

digital edition

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Classic Gear: EvenLED

Rob Halliday takes a nostalgic but instructive look back at the tools that have shaped the industry . . .

A little different this time: a product you've probably never heard of. But classics are products that change the game, and this one does. Think of it as a future classic: EvenLED.

A casual glance would probably peg it as a modular videowall: a 1m square tile housing a 4 x 4 grid of LEDs. Like those products, it is designed to be easily built into arrays: tiles click, then lock together vertically from single hanging points. Metal clips link the handles of adjacent columns, loosely to allow an EvenLED wall to flex, move and find its level if not flown completely straight. Power and DMX daisy-chain through the units, which self-address on power-up.

But this is not a videowall: it is something quite different, expressly designed to do one thing very well: light a cyclorama. Videowall products have a relatively narrow beam angle, designed to be viewed from a distance. EvenLED's LEDs are super-wide; the spec sheets don't quote the beam angle, but it must be 120° or so. Build a set of tiles just 25cm behind a suitable back projection material and you'll get bright, completely even coverage of the screen with the individual sources invisible, the tile's white front surface acting as a bounce cloth and ensuring no light is wasted. The colour range available is remarkable - all the more so when you realise that the product is just using red, green and blue LEDs - from greys and tints, warms and cools through to saturated reds and blues.

But you're not limited to single colour looks and dissolves between them. If you want it - and you do want it - you have individual control over each three-colour pixel. Now, anything is possible. Graduations. Wipes.



Rainbows. Abstract patterns. Pictures - if your control system allows, just dump a sunset photo onto the EvenLED and you have an instant sunset; make a picture of clouds scroll sideways - instant clouds. Or if you have a complex painted cloth, use a picture of it and it will immediately be the best-lit you've ever seen it.

And the real, remarkable breakthrough is the fading. LEDs have traditionally suffered from near-subliminal flickering, stepy fading and that horrible, horrible switch from off to on and on to off: this would be very unpleasant on an enormous cyc filling the entire back of a stage. EvenLED does none of these, with an incredibly smooth transition from off to on then all the way up, and with 16-bit control ensuring that

smoothness isn't compromised by the limitations of DMX - even if it does make a big wall somewhat DMX-hungry.

Designed by Brother, Brother & Sons in Denmark, every detail seems thought out - should a tile fail, the central section, electronics and LEDs, just hinges back and lifts out of the outer rigging frame. It's silent. And it has quite the green credentials, using a fraction of the power of traditional cyc-lighting solutions and without the need to change lamps or constantly replace burnt-out colour. Plus, of course, you never need to waste any time focusing it!

Once you've used it, it becomes quite hard to go back to lighting a cyc any other way . . .

EvenLED >>> www.brothers-sons.dk/prod_evenled.htm



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