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Repurposed U2 ‘claw’ at Loveland Living Planet Aquarium under Obsidian NX4™ control

Famed set piece – and Utah’s newest landmark – now part of a science and learning plaza

If you think the Ecosystem Exploration Craft & Observatory (EECO) at Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Draper, Utah looks familiar, you have good reason to think so. For those who saw or worked on U2’s 360° tour back in 2009-2011, recognition of the famed claw stage is instant.



Brent Andersen, founder and CEO of Loveland Living Planet Aquarium, who saw the U2 show in Barcelona in 2009, acquired the massive 16-story set piece when the Aquarium expanded in 2019. An iconic piece of concert touring, ‘The Claw’ is now a major part of the exhibit as a science and learning plaza that reinforces the Aquarium’s central mission statement of helping visitors understand and respect Earth’s ecosystems.

EECO is used for a variety of events in which their education team educates guests on animals and Aquarium offerings such as a recent Earth Day event. The space is also used for the Aquarium’s Nights Under Lights series, concerts, movie nights, and other special events, and can be rented out throughout the year.

NX4 lighting console

Brayden Gardner has worked at the Aquarium for the last two years as an AV Technician, handling lighting and sound for EECO and other Aquarium spaces such as on-site theatres and new Virtual Reality experience. Brayden has been using an NX4™ lighting console from Obsidian Control System to control lighting for shows and events at EECO, including all the lighting on and around the claw structure. It is a lighting board he has been using for the past 18 months.

“Our previous board kept crashing,” he explained, “and as I had experience with the NX4 from a previous employer, I knew it could handle everything we wanted to do here. It was a big upgrade I must say. I love it because there is so much you can do with it.”



Controls EECO and plaza lighting

Brayden uses the console to control lighting mounted on the EECO structure – LED bars and PAR lights, orange ‘button’ lights that sit atop EECO, and LED tape – along with ground and fence lights around the plaza and the occasional rented-in moving heads. New LED wash lights for the structure’s legs will go up soon.

“The NX4 is so easy to use. With the encoders and the small touchscreen on the right side, it makes a huge difference when designing. In fact, my design time went down by two hours per show because it is so easy to use. With all the presets and parameters that you have control over, you don’t waste time trying to jump through menus to find what you need – it’s right there and easy to access,” said Brayden.

Capture and Dylus

The tech booth for EECO sits at the back of the plaza with network lines that run under EECO to a control room beneath the 70-foot wide circular stage. There, a large amp rack with an optosplitter sends DMX out to EECO and the surrounding park. Brayden uses six universes on the NX4 to control everything. He also uses a Capture Duet Edition license – included with every NX4 console – for visualization of lighting and scenery. “That has saved my life,” he said. “It’s so nice to be able to put that right into the board, it makes it super easy. I use a MAC book so it’s great to be able to use Qlab and Capture at the same time.”

He also accesses the NX4’s built-in pixel composer, Dylus, which he says is especially useful for member movie nights when he matches lighting effects with the movie. Brayden explained, “I can set the parameters of the movie to the lights. For example, if the sky is blue in the movie then the lights will be blue. It’s nice to use for wave effects too. If I want a wave effect across EECO, I just pull up a video of a wave and throw that across the lights. For one of the songs we covered for our Earth Day event, ‘Fireflies’ by Owl City, I wanted it to look like a bunch of fireflies so I took a

sparkle effect and changed the color to yellow and uploaded it to the NX4. The lights looked like they were blinking fireflies. It was a great look and was simple to do.”



As EECO evolves and grows in popularity, the NX4 control solution has the ability to adapt to whatever new events and attractions are added to the schedule. Utah’s newest landmark, EECO, with its iconic U2 claw, has a busy summer ahead.

About Obsidian Control Systems

Obsidian Control Systems is an accessible line of advanced yet intuitive lighting control products for professionals. Refined by passion, Obsidian Control Systems combines over 25 years of experience developing professional entertainment lighting control solutions for automated and theatrical lighting fixtures. Obsidian lighting control software and hardware is easy to use and accessible to every level of user, whether a novice programmer or a designer at the highest level. All Obsidian lighting control systems run innovative ONYX™ lighting control software, a powerful yet easy-to-learn lighting control platform designed for both hardware consoles and PC systems. Obsidian Control Systems products are distributed exclusively by Elation Professional worldwide and are available in various sizes to accommodate any scale and budget. Visit the Obsidian Control Systems website at www.obsidiancontrol.com to learn more.

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