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Elation Lighting for *UniSon* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Lighting Designer Alex Jainchill incorporates dynamic lighting into premiere of powerful new musical

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) has celebrated William Shakespeare's legacy since 1935 with another busy summer season of plays underway. OSF also stages plays by other playwrights and is presenting *UniSon* at the Angus Bowmer Theatre through October, a new musical inspired by the poetry of August Wilson. Lighting Designer Alex Jainchill is using dynamic lighting from Elation Professional on the play, including ZCL 360 Bar™ wash/effect lights and Platinum Wash 16R Pro™ moving heads, as well as color-changing Elation Flex LED Tape™.



ZCL 360 Bar

UniSon is the story of a dying poet who leaves a mysterious box to his apprentice with strict instructions to destroy it. The apprentice opens it however, releasing seven 'Terrors' that tormented the poet through his life. The seven different Terrors allowed Jainchill to use six of the ZCL 360 Bar fixtures to treat the Terrors not featured in the scene in a different way using a saturated color specific to each.

"All of the features in this fixture were important in this play," Jainchill states of the LED moving batten effects with zoom functionality. "I've used them on other shows and love them. On *UniSon*, we used them as lighting fixtures, but also created a pixel map with each cell of each ZCL Bar as a pixel, which is an application that I think is great and unique to the functionality of this fixture."

Six ZCL 360 Bars are hung on a 20' truss about 19' high mid-stage, running stage left to stage right. In one of Jainchill's favorite applications of the ZCL, a scene that moves back and forth from a boxing gym to a jazz club, the fixtures begin as a straight down white worklight in a boxing ring. "When we move to the jazz club, we were able to transform the space very efficiently by changing the color to

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lavender and putting a small effect in the cells to follow the beat of the music,” Jainchill explains. “When we shifted back, we restored the overhead ZCLs to their boxing ring worklight configuration. It was simple and elegant and really transformed the scene.” In another look, a nighttime scene in blue where the Terrors are dressed as Little Red Riding Hoods, the LD was able to use the ZCL Bars to cover the red capes with saturated red to pop their costumes without destroying the nighttime feel of the scene.

Pop concert aesthetic

From the beginning of the process, Jainchill, who has had a long collaboration with play director Robert O’Hara, says it was discussed that the show should have a modern pop concert aesthetic, which meant a fixture capable of doing a very bright, very tight beam was needed. He chose the Platinum Wash 16R Pro, a powerful moving head with beam and wash zoom capability, to achieve the effect and used the fixtures in multiple applications.

One of Jainchill’s favorite looks using the Platinum Wash fixtures is when each Terror introduces themselves at the top of their scene. The designer explains, “Every time this happened we dimmed the rest of the stage and featured them in a tight bright beam from a Platinum Wash 16R unit. When our first Terror emerged from the box, and at the end of the show when our poet descended, we used the 16R units with the beam-shaper in and rotating to make a spinning asterisk shape. Being able to do some cool beam effects but still having full CMY color mixing was a huge plus.”



August Wilson lights

Built into the edging of the multiple platforms on the stage deck was Elation’s versatile Flex LED Tape, thin, flexible and bright LED pixel tape, an easy solution for simple color washing and pixel mapping possibilities. “One of the things we were tasked with in this production was differentiating when actors were quoting August Wilson’s poetry,” Jainchill says. “Going into tech we honestly didn’t know exactly how we were going to achieve this. We ended up using the Flex LED Tape WP in the deck for this purpose.” Jainchill says that he and director O’Hara called them the ‘August Wilson lights’.

“Because we had to use them in every scene in this capacity, it was great to be able to change their color to match to video or to fit the scene we were using them in,” Jainchill continues. “We also were



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able to drive video content through them as well as get great kinetic movement out of them during musical numbers. With a little more tech time, I think we would've gone even further down the rabbit hole of everything this application allowed us to do."

Jainchill thanks OSF Lighting Supervisor Mac Vaughey, projection designer Kaitlyn Pietras, and the entire Stage Ops team at OSF. "This would be a complicated enough show without having to move it in and out of the space multiple times a week for 9 months," he says. "The work of the whole production team to make that seamless is basically a miracle and a testament to the strength of every production department at OSF. The production team of Alys Holden, Donna Bachman, and Rachel Maize deserve a special shout-out for overseeing all of this work and allowing us to shoot for the moon a bit on this production." Other key lighting personnel include OSF resident lighting designer Michael Maag, lighting programmer Christine Ferriter and Jainchill's lighting assistants Lily McLeod and Mextly Almeda.

Photo caption 1: Terror #5: Hunter (Mildred Ruiz-Sapp, with Ensemble) recounts her own troubled history. Photos by Jenny Graham, Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Photo caption 2: The Apprentice and the Poet (Asia Mark, Steven Sapp, with Ensemble) are transfixed as Terror #1: Seamstress (Christiana Clark, right) sings of her childhood. Photos by Jenny Graham, Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Photo caption 3: The Poet (Steven Sapp) and Terror #4: Black Smith (Rodney Gardiner) recall a sin that shocks the Apprentice (Asia Mark). Photo by Jenny Graham, Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Photo caption 4: Terror #7: Soldier (Jonathan Luke Stevens) and Terror #6: Momma (Yvette Monique Clark) share a dance, watched by Terror #1: Seamstress (Christiana Clark), the Apprentice (Asia Mark) and the Poet (Steven Sapp). Photo by Jenny Graham, Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

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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