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## Notes from the *Publisher*

In this issue, we cover the Imagine Dragons tour. One of the unique features of this tour is the collaboration of John Featherstone of Lightswitch and Nook Schoenfeld of Visual Ventures Design. Collaborations in our Industry are not unique, but this one got our attention and we think you will find the story interesting and insightful.

Also in this issue is the obituary on one of the most impactful individuals in growth and development of our Industry, Denny LaFleur of Prevost. It is hard to over-state the impact he had on our Concert Touring Industry. Indeed, it could be argued that there would not be a modern touring business without him.

Next, I want to encourage everyone to sign in to our website [www.mobileproductionpro.com](http://www.mobileproductionpro.com) and check your listing in our search engine. We are working on the next Road Book and all of our listings come from that database. We pride ourselves on having the most comprehensive data in the Global Production Industry, but we need your help to maintain the accuracy of the information.

Finally, as the season is rolling out I want to extend a personal note of gratitude to my family, crew, our advertisers and sponsors who have continued to support the work I started so many years ago as I continue to regain my strength and mobility after a very long and arduous battle with my health issues. We are moving back to the Nashville Soundcheck facility on August 1st but will be working from our homes for a few weeks. We hope you will understand if we are a little slower to respond to your calls and messages and forgive our scattered schedule as we put our new team and offices in place.

*Larry Smith*



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Anvil Productions, LLC  
ph: 615.256.7006 • f: 615.256.7004

[mobileproductionpro.com](http://mobileproductionpro.com)  
[tourlinkconference.com](http://tourlinkconference.com)

### HOME OFFICE STAFF

**Publisher:** Larry Smith  
[larrysmith@tourguidemag.com](mailto:larrysmith@tourguidemag.com)  
**Director of Operations:** Lori DeLancey  
[officemanager@mobileproductionpro.com](mailto:officemanager@mobileproductionpro.com)  
**Editorial/ Office Assistant:** Katie Smith  
[Katie@mobileproductionpro.com](mailto:Katie@mobileproductionpro.com)

### Layout / Design and Website Design:

Warehouse Multimedia  
ph: 615.420.6153 • f: 866.929.9651  
3050 Business Park Circle Suite 500  
Goodlettsville, TN 37072  
[warehousemultimedia.com](http://warehousemultimedia.com)



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events were produced by the same group of people, at the same site, and with the same equipment package for many years without incident. The way they were doing things worked...until the unexpected happened, and in an instant the old way of doing things was discovered to be wholly insufficient in dealing with the challenges

they faced.

No one should discount the value of tenured experience. Many professionals who got their start decades ago are still active today, carrying with them a wealth of knowledge that has been critical to the continued growth of the industry. However, experience alone cannot inoculate one from the possibility of disaster. If the industry is truly committed to the cause of improving safety outcomes, even the most seasoned veterans among us must be willing to exit their comfort zone and lead by example. We must all critically assess our long-held beliefs and practices, and change those which present an inordinate risk to health and safety, regardless of how "effective" they have been in the past. We must be open to exploring new processes and procedures, develop and enforce comprehensive safety policies, and communicate the importance of safety to everyone involved in the event, whether they're a stagehand or the CEO. We must not fear change, but embrace it as necessary process to protect the lives of our guests and employees.

Changing the way one works is rarely easy or comfortable, especially when we've been doing something the same way for years. Thankfully, never before have so many resources been available to assist in the process. The public release of the Event Safety Guide has made available a comprehensive collection of best safety practices culled from the experience of hundreds of active event professionals. Just recently, PLASA has made available all of their Technical Standards free of charge. Not to mention that personal communications technology has placed the wisdom of our entire contact list at our fingertips, regardless of where in the world we may be. In short, the only real barrier to letting go of old work habits and adopting safer ones is our own willingness to do so.

Although he was speaking metaphorically, John Wooden's assertion that a failure to change could be fatal has a very literal meaning in the event world. We should not wait for another tragedy to occur before we ask why doing so is necessary.

[www.eventsafetyalliance.org](http://www.eventsafetyalliance.org)

## A Change Is Gonna Come

If we want to change the industry, we must first change the way we work. Legendary UCLA Basketball coach John Wooden was once quoted as saying that although "failure is not fatal, a failure to change might be". Although undoubtedly speaking metaphorically, there's no disputing that a person's ability to change, to evolve in their beliefs and actions is critical to their continued growth and success. Few know this better than the performers we work with. With rare exception, today's topselling performers have dedicated themselves fully to the process of sustained evolution in sound, image, and live presentation. They have realized that to remain relevant to their audience, they must grow and change along with them, and not simply rely on the same "bag of tricks". Concurrently, innovations in entertainment technology have made producing remarkable live events more efficient, reliable, and costeffective.

Even the process of attending events has changed, from the fan's initial ticket purchase to the way they interact within the performers on stage. All told, change has become an ever-present part of the entire event experience.

Why is it, then, that some within the industry are still disturbingly resistant to changing the way they work for the benefit of a safer event? For those who are dedicated to improving event safety, few statements are as deadly as "I've been doing it this way for years, why should I change it now?". It's a belief founded on the assumption that a lack of previous incidents must mean that your work practices are safe, and therefore require no objective assessment. Unfortunately, recent tragedies within the industry belie this idea - what has "worked" in the past may be as much the product of good luck as skill and experience. Note that the majority of serious incidents that have befallen the event industry these last few years have not involved rookie players at start-up events, but experienced promoters, producers, and crews. In some cases, the affected



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**NEWS**

**Celebrity Coaches Welcomes Jennifer George**  
*as Vice President of Leasing and Operations!*

Jennifer has served in the entertainer coach leasing business for over 25 years and has what it takes to take Celebrity Coaches to a new level of success - the premier leasing company in the industry. Jennifer has two beautiful daughters named Olivia and Brooke, her motivation to sink her best efforts into making Celebrity Coaches reach its highest potential in the industry, while creating a positive legacy for her family.

Along with a wealth of business relationships from colleagues in the industry to some of the best drivers in the business, Jennifer brings a progressive, forward thinking energy to the company that will benefit not only the Celebrity Coaches team, but their current and future business endeavors. New and fresh ideas, passion for the business, respect, honesty and hard work are characteristics of a successful management team. Celebrity Coaches are thrilled to have Jennifer join and lead their team to new and exciting success.

MPP Welcomes you Jennifer!

More info at [www.celebritycoaches.com](http://www.celebritycoaches.com)



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# ONEREPUBLIC

goes 'NATIVE' with BANDIT LITES & CHRIS LISLE

**OneRepublic is back** on the road with Bandit Lites for their Native Summer Tour. The American rock group is celebrating Native, their third studio album which includes "If I Lose Myself," "Counting Stars" and their most recent single, "Love Runs Out." The summer tour kicked off under Bandit's lighting at the band's home state at Colorado's Red Rocks Amphitheatre.

Lighting designer Chris Lisle built on the existing look of last year's tour cycle which is comprised of diamond shaped lighting pods and video screens by repositioning some of the lighting fixtures along the diamond pods and changing out a few fixture types in the rig. The use of lights layered through rig allows for incredible, big looks.

Lighting equipment utilized included MAC Vipers, Bandit 5x5s, Clay Paky B-Eye K-20s, Clay Paky Sharpys, MAC Auras, and two GrandMA 2 consoles.

"Each fixture in the rig has its purpose," explained Lisle. "The DS Aura's are the key/front light for the show, the MS auras lay down our base color, the Vipers are used for gobo looks and backlight, the Sharpys are used for punchy beam looks, the B-Eye's are used partly for wash and then the rest of the show for eye candy, and the Bandit 5x5's are used for pixel map moments and general mayhem."

Lisle and Bandit worked together to ensure that the lighting design met the time, budget and space parameters for the tour. Lisle's design was created to fit easily into the wide variety of venues OneRepublic would visit, with the indoor version utilizing soft goods and drapes at several key moments of the performance, while outdoor venues proclivity for wind would require other elements to make those moments stand out.

The lighting team includes Adam McIntosh, Billy Willingham and Carter Fulghum. AJ Pen is the lighting director and Zito is OneRepublic's production manager.

"As always, the customer service with Bandit is outstanding," said Lisle. "They did a great job with the prep and pre-production paperwork. They also were fantastic at rolling with the punches when I threw 'little surprise request' at them during rehearsals. This is without a doubt quite the undertaking to build at each show, and the Bandit crew (Billy, Carter, and Adam) are all doing a phenomenal job. Also thanks to Brent Barrett and Matt King at Bandit for getting us out the door in the smoothest manor possible!"

"It is a complete privilege to be working with Zito (Production Manager), Chris Lisle and AJ Pen (Lighting Director) on the OneRepublic Tour," said Brent Barrett, Bandit's Business Development Officer. "The attention to detail in both the design itself and input and suggestions regarding the prep and trouping with the lighting system has been incredible. I truly appreciate the professionalism and creativity this team continually expresses!"

*About Bandit Lites, Inc.*

Bandit Lites is a global leader in the entertainment lighting marketplace. From touring productions to fixed installations, Bandit Lites has a full staff of highly trained professionals to deal with all types of lighting needs. Bandit's global presence will insure seamless transitions no matter where your next show takes you.

More info at [www.banditlites.com](http://www.banditlites.com) and [www.chrislisle.com](http://www.chrislisle.com)



## A Tribute to Prevost's Denis LaFleur

Written By: Larry Smith

The Industry lost a beloved pioneer when Denny LaFleur passed away recently. For many years, he headed up the Prevost Bus Shell Division where his vision, hard work, and big heart led the development and expansion of the Entertainment Coach Industry.

Denny had a sixth-sense regarding his clients, their needs and the impact his work had on the development and continued growth of the Industry. He was knowledgeable, personable and approached his work with a genuine concern for his clients and their needs.

On a personal level, he had a huge impact on the development of this publication, the Road Book and the Tour Link Conference. Denny understood our goals and supported every move we made. He not only supported us with advertising and sponsorships, but encouraged other coach companies to do the same. I know that especially in the early years, we could not have succeeded or progressed at all without his continued support on both a corporate and personal level.

When word got out that we were going to do this

piece on Denny, we received many messages from his clients and friends.

**Here are just a few of them:**

*"Denny LaFleur was a friend to all. Always courteous, honest, funny, and smart His word was his bond. The entertainer coach wouldn't be where it is without Denny's guidance. His influence can be seen on every coach on the road today. He is an icon in the Entertainer Coach Industry and we will all miss him. Raise the roof, Denny!!"*

**- Mike Slarve/Four Seasons Leasing**

*"I was saddened to hear the news while walking through LAX. My post on facebook was 'he probably went with a putter in his hand'! Denny encouraged me to be engaged more in the motorcoach industry years ago. I heard this news on my way home from joining the Board of the United Motorcoach Association, so his advice worked and his words live on for many of us!"*

**-Alan Thrasher/Thrasher Brothers Trailways**

*"Lorsque j'ai rencontré Denis en 1996, il m'a offert une bouteille de mon Scotch Whiskey favori et il m'a dit qu'à chaque fois, s'il venait à me décevoir ou ne tenait pas sa parole, je devrais en prendre un verre. J'ai déposé la bouteille sur le dessus mon secrétaire. La bouteille y est encore posée au même endroit et le scellé intact. Même s'il était retraité depuis 2006, notre*

*industrie a perdu un grand ami et un grand homme. Malheureusement pour ceux de nous qui sommes dans l'industrie depuis 30 ans ou plus, nous ne vivrons pas assez longtemps pour avoir l'honneur d'un autre Denis LaFleur dans nos vies.*

*When I met Denis in 1996, he gave me a bottle of my favorite Scotch Whiskey and he told me that every time he let me down or did not keep his word, I was to take a drink. I sat the bottle on the top of my rolltop desk. The bottle is still sitting in the same place and the seal is unbroken. Although he was retired, our industry has lost a great friend. Sadly, those of us who have been in this business for thirty years or more will probably not live long enough to have another Denis LaFleur in our lives."*

**- Jay Adams/Roadhouse**

*"It was a very SAD day when we lost Denny LaFleur. We always looked forward to his regular visits at our shop and his wisdom of our Industry. He was always the 'Bright Light' in any room, always a happy and funny man. We love you Denny!!"*

**- The Girls at Taylor Tours**

*"Denny was a wise and wonderful friend. He helped us build and develop our companies in a way that was not only sound financially, but with a constant eye to the future. He understood our needs as well as the needs of our clients. He always delivered on his promises and became a close friend and*

*consultant. We miss his companionship both on and off the golf course, his visits with Claudette, his beautiful, witty and supportive wife and his irresistible smile. He will be sadly missed by the Industry and all of us"*

**-Jerry Calhoun/Entertainment Coach and Jack Calhoun/Florida Coach**

Denny LaFleur was one in a million, the right man in the right place at the right time. His life touched all of us on a personal and professional level. Our entire Industry owes him a debt of gratitude for our growth and very existence. No single individual in my 35 years as a professional ever had so much impact on so many lives.





# SOUND IMAGE: ON THE ROAD W/ IMAGINE DRAGONS

Written by Katie Smith

Even while standing on stage at a local club, playing before a crowd of 25 friends and relatives for the first time, every band dreams of the day that their show mesmerizes a sold out stadium. They can picture the last sparks of the pyrotechnics falling as they gaze on at a throng of fans singing along to each word. They can see them shoving to be closer to the intense display in front of them. They can almost hear the pleas for encore after encore. It's a dream all musicians share at one time or another. But few bands realize at that early onset (or even later in their evolution) it is one that could be their very undoing. The growth of a band means the development of its sound and presentation. And through it, any act must learn to adapt their style to their new surroundings or adapt these surroundings to their style. It is a challenge that can and has destroyed many entertainers.

Imagine Dragons faced this challenge in a unique way and turned to Sound Image for a solution. Scott Eisenberg, Front of House Engineer, recalls, "My first few shows with them were a mix of acoustic promo performances and Christmas radio festival shows where I was the only person on the crew. The next couple tours were mostly 1,000-3,000 capacity clubs, and right after that we started doing amphitheaters in Spring/Summer 2013. I've never worked with a band that blew up so big, so quickly." Imagine Dragons experienced success seemingly overnight, requiring their sound and style to be fit to new types of locations rapidly.

"You can say good and bad things about any console," says Eisenberg regarding his use of an Avid Profile, "But if you can have your same show almost all the time, that counts for a lot." And that has been the recipe for Imagine Dragons' show success. Across many different venue types and sizes, even different cultures and nations, the Imagine Dragons show and sound remains the same. Consistency is the key. This move nearly guarantees the show at a European festival can be run as seamlessly as a stadium show in Los Angeles.

Andrew Dowling, Audio Crew Chief from Sound Image, played a key role in the consistency of the Imagine Dragons show as well. Dowling recounted the use of the Adamson system with Energia array to preserve the Imagine Dragons show across large and small venues alike. "The E series boxes worked great for the earlier legs where they played both small and large places. The scalability was important. The last run was full production in the largest arenas in the US and Canada. The horsepower of the system let me keep the SPL very even across the venue."

Sound Image not only had to tackle the issue of changes in venue size but also extremely short time between shows. Often, they flew from show to show, having to fly their equipment with them to their next location. Dowling and his crew were up to the task. "We overcame this by using Avid Profiles, carrying our own mics, mic cables looms, ears, wireless, and tuning equipment. We could request a Profile anywhere on the planet. We always had our mic package with us. I flew the looms with us because they were labeled and made patching the festival clean and fast. Scott at FOH used Waves plugins so we didn't need outboard gear."

(continued next page)



Jesse Adamson, Sound Image Director of Business Development, says that their ability to find solutions to problems out on the road such as this one is one thing that is truly great about Sound Image. He says that much of it comes down to good people and service, "Anyone can buy a PA system and there are a lot of great systems out there. The difference is in how the systems are realized and supported in the field. At the end of the day, it comes down to the people that you put behind it," he tells Mobile Production Monthly, "Always put your clients' needs first. This attitude is embedded in the culture at Sound Image."



New, cutting edge equipment is of course the other side of things. Equipment that can provide the sound that you are looking for, and saving time and space are all important pieces of the puzzle. When Eisenberg first began with the Dragons, they were known as "that band with the big drum". And that drum that they were infamous for caused some definite sound problems. The drum is a Japanese Taiko drum that's 5 feet in diameter. Eisenberg says, "The interesting part was that it doesn't really sound the way you would think when you're looking at it. So it's been this constant challenge to develop the sound of that thing to fit the music."

Imagine Dragons plays around the world. They have captured that dream all musicians share and avoided the perilous trap of compromising their style for the sake of growth. Sound Image has made it possible and it has not gone unnoticed. Dowling and Adamson both recall fondly the warm thanks they have always received from the band. So as Imagine Dragons sing along with their fans and enjoy the reality of their dream, they do so on a foundation of consistency provided to them by Andrew Dowling, Scott Eisenberg, and the rest of the team.

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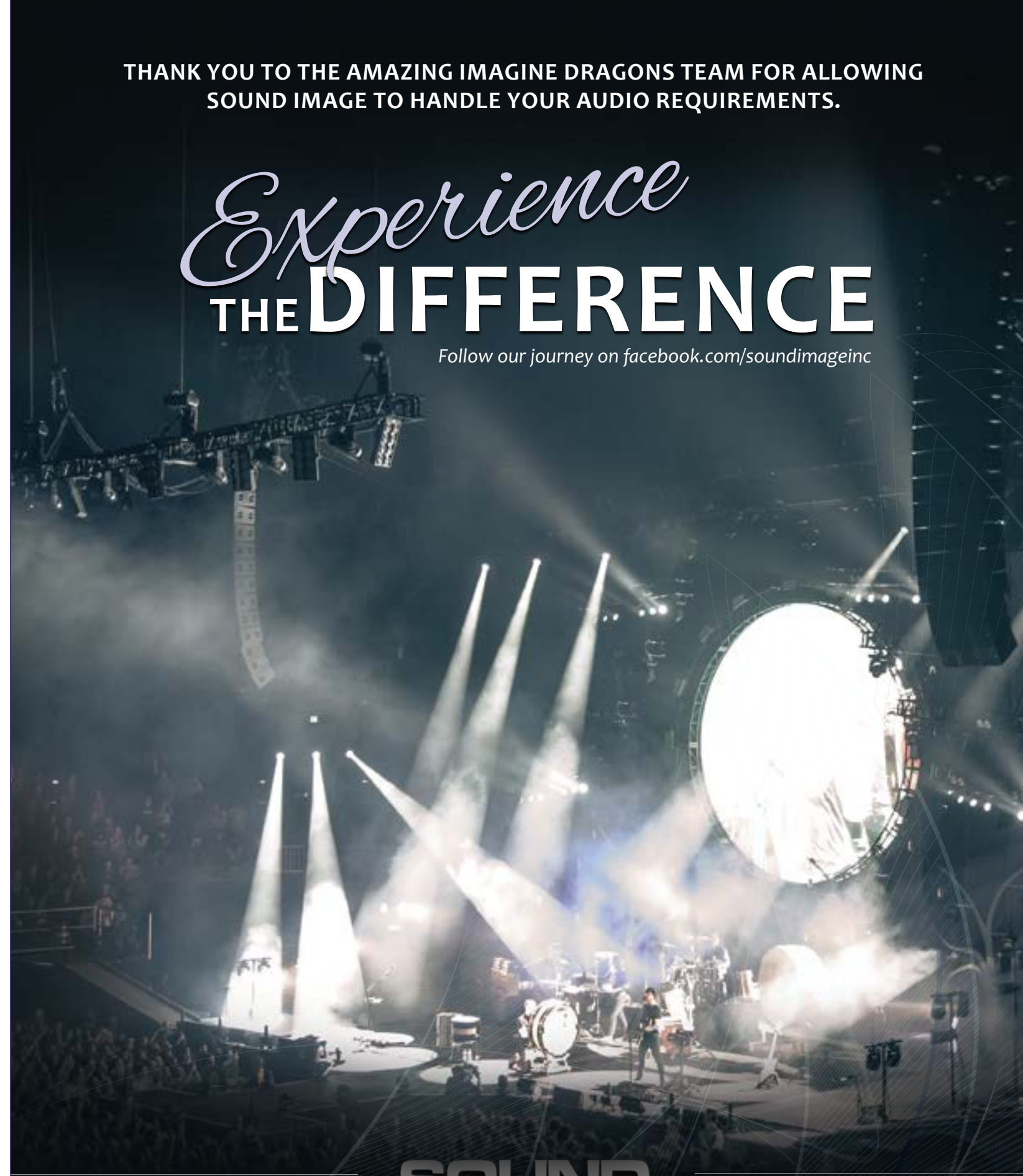
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A collaboration between  
Nook Schoenfeld and  
John Featherstone



John Featherstone



Richard "Nook" Schoenfeld



Austin Shapley

It's not uncommon for creative types from musicians to architects to collaborate and bond with each other on artistic concepts, but this is less common in entertainment design. Despite this, Visual Ventures Design and Lightswitch appear to be a fine example of two totally separate design firms who have worked seamlessly hand in hand to come up with some unique concert productions the last few years. Together they have nurtured the production design for the Imagine Dragons for the last 15 months.

**MPM:** First of all, how do you guys know each other and what's with the separate companies?

**Nook:** It's funny because I met my partner Mike Ledesma in 1985; about the same time I met Norm Schwab, John's original partner. We all did a bunch of shows together in California. Mike and I started a long term working relationship, working on shows and passing gigs back and forth. About 10 years ago we both had so many things going on, that we joined forces to share ideas, as well as a bunch of freelance employees. Come 2000, I found myself living in Chicago where I was turned on to Lightswitch and my friend, John Featherstone.

**John:** Nook and I had talked for a long time about collaborating, and have long had a bit of a 'mutual admiration society' and respect for each others art and equally important, approach to work.

**MPM:** How did your teams come together to work on this project?

**Nook:** I got a call from my friend Corrie Christopher, who is a booking agent for several touring acts. She looked after a new young band and in turn introduced me to their manager. The band had some simple ideas and needed someone to take their concept and run with it. The band sent me their music to see if I would be interested. I passed it to John. We loved it. It was one of those moments when I knew I had to come up with something special because this act had some hits coming. But alas I was booked on two other tours that month, as was my partner Mike. Lightswitch has always offered to help us out with their resources when our little company is slammed. So I picked up the phone and called John.

**John:** So Nook called and based on our successful collaboration for Kid Rock, suggested we pool our resources to work with this band. I had never heard of them but my daughter Ella had, and as soon as I heard the music I knew they were going to be huge.

**MPM:** So once you teamed up, what was the artistic approach to putting the production together?

**Nook:** It was collaboration between 3 of us actually. I came up with a design concept for a set. But I needed to get what was on my mind on paper. I employ a fabulous artist named Chris Tousey, who happens to do a lot of work in Vegas, the Dragons hometown. The band wanted some trees on stage and I wanted some other weird shapes to back them. I simply told Chris that I was looking for some 12' tall Tim Burton looking trees that I could hang some lights off of. Then I called John and asked him about the other effect the band requested. The show was to start with lots of eyeballs blinking about a dark stage.

**John:** One of the things I enjoy most about working with Nook is its really hard to find the 'edges'. By that I mean it's not like 'you do the content and I'll do the

lighting' but we work together in a far more collaborative way. So it's a bit hard recalling exactly who came up with what, but between the three of us we established a really interesting design, that was cost effective and unique.

**MPM:** So once you had a game plan, how did it all come together?

**Nook:** The bands' artwork has a picture of a full moon displayed. The band was playing clubs, but I wanted some kind of moon. So I designed a 14' tall half moon that could be suspended or stood by itself behind the drummer. Chris finished the polished Cinema 4d renderings and took a meeting with the manager, all within a week of my original phone call. By the end of that day I got a message from the manager that we had nailed it, and the band wanted to go with everything. I took care of the set construction. Warren Flynn from Christie Lites came in to handle the lighting needs and of course I dumped all the media concerns for the band into John's lap. He then steered the band through the first rehearsals. In the end Upstaging refurbished the set and provided the space we needed to redesign and program the current arena run.

**John:** Like a lot of younger bands, Imagine Dragons were very interested in exploring video content. They had some specific ideas about what they wanted for some songs, but others were a blank canvas. By using Google Docs as a collaborative tool we were able to rapidly share ideas and drill down to the look the band wanted— it's a huge time saver, and everyone involved with the project can access the central repository from anywhere. Based on that we brought a big bag of stock and custom content to rehearsals in Vegas, and in three very long days put the show together.

**MPM:** Has this design process been an on going affair all year for both firms?

**Nook:** Yes, We collaborated on two other concert productions this year but kept coming back to this one. It was a project that could tour along fine for a few months, til it jumped up in size of venue significantly. So the lighting and set need to magnify with the space. Justin Shaw did a great job running the show for a year. When we got to arenas the band asked me to step in and redesign all the lighting. And my design called for all the video to be reformatted and added to. Thus John chose new video tools, totally different from the beginning. It kept evolving til you see what we have today. The full moon upstage is the center piece.

**John:** It is a little surreal that it is only a little over a year since we were doing production rehearsals at a small studio in Vegas, and now the band are selling out arenas...but that said, one thing I am very proud of is the same set pieces the band bought for clubs are woven into the much bigger design Nook conceived, and content the band paid for is reused too. Of course there are many new elements too, but every dollar the band spent in clubs is still being used for the arena shows

**MPM:** Closing thoughts?

**Nook:** 5 years ago I made a conscientious decision to stop working on media for all my shows. Working on the set and lighting needs was time consuming enough. And John of course is a great Lighting Designer as well, and he knows the VVD style of running a show. Thus Visual Ventures Design is happy to pass that torch to John and Lightswitch. He and his sidekick Austin Shapley are my perfect match. John's skills with artist communication are exemplary. He interprets their thought process and blends my lighting with his stunningly matched media content. It's just a winning team effort when we gig together.

**John:** Nook, You are too kind, and a big 'ditto' from me! I think the collaborative work process we share is remarkable, rewarding and successful, and the way you let everyone have input ensures a better result for the client – and that's what its all about, right?

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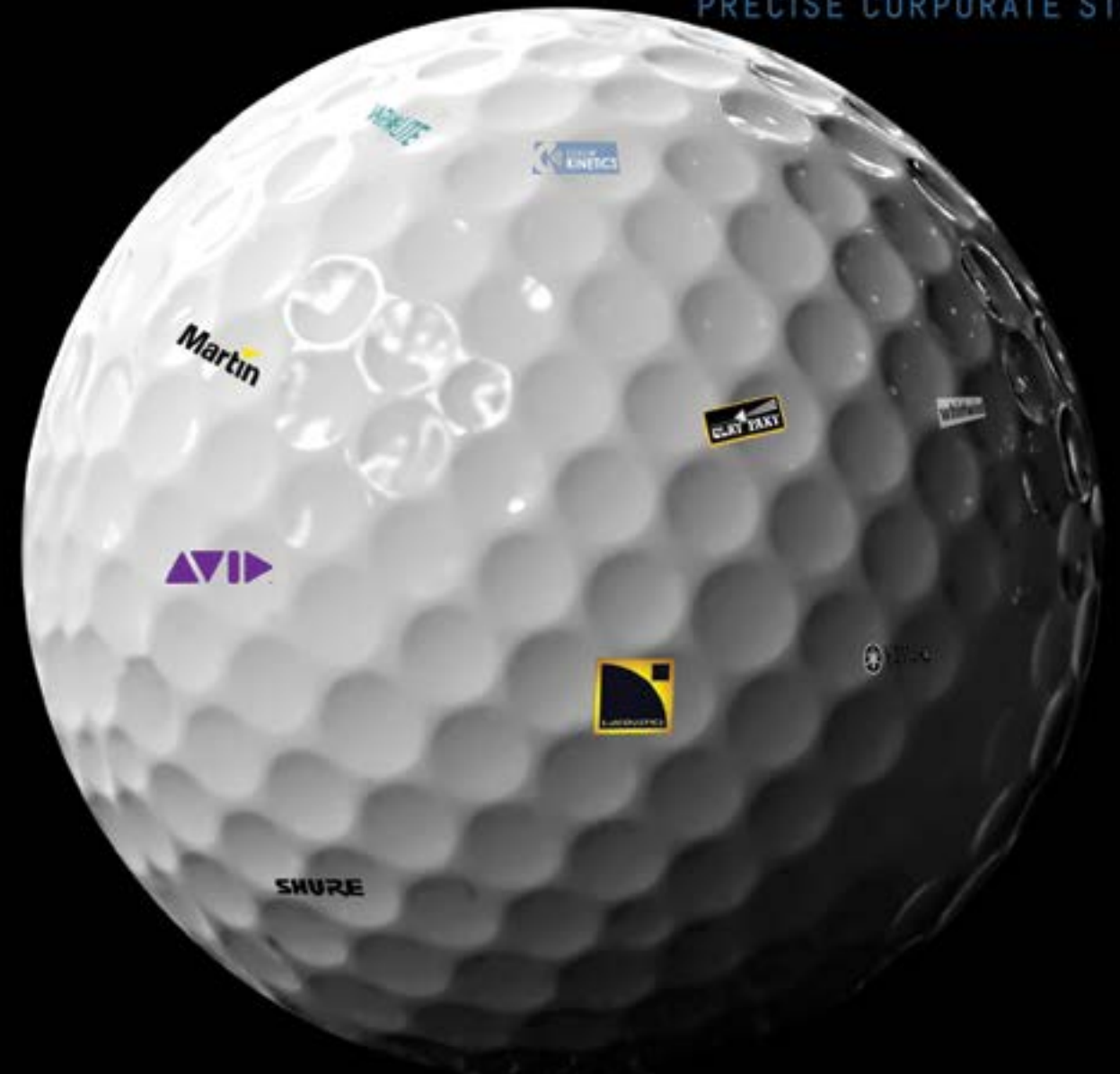
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*Production stage photos  
by SARA MALLOS*

# IMAGINE DRAGONS

## A Team of Production Artists Enhance a Band of Rock-n-Roll Artists

Written By: Mike Wharton



To say the Imagine Dragons current production has undergone “a few changes”, as Production Designer Nook Schoenfeld puts it, is a bit of an understatement. When the tour started in 2013, the original design had to fit in a 15’ trailer. Since then it has morphed two or three times to its present arena-scaled production. Everyone knew the Imagine Dragons were good and would go somewhere. Sold out shows for the North American leg were stacking up while the band labored in the club and theater markets globally.

Nook was recommended to Reynolds Management after the Dragons’ agent, Corrie Christopher, saw his work on a Rise Against tour. The band was impressed with the approach Schoenfeld took with a design that incorporated looks comprising lots of split second accents in a fast paced rock show. “The band told me they wanted a stark and moody look whenever the music applied but stagnant, pretty scenes were something they preferred to avoid for any period of time.”

What the band didn’t know about Nook at the time was his capability to make a small rig look large. This was a valuable asset as the band’s management had booked a variety of capacity venues from clubs to arenas, based on the success of the two hits the band had on the air waves fifteen months ago.

Schoenfeld and his partner at Visual Ventures Design were slammed so he conferred with fellow designer, John Featherstone, and came up with a game plan. Then Nook called upon the creativity of his artist, Chris Tousey, to design these “Tim Burton-esque” trees he envisioned. The “Night Visions” tour has artwork depicting a moon which Schoenfeld wanted to incorporate into the set as well. However, carrying a large moon to hang at the beginning of the tour was out of the question since the initial venues were geared towards House of Blues-sized stages. There was also that 15’ trailer limitation.

So he added a 14’ tall half-moon and asked Tousey to come up with two other “cool” pieces to go with the shopping list. He wanted a ‘set in a bag’ kind of feel. Chris designed what Schoenfeld refers to as the “shark fins” - two free standing shapes that could stand anywhere and just absorb light. Gallagher Staging built one easily transportable cart to carry the entire set and it’s still being used daily.

This set served well in 5,000 seat theaters along with added side floor trusses and the rig getting beefed up with more fixtures in general. For part of the theater run, a fly rig provided by ZFX Flying Effects was added as the band’s vocalist expressed a long-standing desire to fly over the crowd.

Then the arena run began. Production Manager Eric “Shakes” Grzybowski explains:

“Angie Warner, the Tour Manager, and I came on the European leg early on in 2013. There were a couple of guys in place who worked directly for the band before full production was brought in for the North America arena leg. They are still with us; Monitor Engineer, Jared Swetnam, and FOH Engineer, Scott Eisenberg. When we started the US arena leg, I brought on Rigger/Stage Manager, Erik Smith, and my long-time Production Assistant, Dez (Douglas Hughes). I’ve worked with Nook a lot over the years but he was hired by the band, and I’ve had Upstaging and PRG/Nocturne out on tours before. So I was very familiar with those guys. It’s a good team out here.”

“Shakes”, as he prefers to be called, continues, “I have to give thanks to this crew. With just one day rehearsal on an arena sized production, we came right out of the box really solid. We’ve got great Crew Chiefs with Andrew Dowling at Sound, Wayne Kwiat for Lighting, and John McLeish as our Video Crew Chief and Director. Things are pretty stellar now. We don’t do more than three dates in a row on this leg and we’re sold out everywhere. The European leg was very demanding. Distances overnight often meant flying to gigs and renting band gear. But the crew stepped up and did what needed to be done.”

“Each department out here has really strong crews, too,” says Shakes. “Really, it’s the whole picture. All our drivers get the gear and crew safely to every gig. Almost everyone out here wears two hats. Our Rigger, Erik Smith, handles Stage Manager duties as well. Kyle Armbruster, one of the two Set Carpenters, shoots the long lens 50 mm camera at FOH during the show. The other Carpenter, Scott Wienclaw, sets up the eight cryo canisters after loading in the set. The two Video Techs, Josh Phebus and Josh Marrano operate handheld cameras during the show.”



Picture drawn by the band (top left), Initial club set & Lights (bottom left), Arena tour rendering (top right) Summer 2013/Phase 2 - 5000 seaters (bottom right)

“We’re all doing our best to keep costs down for the Dragons. That’s why everyone is wearing multiple hats,” says Schoenfeld. “It is a testament to the quality of this crew that, even with the multiple duties each handles, the show looks and sounds flawless now.”

The lighting crew consists of four people. Lighting Crew Chief, Wayne Kwiat, has been with Upstaging since 2007 and a regular on Coldplay world tours since 2008. He has a very even handed way of overseeing the lighting crew getting the thirty point lighting rig up, running, and at trim in four hours. Side trusses and a DS truss augment the upstage and under hung trusses bring the fixture count to just over two hundred.

Regarding Upstaging, Schoenfeld has this to say, “Upstaging is my favorite lighting vendor. The gear is superb and I can count on every light, every night. Christie Lites did a fine job for us in the beginning of the year but because of the band’s demanding schedule, there were no production rehearsals scheduled. Featherstone and I needed a facility where I could pre-program the lighting in a previz suite, then turn around and tweak the lights while the video hung behind it in a lighting shop. Upstaging had all the gear and space we needed.”

John McLeish, Video Crew Chief, Engineer and Director, who performs each night backstage in video village with a Rick Wakeman-like setup, picks up the previous conversation thread, “Normally three people would hold the positions as Chief, an Engineer shading cameras, and a Director, but everyone on the crew is behind the band, so we’re doing whatever extra we can.”

Schoenfeld emphasizes what a valuable asset McLeish is to him and the production. “I’ll have a look up and tell John, I need something like ‘such and such’ to go with what I have on screen. He knows what I’m looking for and drops it in. He knows the show really well so he can pick up solos when I need them.”

McLeish, who works for PRG Nocturne, has through his wide range of positions from Projectionist to Director over the years, worked with Schoenfeld on several projects. The two have developed an almost telepathic anticipation of asked and needed visualization to create a cohesive presentation.

“The band is very involved with the look of the show. They will ask for something or Nook will come up with a visual idea. Nook or I pass that info onto John Featherstone of Lightswitch and before we play it live, we run it by the band,” says McLeish.

Schoenfeld adds, “The band does not like that static IMAG type look. They don’t want people watching a TV set. They want eyes on them.”





**“.....it’s like a real rock show!  
Everybody’s watching the stage.”**

“Yeah,” says McLeish, “one of the great things about this show is we are not carrying side screens so it’s like a real rock show! Everybody’s watching the stage.”

The video department has a 50mm long lens camera at FOH, two handhelds in the pit and two RoboCams. These cameras feed into a Magic DaVE switcher, then into the MBOX which contains the graphics. Schoenfeld controls the MBOX output via the grandMa. A 21’ x 21’ square 9mm V-9 LED video screen then receives that mix. The square hangs inside a 20’ ID circle. You never see the square as it is masked electronically via the MBOX. A less imaginative designer would tend to go for the obvious Pink Floyd-type effect with this set up. Not so here. Schoenfeld explains:

*“The band just is not into IMAG shots of themselves so I used what we call the ‘Radiohead effect’ where I’ll put up a graphic on the screen with a band member superimposed on or in it.”*

To further avoid the Pink Floyd stereotype, he hung a product made by TMB called Solaris Flare on the perimeter of the 20’ circle. These are RGBW strobe/wash fixtures. Schoenfeld uses them mainly as audience blinders....and blind they do. At 1000w, these are intense. An upstage truss with four staggered under hung trusses on each side of the circle make this relatively sparse rig look huge. The Sharpys that hang in these trusses are well known for their brightness but again it’s Schoenfeld’s design and color combination that heighten the emotional content of the songs. The timing is dead on as well, particularly during the white light chase attacks.

Schoenfeld has an abiding philosophy to make every song in a set look different. Calling on his over thirty years of designing in rock and roll, theater, and corporate markets has given him the tools to accomplish these looks. His last three projects have been diverse, designing Kid Rock, John Legend, and currently Imagine Dragons, to name a few in a long list of clients.

Having seen the Legend show and after watching this show, the first words that came to mind when thinking about the two was, “beautiful”.

While many designers tend to stick with a narrow pallet of their favorite colors, even from one design to another, Schoenfeld utilizes a broad range in the color spectrum available to him. The results are elegant, stunning, and surprising.

John Featherstone of Lightswitch remarked to Schoenfeld at the first show, “I never imagined that you would throw green at my sun image I created for you. It’s beautiful!”

Featherstone is the owner and principal of Lightswitch, a graphic design company, whom Schoenfeld has collaborated with on many projects in the past.

*“Collaboration is the right word for what Nook and I do,” says Featherstone. “It is not a hierarchy. Nook could be seen as a conductor rather than a director. He and I will meet with the band, or sometimes it’s one or the other of us, to see what they want or if they like what we have produced for them. We then collaborate on the overall visual architectural language of the show and then we each kind of return to our specialized areas. It is important to understand what you get wrong as well as what you get right. We are not being defensive when we ask the client ‘what didn’t you like about this part we suggested for your show’. We think that knowledge is incredibly important. We want to know what the story is. This is particularly important with a band like Imagine Dragons whose lyrical content is so important.”*

Featherstone adds, “McLeish has been on the last couple of projects and along with my assistant, Austin Shapley, has been invaluable rounding out this four man creative team we have. We all work in the real world of putting on shows and try to find a way to produce efficiently in the most cost effective manner. We don’t just put something together, say ‘here it is’ and move on to the next project. We’ll show the band our

‘first pass’, learn what they like or don’t like and adjust. Austin, my right hand man, stayed out with this show after rehearsals and into the first few weeks of the tour.”

He continues, “Quite often you will see a show that the set looks nice, the lighting and graphics look good, but something just doesn’t gel. It’s like all of the people were isolated in their ivory tower until it all got thrown together at rehearsal. They are all trying to outdo each other. It’s almost like ‘did you people talk to each other at all?’ Constant communication between all parties brought about a stellar show that everyone enjoys.”

Scott Eisenberg is the FOH Engineer on the tour. He has been with the band since the days when they drove their own cars to get to most of the gigs booked at radio stations. When Imagine Dragons weren’t at a radio station, they were on a radio show line up at a venue. They stepped up to vans to haul themselves and their gear at that time. Eisenberg was Tour Manager, Stage Manager and FOH Engineer. Humble beginnings indeed but listening to the band each night, he knew something was there.

These days his biggest challenge is finding space for the myriad of drums the band keeps adding.

“The band is very bass and drums dominant,” says Eisenberg. Part of my solution was pulling that frequency back where it was not needed, so there would be sonic room for the additions.”

He continues, “The latest addition has been this taiko drum which contains a lot of frequencies. This band though, practically mixes itself. They are really accomplished musicians and that makes an enjoyable job for me just a little bit easier.”

He credits Audio Crew Chief Andrew Dowling and his crew Ted Bible and Ashley Corr for their excellence as well.

Dowling first began working in audio around the age of fourteen and continued his pursuit in school and onto the road as Systems Engineer,

teaching for a host of talented engineers. He cites longtime friend and colleague, Hugh Johnson, as an influential mentor.

Angie Warner, a past winner of the Top Dog Award in 2011, through mutual friends and business associates connected with the Dragons as their Tour Manager. She has been with the tour since April 2013. During her past twenty years in the business she has worked with Jay Z, all of the Dancing with the Stars tours, and ran both Glee Live tours. Her initiation into the business started right at arena and stadium level tours for the likes of Dave Matthews, Britney Spears and ‘N Sync.

Of the Dragons she says, “They are very independent guys. They have not gotten to the point where they need a lot of stuff. They carry their own bags. They get themselves on and off the bus. They’re still very ‘active’ as I call it. The band makes it easy on us since they are so verbal about what they want. They’re great with accepting ideas and very open to new ones. Most of what they want, they figure out on their own. They have a great sense of what they want musically and visually. These guys are very family oriented too. They want to build a team that will be around for a long time so there is not a lot of transition.”

Warner continues, “This past year has been so staggered as far as where we’ve been. It hasn’t been six weeks in America and six weeks in Europe, it’s been more like two weeks here, two weeks there and then we flip-flopped all over various countries in Europe. It hasn’t been steady growth necessarily but it exploded really fast. We took what crew we needed and the gear to get the job done. Now though, it’s a sizable crew; we’ve got a Tour Accountant, Production Assistant, and Live Nation Reps travel with us which is all very necessary on a sold out arena tour.”

Bearing all the craziness in mind of the Spartan days of the early dates of this tour Warner says that this probably is the best tour she has done in fourteen years. “To see them at this growth period and be part of it the last year has been an amazing experience.”

# IMAGINE DRAGONS

## TOURING PERSONNEL

ANGIE WARNER .....	Tour Manager
ERIC "SHAKES" GRZYBOWSKI .....	Production Manager
RICHARD "NOOK" SCHOENFELD .....	Production Designer/Lighting Director
VINCENT CORRY .....	Tour Accountant
DOUGLAS "DEZ" HUGHES .....	Production Assistant
SCOTT EISENBERG .....	FOH Engineer
JARED SWETNAM .....	Monitor Engineer
KYLE ARMBRUSTER .....	Set Carpenter
SCOTT WIENCLAW .....	Set Carpenter
ERIC KANE .....	Drum Tech
SHANE JOHNSON .....	Guitar Tech
ERIK SMITH .....	Rigger and Stage Manager
ANDREW DOWLING .....	Audio Crew Chief
TED BIBLE .....	Audio
ASHLEY CORR .....	Audio
JOHN MCLEISH .....	Video Director
JOSH PHEBUS .....	Video Tech
JOSH MARRANO .....	Video Tech
WAYNE KWIAT .....	Lighting Crew Chief
MARTA KWIAT .....	Lighting
BRIAN REED .....	Lighting
JOSH WAGNER .....	Lighting
BRAD WOSIK .....	Trainer/Band Asst
TOM TIMOTHY .....	Merchandiser
LONNIE JONES .....	Caterer

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 Audio...Sound Image  
 Video...PRG Nocturne  
 Set...Gallagher Staging  
 Cryo...Strictly FX

Production Design by Visual Ventures Design, Nook Schoenfeld  
 All video content by Lightswitch, John Featherstone and Austin Shapley



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