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The Thorn enthralls audiences with impactful visuals from IPS and Elation

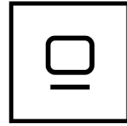
For many, there is nothing more compelling than the story of Jesus Christ. Combine a theatrical drama with the enchanting atmosphere and visual spectacle that today's dynamic lighting can create, and the impact is profound. Illuminate Production Services (IPS) again played an integral role in creating the visual magic that is *The Thorn* (TheThorn.com) and once more enhanced the drama using a large package of [Elation lighting](#).



The Thorn is a modern-day passion play, a theatrical depiction of the life and death of Jesus, yet with a modern touch. The immersive theatrical show combines modern dance, music, martial arts, aerial acrobatics, and emotionally powerful performances, with state-of-the-art lighting and visuals. This year's spring tour kicked off in early February and travels to venues across the U.S., ending in early May in Miami, Florida.

A fun journey

This year, IPS provided audio, video, lighting, staging and special FX, their 11th year working with this incredible production. Caleb Franke, IPS Vice President of Design & Operations, has been entrusted with lighting the show since he was 14 and again served as lead lighting designer. "It's been a really fun journey and the show has changed and morphed a lot through the years," he stated. "There is a lot of variety in the rig and it works out really well." When asked what his



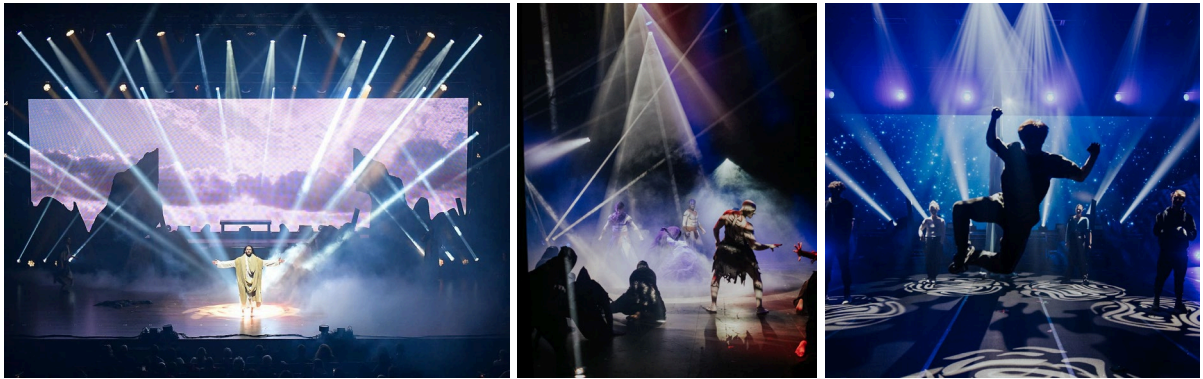
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favorite scenes are, the designer shared “any of the supernatural scenes where we have acrobats and martial artists, the fun scenes where we get to show off the rig.”

Visuals help tell the story

That rig includes a variety of lights in Elation’s Fuze, Proteus, Rayzor and SixPar series, along with other luminaires, used to flood the stage in color and break-up textures, as well as provide striking mid-air beam looks. Designed to be inspirational and motivating, visually stunning beams, color-changing scenes with pattern projection, and changing background graphics add an extra element of visual drama and intensity to the production that both wows and engages the audience. “The Elation fixtures we use give us the dynamic range we need to help tell the story,” Caleb says.

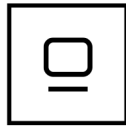
Because passion plays lend themselves to creative use of haze and fog effects as an important aspect of atmosphere creation, The Thorn uses a pair of Therma Tour 800 hazers from Magmatic effects to provide exceptionally fine, long-lasting atmospheric haze that enhances the light beams for higher impact visuals.



Churches to performing arts centers

The Thorn toured in churches for nearly a decade before the production moved to performing arts centers and arenas and according to Caleb, the move posed a challenge. “When we used to do churches, we’d have a whole week to load in, do rehearsals and do a show,” he said. “Now that we’re in performing arts centers, we’re loading in in the morning and doing a show that night. The show has had to change a lot on the production side with audio, video and lighting, but also with the cast and props, they’ve had to change as well. It’s been a challenge but it’s been fun and we figured it out.”

He says that in the past, because church venues vary so much in design and layout, they were redesigning and deploying new custom solutions for the show every week, which took a lot of time and creative solutions to accommodate. Now that they are in larger spaces, they’ve reduced many of those challenges. “Keeping a similar design from venue to venue translates into faster load-in



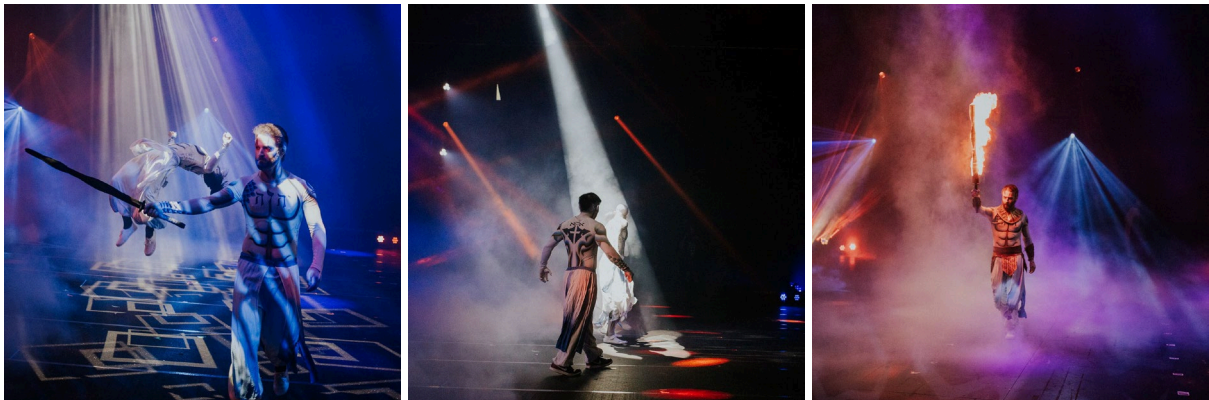
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and load-out, a more prepared crew and cast, and most importantly, a universally better experience for attendees,” he said.

Lighting plays a big role

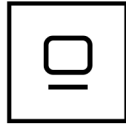
Caleb works closely with show director Andrew Harmon, as well as John Bolin, executive producer and creator of the show. Caleb and Andrew started working on *The Thorn* around the same time and have collaborated and grown with the show over the years, building a unique partnership along the way.

Andrew, who has been directing the show for the past 13 years, says his favorite part about working with *The Thorn* is how unique the show is. “It’s primarily a visual show so we work with the actors as well as the multimedia people in order to create a visual spectacular that tells the story, then we use music behind that,” he said, noting that the actors have no lines to speak. “Lighting therefore plays a gigantic roll. The lighting tells the audience where to look and because the actors aren’t talking, lighting is often part of the dialogue. The lighting will say ‘this moment is important’ or ‘wow’ or tell the audience that this is a sad moment.”



Emotional experience

Andrew says that lighting is often used to obscure elements on stage so that supernatural elements or graphic elements feel more impactful or mysterious. “For example, light obscures things in the crucifixion sequence where shadows lay this blanket of sadness over everything and allow the audience’s imagination to take over.” He says that in other moments of the story they use more concert style lighting than you would typically see in theatre in order to pump up the energy and drive the celebration. “We assume that most people know the story of Jesus but they might not have experienced it or felt it. So we hope people leave the show with a different understanding of the story of Jesus and that they feel it more emotionally and we think the way we tell that story through sound and lighting design, along with everything we put on stage with the actors and performers, helps push that emotion.”



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Rick Franke, President of Illuminate Production Services, says it's been a very exciting project for them to work on over the years and that the show continues to leave a lasting impression on him. "I've worked with The Thorn for many years now and even though I've seen the show hundreds of times, it always impacts me." He concludes by expressing gratitude for the collaboration IPS has had with Elation throughout its run. "I want to thank Elation for supporting us even when we're on the road. When you have a group like Elation behind you, it is a powerful force. Also, a special thanks to the founders and executive producers of The Thorn, John and Sarah Bolin."

Elation gear:

Fuze MAX Profile

Fuze Wash Z350

Fuze Wash FR

Proteus Maximus

Proteus Lucius

Proteus Hybrid

Proteus Rayzor 760

Rayzor 760

Rayzor 360

Platinum HFX

Platinum Beam Extreme

SixPar 100

SixPar 200

Cuepix 16 IP

Protron 3K

EPT6 IP

Magmatic Therma Tour 800

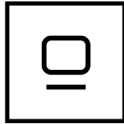
Photos: @photos_by_alison.b

About Illuminate Production Services, Inc.

Headquartered in California with East Coast offices in Florida, Illuminate Production Services, Inc. is a privately owned rental, live event production, touring, and equipment sales and installation company. Founded in 2006 by Rick and Sherece Franke with a passion to serve and the philosophy of "small enough to care and big enough to serve," Illuminate has seen steady growth and developed a nationwide presence as a respected full service production company. www.illuminateProduction.co 855-GOTO-IPS.

About Elation

At Elation, we represent the elite in the lighting industry. We design and manufacture a comprehensive range of best-in-class entertainment lighting products valued by production/rental houses and lighting designers the world over. Our dedication to extraordinary quality and creative solutions has established us as the go-to choice for professionals. With a storied legacy of brilliance, our influence extends from iconic stages to cutting-edge studios across the globe. We also offer an advanced line of lighting control products



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through Obsidian Control Systems, as well as a full range of dependable specialty effects called Magmatic. We invite you to take a closer look at www.elationlighting.com

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