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### Biffy in Ellipsis...

**UK** - In a world growing smaller by the day, Biffy Clyro chose contrarily to expand their horizons through a diminishing perspective. What does that mean? Well, to set designer Misty Buckley, it meant establishing a new benchmark to what is possible with transformative stage sets on festival stages, not least Biffy Clyro's headlining appearances at Leeds and Reading this Bank Holiday weekend.

"The stage is a square walled tunnel, a series of four portals of LED that enclose the full stage, each smaller than the next as you move upstage, and with a large landscape LED screen across the back," was how video director Jack Banks described it. "Looking at what Misty has come up with you can't just put flat pictures behind the band. This is something entirely different to work with, it was great to get away from the classic 'big slab of telly' look. The portal screens introduce an amazing perspective to the video element and it was a chance to really think about how I could make content travel in and out of the set."

The portals, rear screen, d3 servers, and an extensive camera package are supplied by Video Design. "The portals required some close attention if they were to be a practical proposition for back-to-back festival shows," explained production manager Paddy Hocken. "Alex Leinster at Video Design worked with Brilliant Stages to have the portal support trusses, onto which the LED panels are attached, made in such a way that all the LED and power supplies could remain permanently mounted for these shows. Portals 1-3 are hung on Litec D.S.T. 52 track truss (66m in total) to allow the vertical portals to be tracked offstage during the day using a Kinesys driven tracking system provided by Neg Earth. The D.S.T. trusses are also hanging on one-ton Liftket Kinesys hoists so that the 'tracks' can be lifted but kept level. Portal 4 (the smallest) is hung on standard 30.5cm Supertruss also lifted by one-ton Liftket Kinesys. All of the portal hoists as well as the back LED screen hoists have Kinesys Libra Loadcells provided by Rigorous Technologies. All of this infrastructure allowed the portals to stay rigged but with the ability to conceal them during the day's events. Then bring them back in for our headline appearance. I have worked with Video Design before, but always previously with just a camera package and a typical slab of screen upstage. This was different, the integration required was pretty complex but Alex struck exactly the right balance working with Brilliant and the whole process proved a pleasure to deal with."

Video content was produced by Nathan Prince at Silent Studios and by Banks himself. "I've been thinking about and working on content over the summer. I've been using the new Notch plug-in for d3: looking at effects, seeing if they work as I want. It adds a great dynamic to content allowing live adjustment of effects. I was able for example, to hand certain parameters of the 'particle' effects to Richard Larkum our LD, so rather than awkwardly trying to hit cues while directing cameras we could tie lighting and video cues together giving the show a much tighter look."

Video Design contracted Luke Collins, a d3 specialist, to assist Banks, "Luke took all the pressure off me in terms of technical management; he set up my project and managed it for me throughout allowing me to focus on the creative elements of the show."

Leinster also invested in a couple of the new Bradley Robocams with x30 lenses. "With these new cameras I was able to get shots I wouldn't normally have been able to without the addition of extra camera operators on stage. And the x30 lenses were fantastic. I could get a great head-shot close-up of Simon (Neil, lead singer and guitarist) pretty much wherever he went. And the image quality is outstanding, even in challenging lighting conditions, when he strays right off to the extremes of stage for example. I still have a lot of ideas to explore for the tour in the autumn, but this was a great start."

photos: *Andy Willsher*



6th September 2016

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