

SINGAPORE

Asian Youth Games Opening Ceremony

No second place was allowed when **Lighting Designer Roy Chooi** from **Highlight-Systems** was challenged to design the opening ceremony for the Asian Youth Games.

Roy had been picked by **UnUsUaL Productions** to be the Lighting Designer because of his experience with TV lighting. Everything had to be first class as this event was meant to be a milestone for all helping hands on their way to the Youth Olympics staged next year in Singapore. Looking into the future Roy wanted to challenge the **grandMA2 fullsize**, recently acquired by UnUsUaL Productions, as it was the only board giving enough capacity for the show he had in mind. True enough, after the excitement of unwrapping a shiny new grandMA, a lot of hard work was to be done. There was only one month preparation time available so it was jointly decided to rely on the grandMA1 mode of the console as there were also sufficient **MA NSPs** available for the show. There were very specific requirements from the organizers about the show design based upon the show elements. The opening ceremony was to be grand and subtle at the same time. The show was designed around several performances that were to be linked with the help of the lighting. A simple but yet dynamic and aesthetically pleasing look was achieved by relying on using colour washes on floor and performers. Various effects gave the opening ceremony the requested theatrical feel. The fact that the show was live telecasted on TV in Singapore didn't make it easier for Roy, as he had to provide enough light for different sets of cameras and crews. On top of that a compromise on the Whitebalancing had to be found to please the live audience as well as the cameras plus their TV audience. This is where Roy enjoyed using the simplicity of touch screens and the colorpicker on the grandMA. Easy updating of the colour palettes made it possible to cater to all requests.

Interlinking the show elements, Roy used gobos to fill the whole indoor stadium with visually interesting patterns to lead the eye away from an empty stadium floor during the breaks. After all there was a huge space to be lit up bright enough for cameras to shoot at F2 to F3.2. A show that is being broadcasted is always a bit more critical to stage: what happens if the lights go off? There was an extensive focus on backup plan for to be prepared in case this happens. While there was of course the option to switch to the recorded preview of the show but that would not have saved the people in the indoor stadium itself. So Roy planned his lights - 24 **Martin 2000 Wash**, 30 **Martin 2000 Spot**, 50 **Martin MAC600 Wash**, 48 **Vari-Lite 3000 Spot**, 20 **Vari-Lite 2000 Spot**, 12 **CityColor**, 20





Martin Atomic strobe, 196 LED Par-cans, 100 regular PARs and 70 PAR bars of 6 cans each - in a way that even if one section were to go down, the rest of the light would be sufficient to continue the show without any major impact.

The whole show was running on 20 DMX lines split from the 12 universes from the control system. Regardless of power failure of signal failure the show could have gone on. The same care had been given to the control system. Roy ran the **OnPC software** on his laptop (networked to the console and 3 NSPs) during the show for permanent backup and instant failover. One of the highlights of the show was definitely the mirror ball descending from the ceiling. Hidden in a giant spider web of trusses, 800m of multi-layer trussing held by 200 chain hoist motors kept the construction in place under the roof. When the mirror ball finally was to descend while being tracked by moving lights, Roy used two cues containing the start and end position. He applied a manual timing and linked the cues to a fader, giving him full manual control over the fade time.

Not only did Roy manage to hide the mirror ball but he also elegantly covered the giant roof over the indoor stadium. The trussing really served multiple purposes.

Getting the audio right for the event posed another line of challenges. Dan Koh, Events Manager at Xtron Productions, was the man on the ground of seeing through the audio duties of the event from day-1.

ETA: What were the challenges faced by you for the event?
As there were many performing groups and external media involved in this event, our challenge was trying to meet up





LD Roy Chooi



On audio were: Xiao Hei, Yan, Amelia, Dan Koh & Henry Chee

with the requirements of all parties. However, after careful planning and coordination with the organizers, we were able to run the actual event smoothly. This being said, I personally felt that the technical crews did an excellent job, even though there wasn't many full-run rehearsals for them to fully comprehend the flow of the performances. For example, the orchestra involved could only turn up during the final rehearsal on the event day. Thus, we had little time for microphone placement and sound check. Also, some of our custom make animations did not turn out exactly the way we expected when it was placed on the large LED screen. Given the tight timeline, our animators need to change and revise them within a short span of time.

ETA: What was the most satisfying aspect of being involved in this event?

I think the most satisfying aspect is the fact that we are involved in a national-scale production that's also televised all over the world. This is a great milestone for our team and we are deeply honoured to be a part of the inaugural Asian Youth Games Opening Ceremony.

ETA: What mixing console did you use for FOH and how did you and your team of engineers handle the duties for the event?

We used a Midas XL8 digital console. Henry Chee was the technical consultant on our team, and we were involved in the sound, visual displays and live camera works. I was the sound engineer for the entire event and Amelia Yeo was my assistant engineer.



Dan Koh, Events Manager at Xtron Productions, was the man on the ground of seeing through the audio duties of the event

The Asian Youth Games were not only a milestone for UnUsUaL but also for Singapore on its way to next years Youth Olympics. UnUsUaL was given free hand in design and execution and they took it as a challenge, putting their whole inventory into the show. From generators up to the TV cameras, UnUsUaL organized the opening ceremony showing their strength and capabilities in design, inventory and management. Johnny Ong from UnUsUaL was especially proud of the trussing as it was the most complex setup he has seen in the past 14 years since the opening of the Indoor Stadium. He was very happy about the show as he was able to use all of his latest equipment including the new grandMA2 fullsize. He expressed his special thanks to the crew around the Technical Director Alan Meng, knowing the special effort that they had to put in during the setup. After all it didn't seem that there was anything "unusual" about setting up this size of event.

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