



MISSY HIGGINS' LATEST TOUR STARTED IN CAIRNS AND WORKED SOUTH TO WODONGA, FOLLOWED BY SEVEN SHOWS IN WA AND NT, FINALLY FINISHING IN ADELAIDE AND MELBOURNE. IN ALL THERE WERE 26 SHOWS IN SIX WEEKS.

**Kait Hall has toured with Missy as her lighting designer in Australia, America and New Zealand since 2007. On this tour, Missy was performing songs from her Oz album which is an Australian covers album for which she also wrote a book with stories that relate to each song. Kait discovered that the book gave her quite a unique insight into how Missy perceived the song or artist.**

"I used this as the brief for all the video and lighting during the songs," explained Kait. "In between the songs, Missy wanted to incorporate videos and photos that related to the stories in the book. A lot of this was home videos of Missy growing up and starting in the industry but it was interlaced with photos of the original song writers when she introduced each new song."

Consequently, the video was really the element that tied it all together on this tour. The media content included a lot of footage of people so hi res screens or projection that would be big enough to easily see the details was required.

"After we weighed up the space in the truck, set up time and budget we decided that projection would create the biggest impact," added Kait. "After that decision was made then I set about creating a different "backdrop" for each song with the media. The content for the songs varied between simple still images that set the mood to more metaphoric images or textures. Once I had designed the content then the lighting just complemented that and the music. Positioning of lights was designed to keep the projection area clean but to ensure that each player on stage could be individually lit from the top, back, front and sides."

Kait tried to make each song very different from all the others whilst also maintaining a thread that connected them all together. In the theatres this was easier because she could fly in different lighting and draping elements for individual songs.

Fortunately the majority of venues on the tour were theatres which worked really well because a lot of the show is very dark and theatrical. Some venues were arenas or convention centres and trying to create the same intimacy with no proscenium or fly bars created a challenge. Some of the flown elements were not possible in the venues where truss had to be used.

"I think the biggest issue though was where to put the projector every day," commented Kait. "Often the only place it

would work would be next to the FOH consoles but this created heat and noise issues that had an impact on our FOH guy, Gavin."

Kait's rig comprised of Martin MAC2000 Wash and MAC700 Spot for moving lights as well as Molefay duets, profiles, fresnels, egg strobes and some pendant lights. Control was a grandMA2 light with a Fader Wing plus a MA ON PC with wing as backup. Projection was by a coolux Pandora's Box Player Pro and a Barco 12K Projector.

Resolution X supplied the lights for the whole tour except WA and Darwin. Two crew came on the road - Luke Thorley and Michael "Stretch" Vaughan - who Kait describes as fantastic.

"I didn't really want to use LED wash for this tour because I wanted a solid looking light source," remarked Kait. "The MAC2000's are an older fixture but they still do a good job and they fit the budget. I would have liked to take Vipers but for the price I could take more MAC700 Spots and for this show they didn't need to do anything too fancy. It was also important to balance the light level with the projector output and anything brighter than a MAC700 would have blown out the vision. The MAC700 Spots are also still a reliable light for their age. I think this also says a lot about Liz and the team at Resolution X that run and maintain the moving light department."

CCP supplied the lights in WA where the number of fixtures were reduced and the MAC2000's were swapped for MAC700 Wash to fit the budget.

"In Darwin we couldn't get a projector that was powerful enough so we did a completely different show there with the fixtures they had available," added Kait. "Total Event Services supplied a mix of Robe Pointe, Spots and Washes.

"Resolution X supplied a grandMA2 light with a Fader Wing whilst CCP supplied a grandMA2 full-size. I still like the layout of the hardware on a grandMA 1 better, especially the configuration of the executor buttons, but these days I spec the grandMA2 because of the extra features the software has. It was an added bonus to have the full size in WA. They didn't have any grandMA's in Darwin though so I took the onPC and used that with a command wing and fader wing. I

KAIT HALL  
& GAVIN  
TEMPANY

haven't run a show this big off a laptop before but it ran perfectly."

Kait ran all the media from the Pandora's Box which included some footage with audio. Kait uses this coolux media server in Melbourne at the Palms at Crown so she was already familiar with it.

"I think some things are a bit too complex for the average show but Simon Barrett at Show Technology provided really quick and thorough support when I had questions and Luke from Res X was great for onsite backup with all things video," she said. "The CIPJ thumbnail exchange with the grandMA makes everything so much quicker and easier too."

FOH engineer Gavin Tempany is an Australian tech based in the UK where he freelances for Britannia Row, although he is always happy to return home for Missy having mixed her for quite some time.

JPJ Audio supplied a touring control package, whilst PA systems were picked up locally, however Gavin toured his own Midas PRO2C console.

"I believe that they are really the best sounding digital console," stated Gavin. "I have always been a big fan of the Avid Profile but for some reason it just doesn't sound right for Missy. It just doesn't sound organic enough for her, sounding rather harsh or dull. It's a weird thing that I can't explain."

Gavin describes his mixing for Missy as very interactive; he tends to use just one scene and then mix it manually. Although Missy has a fantastic voice, there is constant adjustment to be done.

"Like a lot of female singers her voice tends to be a bit low/mid heavy when she sings quietly and then when she pulls back off the mic, there's quite a bit of high/mid so you're constantly adjusting," he said. "The Midas PRO2 is great for that as you can set up Hot Keys so that you don't have to go to her channel to do it. It's a clever little console like that."

"The rest of the band are a bit like a jazz band where they balance themselves but need a little bit more push and pull every now and then. It's a good fun band to mix because they go from very quiet to very loud."

Having said that the show is particularly quiet - most of the time it's 95dB at FOH and the highest it reaches is 98dB. I've had a lot of comments from people saying how nice it is to walk away from a show without bleeding ears. A lot of people don't realize it's not about the volume but being appropriate for the artist. Sometimes you have to put your ego aside and not absolutely smash it!"

Gavin used a Klark Teknik DN9650 AES50 to Dante converter to interface with a few computers. As Dante just uses the Ethernet port on a computer, he used the 'Dante virtual soundcard' software instead of an audio card for system tuning, virtual soundcheck and background music. Gavin reports that it was faultless, easy and super quick to setup each day and so he'll definitely be doing this again in the future.

PA was a combination of in-house gear or local production with the tour carrying one set of wedges as the in-house PA's tended not to have enough coverage in the centre. Fortunately Gavin had a Lake Processor LM44 in his console package which proved invaluable.

Missy uses a Neumann KMS 105 microphone which according to Gavin, sounds really good for her voice.

"We've tried a lot of different microphones with Missy and because she has in-ears and hears really well, she doesn't always sing right on the mic," explained Gavin. "Fortunately the Neumann mics are more forgiving with this."

Missy and the entire band are all on Future Sonics in-ear monitors with Missy and Nathan Davis, monitor engineer, on molded models and everyone else on the generic Atrios models. Nathan mixed monitors on an Avid Profile and Gavin describes him as one of the cleverest, most ingenious users of the console he has seen in a long time.



LUKE THORLEY (LEFT) & MIKE "STRETCH" VAUGHAN FROM RESOLUTION X

• 5 Brands

• 6 Regions

• 1 Philosophy



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