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Elation DARTZ™ makes the cut on *Dancing with the Stars*

LD Tom Sutherland exploits effects package to customize looks and keep design fresh. Lighting supply by Felix Lighting

Enjoyed by young and old alike, *Dancing with the Stars* has been a mainstay of American reality television since premiering in 2005. For season 28, which premiered on September 16th on ABC, lighting designer Tom Sutherland is using Elation Professional DARTZ 360™ beam/spot LED moving heads as a principal luminaire in an immersive 360-degree lighting environment. Lighting vendor for *Dancing with the Stars* is Felix Lighting with Nicole Barnes as account manager.



After skipping its standard spring season—there are typically two seasons per year—the Emmy-winning dance competition returned this fall with changes designed to freshen up the format and delight fans in new ways. A new creative director came onboard for the new season, as did Sutherland who works with set designer Florian Weider on a revamped set.

For the uninitiated, *Dancing with the Stars* features celebrities dancing with professional ballroom dancers as a panel of ballroom experts, along with fans at home, determines who makes the cut each week. Filmed at CBS Television City in Los Angeles, it is a competition that is as much about drama and glitz as dancing, and that's what has kept fans coming back year after year.

Lead designer at DX7 Design and a Knight of Illumination award winner, Sutherland, who has a wealth of experience lighting other TV reality shows such as *The X-Factor*, *The Four*, *American Idol*,

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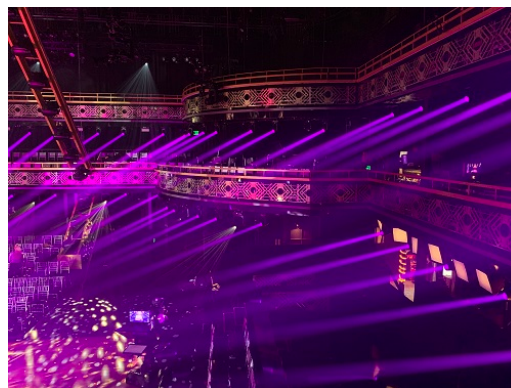
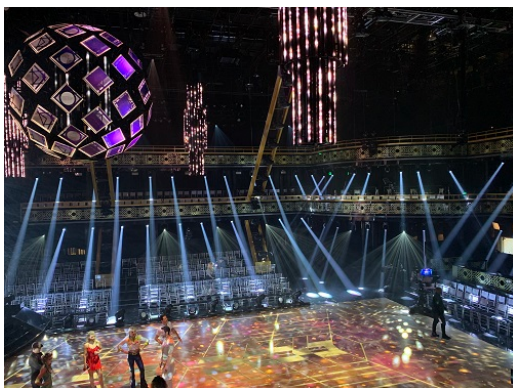
Britain's Got Talent, The Voice China, Love Island and La Banda, embraced the opportunity to create something original and sought a versatile light as his principal source.

"I needed something that was small but also quite bright and punchy that could light the entire room," he said. "I also needed a light that was cool that I could put close to the audience as they surround the audience in a 360-degree set."



Sutherland, who is known for creating big looks on broadcast sets, had used the DARTZ 360 on a previous show and was familiar with its tight 3-degree beam and myriad effect options. Safe to use at any distance, the DARTZ, with its 50W RGB LED engine, is an ideal 'up-close' luminaire. "It's also small and compact and can fit into any space," said Sutherland who positioned 84 of the DARTZ fixtures around the set to frame the underside of the audience balconies. "We also use them to light the edges of the dancefloor as well as in reverse shots."

The challenge, the designer says, is to create unique looks for each couple's performance show after show, keeping the look dynamic and interesting for the millions of fans that tune in each week. That's where a multifunctional luminaire comes in handy. Used extensively for a variety of effects, Sutherland relies on the DARTZ's effects package, using everything from a variety of color shades to prism effects, gobos, rotation and even frost.





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Shot in 360 degrees, the DARTZ, which is extremely bright for its wattage and size, are used throughout the show with the 360-degree positioning effectively filling wide shots and expanding the look of the set. "I work with the creative director to come up with a concept for each performance and build around that," Sutherland says. "We do many performances a week so I use everything in the fixture. They have been great on camera as well with no flicker issues, just very solid," he says, adding that matching the other fixtures in the set hasn't been an issue either.

Photos: Hunter Selby / James Coldicott

About Elation Professional

Based in California with facilities in Florida and Mexico City, as well as European offices in The Netherlands, Elation designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of innovative lighting and video products known for its superior performance, excellent efficiency, and outstanding price:value ratio, all backed by a hard-earned reputation for Total Support. Through nearly three decades of intelligent lighting development, our mission has always been simple: to provide best-in-class products and service while offering the best value:performance ratio in the industry, helping show designers and producers achieve their vision. From discharge to LED, intelligent to conventional, Elation products continue to be a part of the industry's most exciting projects across the globe and our list of references is always growing. We invite you to take a closer look at www.elationlighting.com

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