

VARI*LITE

“OUTSTANDING” VARI-LITE VLZ PROFILE MEETS EVERY CHALLENGE FOR EVITA



Kansas City, USA – The VLZ PROFILE luminaire, from Vari-Lite’s latest generation of LED moving head fixtures, has once again proven its outstanding stage lighting credentials, this time on Plan B Entertainment’s US touring production of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s hit musical *Evita*. The fixture’s size, brightness, zoom range, and effects package combined to meet the lighting designer Chad Bonaker’s every need.

Bonaker, faced with the familiar touring theater challenges of limited truck space and short load-in times, knew he had to ask a lot from his lighting fixtures. “The lighting package needed to be very compact,” he says. “And, with quite a few one-off tour dates, we wanted to limit the number of fixtures to be loaded in and refocused from venue to venue.”

Ideally, what the lighting rig lacked in fixture numbers, it would have to make up for in the versatility of the individual fixtures. “Every light in the air had to pull its weight in multiple roles,” says Bonaker. “*Evita* has a few full stage numbers where I wanted to get good color on the whole stage and still have enough fixtures left over for specific texture and solo work.”

The core of that versatility would come from a high brightness fixture that would hold its presence from the narrowest beam to the widest wash. The VLZ PROFILE’S powerful 24,000 lumen output and 8-50° zoom range delivered all the flexibility he needed, and more.

“I originally planned on 16 fixtures to provide a full stage side wash in color, so I was pleasantly surprised that, with the VLZ’s brightness and zoom range, I could usually get away with using

just eight,” he says. “The VLZ has great intensity at full zoom and searing intensity at its narrowest. With the zoom, I didn’t need to use the iris for tight pickups.”

Overall, Bonaker declares the VLZ’s light output, both in terms of brightness and the quality of its color rendition, to be “outstanding.”

“Normally,” he says, “you run fixtures at full and wish you had a bit more intensity. For some pickups, I find myself running the VLZs at 50%, while the evenness of the field means that the gobos look great. The quality of the LED light also avoids the weird skin tone color issues that sometimes occur with non-incandescent sources, and the color is constant across the full range of intensity.”

Bonaker also found the VLZ PROFILE’S extensive feature-set, including its four-blade framing system, particularly useful. “I used the shutters a fair amount to make the shot between the upstage video walls. I used the prism and gobo rotation in a couple of places to add interesting motion. Specifically, I used the effects wheel and gobo rotation during the *Eva* and *Che* waltz to make it seem like they were waltzing in space, surrounded by moving stars.”

Summarizing his experience of the VLZ PROFILE, Bonaker says, “I put the VLZS through their paces and they did great. I was nervous going into tech with so few fixtures in the air that the show wouldn’t be very dynamic, because I’d have to use so many for area lighting alone. Luckily, I could do so much with just a few fixtures, that the rest could be used to create some art.”



“From moment to moment, I could use a VLZ as an area light, then as a back special, then as a texture cutting through the air. The flexibility allowed me to create a dynamic design with a great variety of looks.”

For Bonaker, the VLZ PROFILE has not only provided an efficient and versatile new lighting tool, but also validated LED technology's place in stage lighting. “LED technology has come a long way,” he says. “This tour has proven to me that the age of the incandescent theater fixture is waning. The quality of the VLZ makes me believe that we’re on the verge of a seismic shift in lighting to rival the introduction of the original Vari-Lite.”

Touring US theaters this spring, Plan B Entertainment’s production of Evita is the latest in a string of high profile stage successes for the Vari-Lite VLZ PROFILE, which has already impressed lighting designers on prestigious stages including LA Opera, B ejart Ballet Lausanne, and Copenhagen’s Royal Danish Theater. ■

PRODUCTS FEATURED:
VLZ PROFILE

PHOTO CREDITS:   Plan B Entertainment / Will Page
Photography

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Chad Bonaker

LIGHTING APPLICATION: THEATRE