

INSTALLMENTS

PRESTONWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH TO AIR "GLORIA—A



During the finale, the adult choir is joined by over 500 children, totaling over 1000 voices

It's an off year for Prestonwood Baptist Church from their typical Dallas Christmas Festival production which is a two hour secular Christmas performance combined with a choir concert and a theatrical story of Christ played out in a massive stage show for over 70,000 guests each year. While an all new show is being created for 2007, Prestonwood's Minister of music & worship, Todd Bell created a stunning, made for television choir and orchestra performance that will be seen all over the country.

Todd Bell explained "Gloria, A thousand Voices Sing Christmas" was an attempt by our church to lend an atmosphere of worship to the Christmas Season. The central message of the evening is that the birth of Christ is not a "fairy tale", but something we wholeheartedly believe happened. This was not meant to entertain people, but to draw them emotionally into the true meaning of Christmas. We wanted our audience to see and share the glory of the birth of Christ and the love He extends to each of us."

Three sold out performances featured the 550 person Prestonwood Choir and 70 piece live orchestra through half of the performance lead-

ing up to a Christmas message from Pastor Jack Graham. For a 20 minute conclusion to the performance the adult choir and orchestra is joined by over 500 children & youth choirs totaling over 1,000 voices in a breathtaking performance.

Prestonwood's 7,000 seat worship center was converted into a performance hall with the three day construction of a custom set & riser system designed, supplied and built by Communilux Productions in Dallas TX. The set was designed to allow for a breakup of the choir to add dimension and depth to the look and to pull it away from the traditional look of a large choir in standard choir risers. The set and lighting was also designed to be pulled forward and put the choir out front and in the faces of the crowd. "The "V" shaped, custom set was 145' wide, over 11' rows deep and stood 18' off of the stage floor and was treated with soft goods to match the interior of the worship center space. The 200 some odd load rated deck units all had custom legs to fit over the existing house risers, flooring and half walls" says Joe Kaplor, Scenic Designer. The various backdrops included a cyc, a

100' special effects sharktooth scrim for amplified projection of light and a white light LED curtain.

In addition to the powerful music of the orchestra and incredible voices, the show featured several customized video elements and specialized lighting in addition to an aerial adage.

"A variety of artistic creators, producers and directors allowed us a lot wonderful media to help expand and magnify what we tried to relay in the songs performed" says Cyndi Nine, Production Manager. Several videos and graphics were produced that played along with or accompanied the live music such as, pencil sketch animations to the music of Glorious Impossible, outlining the songs meaning throughout the number or words to the Lord's Prayer projected magically into the middle of the scrim surrounded by lighting. A custom video was produced for "I believe" walking through the lyrics and reinforcing the true meaning of Christmas. Multiple children's drawings were part of a video collage for the song, children go where I send thee.

Lighting designer Donnie Brawner of Springfield MO based Brawner & Associates was brought in to ac-

THOUSAND VOICES SING CHRISTMAS”

accomplish two main objectives from a lighting stand point which was to light the show for television and build a lighting design that would match the strength, power and magnitude of the production while creating multiple lighting moments throughout the show. “I challenged Donnie to work in unison with our video team to create some special moments in the show and work to tie the lighting and video together as a cohesive package. Not only did we create an overwhelming live experience, we captured this for television for thousands of others to experience” says Todd Bell.

“Due to the limited setup time for this production which all happened inside of a week and my schedule which did not allow for virtual pre-programming, we worked to keep the house plot in tact as much as possible and decided to light the show with an intelligent system” says Donnie Brawner. A rental package was brought in from Christie Lites in Dallas which when mixed with the house equipment totaled over 350 conventionals and 112 moving lights. “We lit the stage with VL3500 as key light units with VL3000 units providing color and texture on top of the 3500’s. We used Mac 2K profiles as the over stage aerial units and Mac 600 units as the workhorse for all of the backlight. The conventionals consisted mainly of audience light, upstage orchestra lighting, colored side light and a few specials. We corrected all of the conventionals to the CTB that we get out of the moving lights and shot the whole show that way. This allows our colors to read much more true on tape” Brawner explains.

“The time frame for building the cueing was certainly tight. We built over 300 cues in a couple (of) days but those cues had to be specific in that they were tied to the color palette coming off the screens and they had to be appropriate for the camera angles being used and obviously tied to the

music. What saved us was that we were not necessarily lighting dancers and performers coming on and off the stage and following people around with light and constantly lighting a new drop or scenic element. We had a general setup for the choir and then worked with positions and color over the top of them as the changing elements. The key however, is to over exaggerate the lighting to keep up with the power of the music. The musical arrangements created and produced by Prestonwood are hard to keep up with sometimes and you have to consider that in the design process.”

“The key to making all of this happen was having programmer Ron Robertson sitting at the GrandMA. He and I work together all of the time and that relationship between programmer and designer can make or break a deal of this size.” Brawner adds.

Production Manager Cyndi Nines comments “The magic of the moment was directly related to the beautiful display of color and movement of the lighting. We have worked with Brawner and Associates for many years and once again were blown away by the incredible pictures that were painted through lights. The depth of each song grew as it was enhanced by the myriad of lights encompassing the room. Anyone in attendance would have to acknowledge the genius creativity of lighting designer Donnie Brawner and his programmer, Ron Robertson.”

All three shows were taped between two days with over 20,000 guests and will go into edit for a one hour television special. Front of house cameras were combined with floor level cameras down front, handheld cameras roaming the room and boom cameras sweeping the air. The production will be aired over Christmas Eve and several times before and after on TBN, Daystar, Family Net and local ABC affiliates in certain cities including Dallas & West Palm Beach FL.

AVIOM GEAR STRIKES A CHORD WITH THE METROPOLITAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOUSTON

The Metropolitan Baptist Church of Houston, TX (a.k.a. “The Met”) has improved their audio networking connectivity and sound quality by upgrading its Worship Center’s Aviom stage monitoring system, adding an AN-16/i input module to an already impressive solution.

Aviom’s A-16D Pro Distributor simplifies stage and studio setups for The Met via eight channels of isolated DC power that are dispersed to connected A-16 personal monitor mixers.

“Aviom products have been instrumental in helping this church maintain the integrity of the audio signal throughout the entire system even with locations exceeding 300 feet apart,” explained Harold Rubens, audio consultant for The Met. “By installing three Aviom 16/0-Y1 cards into the Yamaha DME64N system DSP located at front of house, running three CAT-6 cables to the amp room and inserting three Aviom AN-16/os next to the amps, The Met has successfully upheld its mission.”

“Since the majority of our musicians, singers and technical arts personnel are volunteers, many are not well versed in audio engineering and equipment application,” says audio director Tracy Clayton. “This is why it’s so important that The Met fulfill its audio needs with a system that is not only high in quality, but also is easy to configure, learn and apply.”

The Met’s choir room installed an AN16/i-M A-Net Input Module, and acquired six A-16II Control Surfaces to establish simplified audio connections and two remote control points for a given mix. The system also now features an A-16D Distributor, re-tasked from prior usage at the Worship Center.