

# Rocking in the air



Lighting and video effects are a rock and roll staple that can set creative targets. **Geny Caloisi** went to Liverpool for a first hand look

**IN THE 2007** season of music festivals, the weather behaved as normal — it rained and was muddy everywhere — but it didn't deter people from having fun at the first ever Knowsley Hall Music Festival in Liverpool.

The two day rock festival presented popular artists such as The Who (Saturday headliners), Keane (Sunday headliners), Joss Stone and Madness. Local band, the Zutons, had the audience singing along and dancing.

The festival was developed by Cream, the organisers of Creamfields held in nearby Daresbury, and produced by Loudsound Events. Knowsley Hall's grounds and stage sets allowed visitors to capture the true essence of what a rock festival should be like.

In the back drop, there was the beautiful Knowsley House, just seven miles from the centre of Liverpool, complete with a lake, a grand entrance and 2,500 acres of grounds. The only neighbours that were affected by the sound of the festival was a flock of sheep which were 'baaahing' along to the music.

## STAGING AND VIDEO

The main stage was based on a Star Events 20m Vertech system, which is 15m deep and provides 11m of headroom above the 2m stage deck height.

Two line arrays of speakers at the sides of the stage were used, although they changed height — because The Who asked for the speakers to be about a metre and a half higher for its show on Saturday. The two speakers at the top had to be switched off because otherwise the sound would have travelled straight out of the grounds. On the Sunday, when the speakers were lower, the sound was much more intense.

HSL supplied full lighting production, rigging and crew for the main stage, for the My Space stage and the VIP tent, which had its own stage and comfortable sitting area.

Video was run on LED screens behind the artists on both days. HSL's riggers Danny Spratt and Mark Wade put in 5x two tonne points and 2x one tonne points on the main stage for The Who's upstage tracking Lighthouse video screen, which weighed 6.5 tonnes and split into four. It was supplied to The Who's touring production by XL Video.

Keane utilised the same points for its 'V' Truss and its 40 x 20 ft MiTriX video screen. The total rigging point count was 36, including the four for the PA wings.

## LIGHTING

The way the lights were arranged for the headliner groups of each day meant that they could fit together in one lighting grid, avoiding having to change the whole rigging from one day to the next. While The Who had a square arrangement for its lights, Keane had a V shape which fitted inside the other. However, changing the lights from one truss to the other was 'interesting', according to a diplomatic Mike Oates from HSL.

Robe moving lights were used throughout. On the V truss these included 12 of the new Robe ColorSpot 700E ATs and nine ColorWash 700E ATs on the floor at the back. Eight-lites and scrollers fronted the pantographs, complimented by 4-lites and scrollers on the floor.

The Who used a total of 20 Robe ColorWash 700E ATs, 44 Robe ColorWash 1200E ATs and six ColorSpot 1200E ATs the only spot fixtures on the rig. Its front truss comprised PARs and seven 8-lites with scrollers.

HSL also supplied four Robert Julian Ivanhoe 2.5K follow spots at FOH, 14 Martin Professional Atomic strobes and 28 JTE PixelLines used to edge the front of The Who's trusses, plus some 8-lites on small trusses to illuminate the PA wings. The Who also brought in 10 Syncrolight B52s from its festival touring rig, but it asked not to have any smoke on stage, which made the lighting design more difficult, in particular on the bright summer nights when ambient light makes special effects appear dimmer. The Who played black and white and colour archive footage from the band's 40+ year history.

Keane also used an LED back wall and the material in it was a mixture of computer graphics and live feeds from the three band members. These images were filmed by a three camera crew the band provided.

The lighting for Keane was truly spectacular, unlike The Who they made full use of smoke and the band's lighting designer, Rob Sinclair, made artistic use of light and shadows giving the spectacle a filmic feel. □

**Mud and lighting are both festival staples, but The Zutons, the fans and Keane helped to transcend the weather**

## CONTACTS

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