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ELS and Elation light inaugural “Holiday Wonders” at Bowie Nature Park in Tennessee

Extreme Lighting & Sound (ELS) recently wrapped up its first season presenting “Holiday Wonders” at Bowie Nature Park in Fairview, Tennessee. The dazzling drive-thru holiday light show featured atmosphere-generating effects from a large amount of Elation lighting gear along with custom pixel products and proved a huge success.



Tight schedule

ELS (www.elsnashville.com) was approached by the city of Fairview in September to create and run the show after an initial contractor pulled out, which gave the design and production company only two short months to get everything together.

“We agreed to do the Christmas light show but knew we were on a tight schedule as opening day was scheduled for the day after Thanksgiving,” recalled ELS President Austin Grundberg about the start of the project. “We basically put the whole show together in 8 weeks from design, product specification/supply and setup to funding, ticket sales and promotion.” The “Holiday Wonders” show was an ELS production in partnership with the City of Fairview. Meeting such a tight schedule was even more impressive considering the company had other installs to take care of during that period.

Not your traditional Christmas light show

ELS often handles other work for the city of Fairview and surrounding county, including a July Independence Day celebration, and were happy to take on the holiday project. Grundberg, who

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designed and programmed the show, sought to take the conventional Christmas display and blend it with an entertainment light show while adding in Disney-like projection mapping and animation elements. “Mixing those three elements together, we produced a unique show that wasn’t your traditional Christmas light show,” he said. “I think that was a big factor in its popularity.”

“Holiday Wonders”

With such a short time frame to work under, ELS accessed their inventory of Elation lighting gear with a few supplement purchases such as 25,000 LED pixel lights. According to Grundberg, prep and programming took over 1,000 hours, including over 250 hours of animation. Load in and setup took eight workers two weeks to complete.

“Holiday Wonders” followed a loop just under a mile long, a short enough drive that allowed guests to loop through again and enjoy the show multiple times. “That was important as not only did people feel like they got their money’s worth but they often said that they saw something different every time they went through,” said Grundberg who synced and time-coded the lighting to a 28-minute track of music, programming a number of individual areas as its own show.



Bowie Nature Park features a canvas of beautiful pine and oak forest and ELS used their inventory of 36 [SixPar 200 IPTM](#) color changers to uplight the canopy. Besides lighting treetops, tree lines and branches in a host of holiday colors, the versatile six-color Par lights also lit signage and entrance tents. Tree lines were also illuminated using 12 IP65-rated [PaladinTM](#) luminaires, all-weather strobe/wash/blinder lights that ELS acquired specifically for that purpose. “With their power, we could use them from longer distances to light huge areas,” Grundberg said.

ELS utilized their in-house fabrication shop to custom build pole mounts that they strapped onto trees 25 feet up and mounted with [Proteus Rayzor 760TM](#), [Artiste DaVinciTM](#) and Platinum HFXTM moving heads, the latter two with vinyl rain covers. “These proved great as it allowed us to get moving light effects from high above,” Grundberg says. “It was a nice effect as people didn’t know where the light was coming from.”



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Centerpiece Christmas tree

A 33-foot tall Christmas tree adorned with pixel lights formed the centerpiece of the show, a focus area that Grundberg complemented with a semi-circle of ground-based [DTW Blinder 350 IP™](#) 2-lites and Platinum Beam 5R Extremes™, which the designer cleverly covered with vinyl pop-up green houses. “The DTW blinders gave a concert feel to the area while the Platinum 5R Beams made for some incredible beam looks,” he said. More Platinum Beam 5R Extremes and DTW Blinder 350 IPs worked from behind the main Christmas tree.

Lining four adjacent trees were compact Rayzor 360Z beam moving heads outfitted with rain covers while 18 Chorus Line 16™ LED battens formed a tunnel of light. The show ended up using 100 moving lights with 91,648 channels of control.

Grundberg and his team worked extremely hard throughout the entire project, meeting and overcoming a host of challenges. The designer even taught himself animation in order to create and project dancing elves and singing snowmen onto holographic scrim. His favorite part of the experience he says however was the light show at the 33-ft tall Christmas tree. “It’s a nice blend of colorful pixels surrounded by Elation lights and made for a perfect focal point of the show,” he said before explaining one of his favorite looks. “There is one look during Amazing Grace, the show’s last song, where all of the 5Rs point straight up, which is really powerful that people loved. If it was cloudy or overcast the beams hit the cloud cover and you could see them from miles away.”

A first-year success

Despite rainstorms, thunderstorms and snowstorms – two in the show’s last week – Grundberg reports that they had very few problems with fixtures. “Honestly, with this many fixtures sitting exposed for 8 weeks, and many of them not IP65, we were expecting more products to go down but 99% of everything has made it.”

“Holiday Wonders” at Bowie Nature Park ran Thursday through Sunday nights from November 26 until January 9 and was well received by the community. “The city was excited to have their own holiday light show and we were excited too. People were ecstatic with it and the turnout was huge,” Grundberg said, adding that people came from across the state to see it. “It was a real home run in our book.” The designer concludes by saying they hope to work on the project again next year, albeit with a longer lead time. “Imagine if we had eight months to prepare instead of eight weeks.”

With a complete event to put together and all on a tight schedule, Grundberg sends thanks and kudos to a dedicated team. “It takes a village and we are grateful for all of you. My dad and business partner Glenn Grundberg for handling accounting, logistics, and ticketing; Vince Romanelli for all pixel content/programming; the city of Fairview (Richard, Brandy, Scott, Jesse, Todd, Keith, Justin) for allowing us to do the event and all their help and hospitality; the Simon family (Jessi, Mike, Jenni, Callie) for their help with social media, ticketing, and crowd control; and the ELS crew of David, Chad, Seth, Fernando, Clint, Alex, and Salty, and everyone else that helped out!”

Elation Gear:

10 x Artiste DaVinci

8 x SixBar 1000 IP

8 x DTW Blinder 350



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12 x Paladin
36 x SixPar 200IP
18 x Chorus Line 16
16 x Platinum Beam 5R Extreme
10 x Platinum HFX
8 x Proteus Rayzor 760
12 x Rayzor 360Z

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 products known for its superior performance, excellent efficiency, and outstanding price: value ratio, all backed by a hard-earned reputation for Total Support. Elation also offers an advanced line of lighting control products through Obsidian Control Systems, as well as a full range of dependable specialty effects called Magmatic. Our mission has always been simple: to provide best-in-class products and service while offering the best value: performance ratio in the industry. Elation products continue to be a part of the industry's most exciting projects across the globe. We invite you to take a closer look at www.elationlighting.com

For more information, contact:

Elation Professional US

6122 S. Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90040
USA
Tel: (866) 245-6726 (toll free)
Tel: (323) 582-3322
sales@elationlighting.com
www.elationlighting.com

Elation Professional EU

Junostraat 2.
6468 EW Kerkrade
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)45 546 85 66
info@elationlighting.eu
www.elationlighting.eu

Elation Professional Mexico

Av Santa Ana 30,
Parque Industrial Lerma,
Lerma, Mexico 52000
Tel: +011 52 728 282 7070
ventas@elationlighting.com
www.elationlighting.com