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Indiana's Floyd Central High School Debuts New Elation Lighting Rig on "Mary Poppins"

It's no secret that the quality of high school productions has risen over the years thanks to an impressive wealth of talent in high school theatre programs – both on stage and behind the scenes – as well as an increasing use of intelligent lighting systems. An excellent example is Floyd Central High School in Floyds Knobs, Indiana, whose recent production of "Mary Poppins," performed beneath a new professional lighting rig of Elation Professional fixtures, was nothing short of spectacular.

Winner of Stage Directions magazine's 2013 High School Theatre Honors Program of the Year (Midwest), Floyd Central's new Elation lighting rig, purchased from Phoenix Lighting of Louisville, Kentucky, was part of a recent school lighting renovation and "Mary Poppins" was the first show to have the new gear available.



Lighting upgrade

Floyd Central High School's Director of Theatre Arts, Robbie Steiner, produced and directed the production and also designed the scenery. Concerned a couple of years ago about the quality of their theatre's lighting, he approached school administrators to see what could be done to begin upgrading their outdated system.

"Our school auditorium was constructed in 1981 and the bulk of the fixtures we were using were from that time period," he says. "Many of our students pursue careers in technical theatre so I was concerned that our antiquated equipment was preventing them from receiving an up-to-date education. Fortunately, our school corporation was able to set into motion a lighting upgrade and we just completed our first round of purchases, including the Elation package. I'm thrilled that our students are now able to work with some of the newest lighting technology out there."

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Floyd Central's new Elation lighting package consists of LED-based Arena Q7 Zoom PAR wash lights and Platinum Spot 5R Pro moving heads, along with Colour Chorus 48 LED batten wash lights and white light Cuepix Blinder WW2's. "Elation provided a high quality product at a price the school could afford," stated industry lighting professional and Floyd Central alumnus Michael Nevitt of Crossfade Design, LLC (www.crossfadedesign.com), who served as lighting consultant on the production. "Not only is the Elation gear cost effective but it's well suited to theatre productions and I know from my experience that it is reliable."

Elation rig

Performed on March 7-8 and March 13-16, lighting design and lighting programming for "Mary Poppins" were handled by students Matthew Barnett and Jerran Kowalski respectively. Barnett, who has designed one other main stage show at the school but had mostly conventional fixtures at his disposal, was pleased to have the opportunity to use intelligent fixtures. "The benefit of the Elation lighting instruments is through the immense flexibility gained due to the number of features inherent in the fixtures," he stated. "The Q7's variable zoom for example allowed for not only lighting a wide wash or a highly focused area but for effects on overall atmosphere of a scene with the use of hazers."

The rig housed 32 of Elation's high-power Arena Q7 Zoom RGBW wash lights, which were used as stage backlight. "We really liked the Arena Q7 Zoom's small but durable housing and felt it would offer a long operational life," Nevitt commented. "The color system is well suited for a theatrical application and the zoom range is terrific. The wide 10° - 60° zoom range allows them to be used as tight spots and beams in the air while also zooming to become excellent stage wash lights."



Used as specials and for gobo pattern projections were color-changing Platinum Spot 5R Pro fixtures. "They gave us the ability to place a special nearly anywhere on stage, and allowed for some great aerial effects during some of the show's dance numbers," Barnett explains. The school originally intended to purchase custom gobos for the Platinum Spot 5R's but found the stock selection to be good for theatrical production, Nevitt says of the Platinum 5R fixture, which allows designers to choose from 22 gobo patterns as well as a full spectrum of colors.

Elation's Color Chorus 48, a 4-ft LED batten wash light with RGBA LEDs, also played a role on the production as cyc and backdrop lighting. "The Colour Chorus fixtures gave us virtually infinite options for



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color,” Barnett says. “and are a vast improvement over the 4 cell cyc lights we were previously running.” The new series of Colour Chorus LED battens are available in four lengths and are useful for floodlighting surfaces, cycs and stages in even washes of dynamic colored light.

“All of the Elation gear held up without flaw during the run of the production,” says Barnett, “and of course with proper care and maintenance the gear should last for years to come.” Other lighting gear used on the production included conventional lighting fixtures and PAR lights, as well as other entertainment technology such as a ZFX Flying Effects system. Backdrops were designed by Grosh Scenic Rentals and TheatreWorld Backdrops.

Benefits of the new system

Such a technical version of “Mary Poppins” was an ambitious production for the theatre department at Floyd Central to put on, but with a talented cast and crew, not to mention a new professional lighting rig overhead, the play captivated audiences. Addressing the benefits the new Elation lighting brings, Steiner commented, “First and foremost, the new Elation lighting gives my students the chance to work with some of the best equipment in the industry. This gives them a huge advantage over most high school students. My students are able to learn technology that they will encounter in the professional world and gain valuable experience that can be transferred to work at the college and professional levels.”

Looking back on the first production with the new system, Steiner was very pleased with the performance of the Elation lighting. “The fixtures truly enhanced the look of our show, providing some of the most stimulating visuals that we have ever produced on our stage,” he says. “We received a lot of positive feedback from audience members on the lighting and our student Lighting Designer and Master Electrician had a great time premiering our new Elation equipment. Michael Nevitt has been an incredible help throughout our process of upgrading our lighting and I’m very grateful to him as well as Elation for helping us provide our students with the best!”

Director:	Robbie Steiner
Stage Manager:	Layla Aemmer
Lighting Designer:	Matt Barnett
ME/Programmer:	Jerran Kowalski
Followspot Operators:	Sydney Willis, Connor Nevitt, Joel Jackson, Reese Carpenter
Lighting Consultant:	Michael Nevitt, www.crossfadedesign.com

Elation Equipment:
32 x Arena Q7 Zoom
22 x Colour Chorus 48
10 x Cuepix Blinder WW2
8 x Platinum Spot 5R Pro
4 x RDMS6 Truss Mount Data Splitter
3 x Opto Branch 8 DMX Splitter

Photos: Sam Vogt



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About Elation Professional

Elation Professional is one of the world's leading lighting and visual solutions providers and is the global brand of Elation Lighting. Founded in 1992 and headquartered in Los Angeles, with European sales, distribution and support based in The Netherlands, Elation designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of innovative yet affordable lighting and video products that are distributed through a global network of dealers and distributors. Made up of a spirited team of dedicated personnel, Elation is setting new efficiency and performance standards in Platinum lamp and LED technology and is acknowledged for a comprehensive commitment to Total Support. As a company in expansion with a presence in a growing variety of market segments, chances are you've experienced Elation lighting at a concert, special event, TV, theater, late night venue, House of Worship, theme park, cruise ship, exhibition, architectural space or elsewhere. For more information, please visit www.elationlighting.com

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