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All Proteus™ Moving Head Rig for Germany's Nature One

Elation IP65 lights fill cubic truss design as only moving heads on outdoor Open Air Floor. LD Thomas Gerdon first in Europe to use Proteus Maximus™

Lighting designer Thomas Gerdon has been working on Nature One for over 15 years and has designed the lighting for the festival's main Open Air Floor every year since its introduction in 2011. The designer stays on the cusp of innovation and after incorporating IP65-rated Proteus Hybrid luminaires in his notable 2018 pyramid truss and stage design, turned to more Proteus line fixtures for the 2019 festival.

"Last year, I discovered how easy and cool it was to have an IP65 fixture with the Proteus Hybrid," the designer states. "This year, I was sure I wanted to use as many IP65 fixtures as possible. Ninety percent of this year's fixtures were IP65 rated and all the moving lights were Elation Proteus series." Populating Gerdon's newly designed overhead audience and stage rig were Proteus Hybrid™ moving heads, new Proteus Rayzor 760™ LED moving heads, and new 50,000-lumen Proteus Maximus™ LED moving heads.



Cubic design

Nature One celebrated its 25th anniversary in early August when tens of thousands of EDM fans converged on the former missile base of Pydna in central Germany. The Open Air Floor, which the festival promotes as the largest open-air club in the world, attracted over 30,000 guests at peak periods. Seeking to mirror that club setting where lights hang over the dancefloor, Gerdon created a large, ground-supported architectural truss structure that spanned the crowd. "If you go to a big club in a place like Ibiza," he said, "you always have the lighting rig above the people. This year, we went back to basics a bit with a huge, cubic truss design and lighting rig above the people that we filled with a lot of Proteus."

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To feature top artists like Paul van Dyk and Eric Prydz, a large stage was also a key requirement. Gerdon continued the cubic design on stage with vertical columns of stacked metal pyramids, or “shields”, covered with LED video and topped with a lighting fixture. “The metal shields are new this year. They are a foundation to work from and we will use them again in next year’s design to build the stage look. It gives something recognizable, which will guide us through the next three to five years,” the designer says. Columns of LED video screens added to the visual landscape with a large backdrop LED screen used to feature the artists. The metal shields were custom-produced by Schoko Pro, who handled lighting and sound supply for the festival.

“We put a lot of effort in creating a stage design that has scenic elements but not concrete or specific décor elements,” Gerdon explains, adding that when you look at some of the other big festivals out there, they put a lot of effort into creating a story or theme but that Nature One is different. “Nature One has existed for 25 years without building a story. The point isn’t to create some type of fairy tale. The festival itself is the point and the visitors are what make the festival. This history is the story to tell. It can be complicated to create a scenic design based on that but our effort really paid off and the design supported the story of Nature One in the best way it could.”



All IP65 moving head rig

Gerdon succeeded with a magnificent big event look that immersed the crowd in brazen beams while supporting the on-stage talent with color and mid-air lighting excitement. With nothing to protect either the audience or stage rigs from the rain, Gerdon turned to an all IP65 moving head rig.

“From a design point of view, you don’t have the limitations that the rain covers give you like struggling with lighting through plastic, reflections, shadows, etc. And, as we all know, a rain cover does not work 100%. There is still risk of water damage. From a budget point of view, you don’t need the rain cover or the logistics and manpower to install it so you save a lot of money. Even if the IP65 fixtures cost a bit more, in the end it is cheaper than using a non-IP65 fixture with a rain cover.”

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With a 44-meter wide by 18-meter high stage to work with, not to mention the crowd itself, there was a lot of real estate to light. The Proteus Hybrid served as the main workhorse of the rig with 98 located in the rig above the crowd and another 48 mounted on the upper edge of each metal shield on stage. Additionally, a line of 32 compact Proteus Rayzor 760 LED wash luminaires with SparkLED™ technology lined the downstage edge.

“I like to use washlights on the front of the stage and it was the first time I used the Rayzor 760,” Gerdon said. “Besides being a great effect light it provided wonderful flare on all cameras and photography. Even though they are IP65 they are pretty compact relative to the output. There’s a lot of output in that small fixture.” Useful as a simple wash or specialty effect light, the Proteus Rayzor 760’s SparkLED is a patent-pending pixel effect of 2W white LEDs inside the oversized front lenses that works as a unique sparkle effect. “The eye candy SparkLED is a nice feature as I liked to use it as a camera flare. Even when the fixtures were off, I could fill the space with the sparkle effect and still have something interesting for the camera. They worked out well.”

**First with Maximus**

Prior to Nature One, Gerdon had the opportunity to use the much-talked-about 50,000-lumen Proteus Maximus LED fixture, the first in Europe to do so. When Elation Europe head Marc Librecht showed him the fixture earlier this summer, he was so impressed by its power that he immediately spec'd them for a Fashion Week show in Paris. “I had a wooden floor on the stage in a really light gray color,” Gerdon explains. “It was summer with blue sky and full sunlight. The fixture was so powerful I could do my position presets and 80% of the focusing during daytime with full sunlight! That’s unusual, really remarkable and definitely ahead of the curve. That was the ‘a-ha’ moment where I said, that’s something really new and exciting and innovative. That was a nice experience so I decided to add them to the Nature One rig.”

Gerdon secured 22 Proteus Maximus units for Nature One and used them to light the metal shield pyramids from positions on stage and in PA towers. “They were the coolest, most badass fixture in



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the rig!" he said of the all-purpose power luminaire. "I was able to light the pyramids really well from those angles and because they were so bright I didn't need a large number of fixtures."

With CMY color mixing and comprehensive FX package that includes framing, Maximus can be used as a profile, beam or wash light. Housing a 5.5- to 55-degree zoom and 950W White LED engine, it delivers an unmatched level of brightness with the power to cut through at great distances.

Gerdon has had experience with 'bright' fixtures before, but with Maximus things were different. "A lot of companies have launched 'super bright' fixtures where they say you don't need to use a big number of lights but when you get them on a show you realize the extra brightness is minimal and you really do need the same number of fixtures," he says. "This was the first time I got on site and experienced that the fixtures I had were more than enough because they are so powerful. Even using a wide zoom angle, it was more than enough. We used big zoom ranges, gobos, effect wheel - all very visible and bright enough to be recognizable, even with all the light coming off the LED screens. They worked out really well and their IP65 protection makes them even more attractive." After two days of preprogramming and three days of festival the Proteus lights reportedly had no failures.

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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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