

Kate Miller-Heidke

The press for Kate Miller-Heidke's upcoming shows at the Sydney Opera House as part of Vivid LIVE lyrically describes her thus 'Yielding vocal heroics described by the New Yorker as 'a big clutch of Pantone swatches' and 'being f***ed by butterflies' by Neil Gaiman.....'

Just had to share that with you.

Kate has just finished a short tour of the country in support of her fourth solo album *O Vertigo!*, a vibrant and critically acclaimed piece of work. Lighting designer for the tour was Kait Hall who had previously worked indirectly with Kate when she supported Missy Higgins.





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After discussions with Kate, Kait looked for a way to add theatrical elements to the show that would tie in with the album's artwork, recent video shoots and other media. The result was a mythical forest look with a series of white vintage dresses, from the 1940's through to the 1980's, hung on coat hangers midair. Strands of ivy are hung in front of the rear stage blacks with the dark stage accentuating the dresses.

The dresses were internally lit by LED bud light and externally lit by LEDs and wide angled spot fixtures that were hired locally. Essentially each dress was a mini projection screen.

Kait spent many hours scouring charity shops for the dresses as she wanted a variety of textures.

"Design wise, the dresses had to look good on a hanger but it was nice to get a variety of fabrics as each one appears differently under certain colours," explained Kait. "The dresses hang in the air on black cord which obviously has wires attached to it because of the internal lights. The LED bud lights were something I found in IKEA many years ago – they've been sitting in storage waiting for the right use for them! I tried some other single point light sources but the bud light illuminated the entirety of the dress the best and didn't generate any heat".

The dresses were patterned by gobos from either Martin MAC Vipers or Vari-lite



VL3000's, depending on what the hire company had available, and the colour wash was supplied by RGB LED PARs or occasionally, MAC 101's. The remainder of the light for the performers onstage was provided by MAC700's from the front and the rear, with either MAC250 Entours or MAC350's to light the performers from below and the sides.

"There were a few specials where I did triangulations for solos," added Kait. "Because there are some moments in Kate's songs that can get quite eerie and emotional, I deliberately picked some positions for the MAC250's that would result in some haunting shadows. Just the odd two or three seconds in certain songs where Kate's lyrics get very dramatic."

With only three performers onstage, there wasn't a need for masses of light on them with each player lit individually. There were no big washes of light on stage and to keep the theatrical atmosphere, there is no visible movement of lighting fixtures.

Lighting was picked up in each city with only the dresses and the ivy travelling with the tour in two suitcases. Everything had to be fairly portable - this was integral to the design as there was only Kait and one other crew person on the road. For control, Kait chose to use a grandMA1 rather than the newer grandMA2.

"Most of the hire companies had grandMA1's," Kait explained. "If I had used the grandMA2 I would have liked to have a wing with it and most companies didn't have one available. I decided I'd rather take a grandMA1 with extra faders and executor buttons".

Addendum

In the article (April, CX) featuring the Breath of Life Festival it was written in a couple of places that the PA in use for the festival was a "d&b Technologies PA system". The actual brand used for this festival was d&b audiotechnik, the well-known and very well accepted German brand.

CX apologize for the error.



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