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UVLD's David Seitz Lights Prestonwood's "The Gift of Christmas" with Elation PARAGON

Each December, Prestonwood Baptist Church transforms its Plano campus in Texas into the setting for one of the largest and most ambitious holiday productions in the U.S., and this year the visually stunning presentation was powered by Elation's [PARAGON](#) LED profile fixtures. With over 1,200 cast and crew members, live animals, flying performers, massive scenic elements, and nearly two hours of nonstop music and storytelling, The Gift of Christmas is a signature seasonal event for thousands of attendees.



For the 2025 production, Lighting Designer David Seitz (UVLD) relied on 50 [PARAGON M](#) fixtures to help bring the visually complex presentation to life.

UVLD creates lighting designs for corporate events, television, and special events and has been a long-time creative partner of Prestonwood, helping shape the show's evolving look, year after year. "This show is always evolving," says Seitz. "We work on it basically year-round. We're constantly tweaking and refining it, so having fixtures that give us flexibility is critical."

Seitz, who has worked on the production for more than a decade, led the lighting design alongside UVLD colleagues Technical Director Greg Norgeot and Production Designer Matt Webb. Webb, who grew up attending the church, has been involved in the production for decades, including serving as a former lighting designer.

Production on a Grand Scale

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Staged in Prestonwood's 7,000-seat worship center, The Gift of Christmas spanned 14 performances plus rehearsals and incorporated nearly every imaginable production element: actors, dancers, choir and orchestra, flying drummers, live camels, donkeys, alpacas, peacocks, and immersive large-scale projection and video content.

The production unfolded in two distinct parts. The first embraced a bold, colorful North Pole theme featuring Santa Claus and high-energy musical numbers. The second transitioned into the story of Jesus, culminating in a live nativity scene.

“We might go from 1,000 people on stage to a moment where there’s one performer in the middle of the audience singing,” Seitz explains. “It’s powerful in both ways—whether it’s a huge cast and orchestra or a single soloist.”



Nearly All-LED Rig

For this year’s show, UVLD revamped parts of the lighting system and now runs a nearly 100% LED rig. Working closely with longtime rental partner Gemini Light Sound and Video of Dallas—part of Live Events Productions—the team evaluated inventory options and selected the PARAGON M for its versatility.

“We were revamping some of the lighting, and we looked at what Gemini had available,” says Seitz. “The PARAGON made a lot of sense because we were looking for something that could do a lot of different things in one fixture.”

The PARAGON fixtures, supplied by Gemini, formed the backbone of the overhead rig, appearing across six trusses from downstage to upstage. “They were front and center,” Seitz says. “They basically replaced a traditional profile system and became a do-it-all fixture for us.”

From Development to Deployment

Seitz had early exposure to the PARAGON during its development, providing feedback on prototypes before its official release. “Nick Saiki at Elation brought me in early on,” he recalls. “I got to see the iterations, from where it started to where it ended up.”



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Before committing to the fixtures for the show, Seitz visited Gemini to review the final production units. "Seeing the finished product in person really confirmed it for me," he says. "The optics are really crisp and clean. The colors read really well, and we get great punch, even with saturated colors."

One Fixture, Many Roles

One of the PARAGON's standout features for Seitz is its TruTone variable CRI system, which can adjust from CRI 73 to CRI 93, allowing designers to balance output and color accuracy. "I love the TruTone system," he says. "We'd tune it up to 90 CRI when we wanted beautiful skin tones, then tuned it down when we wanted more punch. Having that option was huge."

This flexibility proved essential in a production that ranged from theatrical storytelling to high-energy EDM-style numbers. "The PARAGON can be a rock-and-roll beamage fixture and then turn around and light performers with incredible quality," Seitz explains. "If I want more power or better color rendering, it's right there."



For rental houses, the designer describes it as an ideal light. "You can swap lenses and turn it into a Fresnel, a PC—whatever you need. You're not buying separate fixtures for every purpose."

For a production built to maintain its technical infrastructure for years to come, adaptability was key. "We're intentional about how we allocate both budget and programming resources," Seitz notes. "When we integrate new fixtures into the rig, we expect that investment to serve us reliably for eight to ten years."

Lighting a Dynamic Environment

The show's 160-foot-wide stage featured massive projection panels that stretched its length and were 34 feet high, forming a curtain and canvas for video mapping and scenic visuals. Combined with layered scrims and LED walls, the environment presented significant lighting challenges.

One new number introduced this year involved multiple projection scrims with performers positioned behind them. "It was tricky because we were creating this 3D environment between the



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LED wall in the back and the scrims that are layered in,” says Seitz. “We needed lights that could go from precise framing cuts to side light and backlight instantly. The PARAGON could do that.”

They then used the same lights to illuminate around the scrims for textured gobo looks. The fixtures’ framing shutters, animation wheel, and gobo system allowed for rapid transitions. “We’d go from big gobo moments to incredibly narrow cuts on a scrim, then immediately back to lighting people,” he explains. “That flexibility was a huge benefit.”

Seitz explored nearly every feature of the PARAGON M throughout close to 5,000 lighting cues. “There isn’t a single element in those fixtures that went untouched,” he says. “They handled everything — beamage, scenic breakup, aerial effects, animation, and performer lighting. With the show in constant motion, the rig needed to be extremely flexible.”



A Creative Collaboration

Beyond lighting design, UVLD played a broader role in overseeing the production, working closely with Prestonwood’s staff and volunteer-based technical teams. “It’s truly a team effort,” Seitz emphasizes. “Because of the church’s size, there are so many talented people volunteering their skills and talent. It’s unique, and it makes the production special.”

Seitz also collaborates closely with the show’s composer, Jonathan Walker, integrating original music and lighting at a technical level. “He writes with lighting in mind,” Seitz says. “For our ‘Drummer Boy’ number, which has flying drummers fly over the audience, I’m taking MIDI triggers from the drummers and manipulating lighting in real time. It’s amazing to be part of those creative decisions.”

Continuing a Christmas Tradition

Presented December 4–6 and 9–13, The Gift of Christmas delivered a powerful message supported by cutting-edge design. “At the heart of this production is the story of Christmas,” Seitz concludes. “Our job is to support that story visually and emotionally, and the PARAGON helped us do that.”

Lighting Team Production Credits:



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Greg Norgeot/UVLD- Technical Director
David Seitz/UVLD- Lighting Designer
Matt Webb/UVLD- Production Designer

Nick Deel- Production Electrician
Michael Olivarez -Assistant Electrician
Scott Essancy-Assistant Electrician

Bryan Bailey- Prestonwood Baptist Church Director of Media
Rodney Bailey- Prestonwood Baptist Church Lighting Technician
Matthew Hughes-Follow-Me Department Lead
Amber Hess- Follow-Me Operations
Follow-Me Technician-Ben Coleman

Follow-Me Operators

Bill Mantz
Bill Russell
CG Maclin
Erin Priddy
Mark Holloway
Michael Fuhrman
Soma Badugu
Stephen Brown
Tayden Pendleton

Lighting Vendor

Gemini

Photos: Iris Lee

About Elation

At Elation, we collaborate with leading professionals in the lighting industry to help bring extraordinary experiences to life. As a designer and manufacturer of a wide range of high-performance entertainment lighting products, we're proud to be a trusted partner to top lighting professionals and rental houses around the world. Our commitment to quality, innovation, and creative solutions has made us a go-to resource in the industry. We also offer an advanced line of lighting control products through Obsidian Control Systems, and a full range of dependable specialty effects called Magmatic. Elation serves clients worldwide through offices in Los Angeles, Mexico City, and the Netherlands. We invite you to take a closer look at elationlighting.com

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