming.

“Working with Paul McCartney has been a fantastic experience,” he adds. “The fact that it has lasted this long is incredible. Not many people get to be as fortunate as I have, not only to work with such an icon of our business, but the fact that he is such a great person to boot.

“Roy and I have had a great working relationship from day one, starting back in 1986,” Lees concludes. “It took some time in the beginning getting used to his way of thinking and cue intensive shows, and the amount of detail, but now we barely have to talk about the lighting, as nine times out of ten, we are thinking the same thing. It's a nice place to be!” **PLSN**





Solotech and Paulie Becher look after the video.



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**“Roy checked out many fixtures for the pod and decided on the Elation Dartz 360’s. We were trying to get as many as possible into a small space in order to create this big bold look.” —Wally Lees**

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Wally Lees has been looking after the lighting for 17 years.

**Crew**

**Lighting & Set Design:** LeRoy Bennett  
**Lighting Director & Programmer:** Wally Lees  
**Lighting & Set Design:** Dakana Designs, Inc.  
**Lighting Co:** Upstaging  
**Upstaging Rep:** John Huddleston  
**Lighting Crew Chief:** Thomas Walls  
**Lighting Techs:** Josh Harvey, Chris Donati, Roy MacMahon, Yoshi Shinohara, Calvin Mosier, Abby Wright, Zach Svoboda, Troy Smith, Shawn Whitton  
**Ground Remote Spots:** Craig Kreider  
**Video Director:** Paul Becher  
**Video Designer:** Andee Kuroda  
**Video Co:** Solotech  
**Solotech Reps:** Todd LePere, Paul Becher, Leon Roll  
**Video Crew Chief:** Michael Seinkiewicz  
**Video Engineer:** Christina Lavoie  
**Video Server Operator:** Allison Sulock  
**Video Techs:** Tony Doucet, Kevin Paul, Simon DiFazio, Roberto Villalobos, Mike Nelson, Ken Bowman, Roger Rubey, Jeremy Miget  
**Tour Director:** Barrie Marshall  
**Tour Manager:** Phil Kazamias  
**Production Manager:** Mark "Springo" Spring  
**Production Assistant:** Mat Pepino  
**Production Coordinator:** Diane Eichorst  
**Stage Manager:** Scott Chase  
**Assistant Stage Manager:** Gino Cardelli  
**Sets:** Tait/James Fairorth, Adam Davis, Brian Levine  
**Motion Control:** Jeff Lunsford, Lear McClellan  
**SFX:** Image SFX  
**Image SFX Reps:** Doug Adams, Michelle

Wuscher, Henry Wetzel, Joseph Suhle  
**Pyro Techs:** Mick McGuire, Hayden Hale, Afshin Arshia, David Harkness  
**Laser Techs:** Phil Payne, Jeffrey "JB" Culp  
**Riggers:** Francisco Attwell (Head), Almon Sheffield, Scott Fremgen  
**Carpenter:** Flory Turner, Tina Skjerseth, Jared Budrick  
**Drapes:** Sew What, Inc./Megan Duckett  
**Trucking:** Upstaging

**Gear****Lighting:**

2 grandMA3 Full Size Consoles  
 1 grandMA2 Full Size Console  
 528 Elation Professional Dart 360  
 14 Claypaky Scenius Profiles  
 55 Vari-Lite VL3500 Wash FX  
 24 Vari-Lite VL6000 Wash Beams  
 115 GLP JDC1 Strobes  
 512 Upstaging Sabers  
 16 8-Lite Molefays  
 11 PRG GroundControl Followspots

**Video:**

1,360 Saco S12 LED modules  
 162 Saco C-thru Panels  
 540 Saco S9 modules  
 216 Saco S18 modules  
 1 2ME — HD Grass Valley Flypack  
 2 Grass Valley Long Lens cameras  
 2 Grass Valley Hand Held cameras  
 2 Robotic Cameras  
 2 24ft JIB w/ Grass Valley Cameras  
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 2 grandMA consoles



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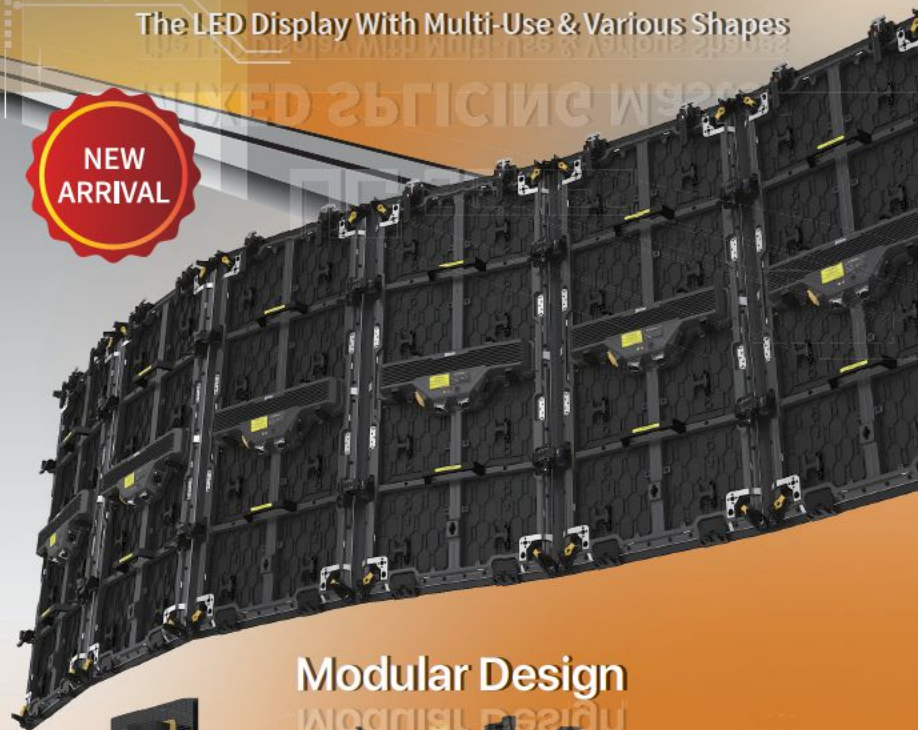
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