

Cheetah-licious:

Abbey Rosen Holmes on The Cheetah Girls' *One World* Tour

The Cheetah Girls recently wrapped up their *One World* tour of U.S. arenas. Having designed last year's Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus *Best of Both Worlds* tour, Abbey Rosen Holmes took on the challenge of lighting this trio of Disney darlings. "One of the great things about Miley's tour was working with director Kenny Ortega," she says. "On this, I worked with another great director, Amy Pinckham, and that was fantastic, too."

"Disney has a truly great producing team, from the top all the way down,"

responded to the changes, and all three of the girls were really hard-working, too. Everyone remained unbelievably pleasant, even though we were under the gun for time."

Nevertheless, Holmes and lighting programmer Patrick Dierson produced a heavily cued show. Jim Fitzpatrick was the tour's lighting director. "If something happens in the music, we're on it," Holmes says. "We had many cues running on time code. There's no reason not to lock into it.

On this type of pop music, all the little steps that play off the music would be difficult to execute manually; some are just too fast. [Time code] leaves you free to look at what else is going on. Jim concentrated on the spot calls; that's difficult, with all three girls up there, and he did a fantastic job."

Lighting equipment included eight High End Systems SHOWGUNS, eight Martin MAC 2000 Wash XBs, one Martin Mac 2000 Wash XBs, 19 Martin Mac 2000 Wash XBs, 33 Martin Mac 700 Profiles, 22

Vari*Lite VL2500 Wash units, 39 VL3000 Spots, four Reel-EFX DF50 hazers, two Martin ZR33 foggers, six Lycian M2 followspots, 200 American DJ Egg Strobes, six Confetti Storm machines, and two grandMA consoles. "I had the most impeccable lighting system ever from Upstaging," Holmes says, "and we had a great crew, who did a beautiful job on this."

Holmes collaborated on the production design with Butch Allen. "We created a lot of fun dance areas with a lot of levels and places to appear on the stage," she says. "Butch is really good at making shows that don't have a lot of money look like they did. We had a fairly streamlined set and lighting system, but I think we succeeded

in making it look big and rich." One highlight featured the girls flying in on the set's three crystal chandeliers.

All Access Staging, with support from Bob Hughes, built the set, which included decorative fascias made from Allen's artwork. These were laser-printed and hand-painted on top of a vinyl fabric. "We had a request from the girls and Amy for some curvy shapes," says Holmes. "Curved trusses are expensive to build and to truck, so the curved fascia was a way to have that look. We have a curved shape in the video screen, and it's mimicked on the bottom, where the stairs come in. We tried to mimic it by arching the trusses, to give the rig a bit of shape and architecture."

Rob Wagner, who was responsible for the video content, also incorporated the curved fascia on top of the LED screen into the images. "It made the content look so much different from what you typically see—so much video is rectangular," Holmes says. Video gear included a 16' x 32' wide Daktronics 13mm high-res screen and a Doremi dual hard drive, supplied by Screenworks.

Holmes worked closely with Wagner to make sure the video content and the lighting were complementary. "Rob and I talked about colors ahead of time, and he and his team were with us on site, so, when we had issues with brightness or contrast or levels, they adjusted the footage," Holmes says. "The video and the lighting cues all look like part of one coordinated piece, so I was really happy about that in terms of how the show looked.

"Overall, it was a really good show," Holmes says. "Disney does work that is aimed at kids, but they don't dumb down the quality of the production values. It was really cute and, actually, more sophisticated than you might expect."

—Catherine McHugh



Holmes adds, "and it was a real pleasure to work with all of them again. Chip McLean is the senior vice president of Buena Vista Concerts for Disney Music Group and Gary Lanvy is the vice president of production. Gary manages to keep within the budget without losing sight of which elements are important to the show. He has a wonderful tour manager working with him, Dan McGee, and Jack Albeck, a great production manager."

Rehearsal time was short, she notes, "especially for a fully choreographed show like this. But everyone stepped up. The director was great—I've never seen anyone get a show up and running so quickly. Also, the choreographer, Fatima Robinson, quickly