



## Roots Music: Designing Florida Georgia Line's Current Tour

"For their current tour, *Dig Your Roots*, Florida Georgia Line really liked the idea of the stage transforming over the course of the show," reports Baz Halpin, who, along with Chris Nyfield [both of the firm Silent House], handled production and lighting design.

The show opens with a white Kabuki dropping; the song "This is How We Roll" sets the tone. Vocalists Tyler Hubbard and Brian Kelley are suspended in mid-air, atop two [of ten] automated lighting pods that gradually lower them to the floor. Upstage is a massive LED wall flanked by lighting. "Both the upstage video screens and lighting walls are on an automated traveler track; they can bi-part and traverse the stage," explains Halpin. In the four vertical lighting walls, there are Ayrton Magic Blade-Rs [88] and Chauvet Professional Strike 4s [56]; they work in tandem with the 31' 5" x 23' 7" nine-millimeter Winvision LED wall.

The pods that enable Hubbard and Kelley to take to the

sky are hung on four axes of motion; each is filled with 12 Claypaky Mythos units. "The workhorse of the show is probably the Mythos, and they're located only in the automated pods above the stage," Halpin notes.

"This is How We Roll" also includes an impressive amount of flames. "There are six X-plo flames and six dragon heads that are midstage in a grated area countersunk into the set," explains Reid Deme, of the Nashville office of Pyrotek, the show's effects provider. "The X-plo flame is a relatively new flame effect that is a moving flame approximately 15' and is adjustable to up to 30'. It is DMX-controlled and can swivel up to 180°. The Pyrotek Dragon is a propane flame head that is also DMX controlled and that can do 20' fire balls or columns of fire." Flames also heat up the stage during "It's Just What We Do," and "Anything Goes," while six midstage cryojets make themselves known during "Round Here." "The first scene is pretty rock 'n' roll," Halpin admits.

The show's opening displays the wares of a variety of vendors. Automation and staging are provided by SGPS Show Rig; Visions Visual, based in Nashville, provided the video wall; and the lighting is from the Los Angeles office of PRG. The kabuki is courtesy of Georgia Stage, of Duluth, Georgia; all other soft goods are from Sew What?, headquartered in Rancho Dominguez, California.



While the first act starts the party that is every Florida Georgia Line show, the second act takes the audience in a very different direction. “We have 11 inflatable trees that appear. They just get pulled up with motor chains from above and there are scenery lines that support the limbs,” Halpin says. The trees vary in height and reach up to 25'; they were created by Tom Meacham, of Landmark Creations, headquartered in Burnsville, Minnesota.

The floor is also covered by custom Marley. “SGPS created it with one of their artists in house,” says Todd Ortmeier, Florida Georgia Line’s production manager. “It’s black Marley with a white tree pattern painted on; we have the same on the risers, and they follow the same pattern.”

“This second act is more theatrical,” Halpin notes. “In this act, we use video content to extend the scene and create the environment; we can be in a swamp, or embrace the tree architecture and continue those trees on the screen.” Video content was created by Tom Colbourne and his staff at Burbank-based BlinkTV.

“We also have two FOH cameras on tripods and two handheld cameras in the pit in front of the stage,” explains Ortmeier. The camera system is being used with a PRG Mbox media server.

The foray into nature continues in the third act, which takes place on the 32' x 16' B stage; it’s surrounded by four hard scenic trees that pivot up from the stage with festoon lights hanging between them. “It’s just the two guys, and is very intimate,” Halpin notes.

The B stage has the feel of a campsite deep in the woods, and it comes complete without a campfire, which, Derne says, is DMX-controllable. “We operate it with one of our dragons as the main firing system,” he explains. “All the safety features are built into the dragons, so we just needed to adapt the fire element of the campfire to work off the same safety features. This allows us to have full control over

on/off and height from a remote location, allowing Al Domanski [pyro shooter] and Amanda Pindus [pyro tech] to have full control over it at all times. As you can imagine when dealing with open flame onstage, safety is the number-one priority.”

The band heads back to the main stage for the fourth act. “At that point, they do some songs with a fun, country-party vibe,” Halpin notes. The lighting rig also includes six PRG Bad Boys, 35 Philips Vari\*Lite VL3500 Wash FX units,



18 Chroma-Q Color Force 12s, and 28 GLP impression X4s. Halpin adds, “We also have a lot of internal lighting in the stage; specifically we have 90 Chauvet [Professional] Nexus 4x1s. They’re located all the way across the midstage steps. The Nexus 4x1s feature very versatile fixture controls, a nice homogenized lens, and are also quite powerful.” Kirk Miller, of Earlybird Visual, programmed the show on an MA Lighting grandMA2 console. On the road, it is run by the band’s longtime lighting director, Scott Cunningham.

Halpin notes, “In the encore, they cover a bunch of other songs in a medley, including one from the Backstreet Boys [‘Everybody (Backstreet’s Back)’]. This section by far has the most production elements. That’s where we unleash all the firepower of the incredible lights on the back wall, including the Strike 4s.”

The encore includes its share of effects, most notably in flames in “Cruise” and “Last Resort,” Derne says: “There’s a lot of flame between the dragon heads, the X-plo flames, and the campfire. All the units are concealed, since it’s all built into the stage, which is quite cool.” The cryojets make their final appearance during “Party People.”

Florida Georgia Line’s *Dig Your Roots Tour* continues into October. “Florida Georgia Line is awesome, their management is fantastic, and I genuinely had a lot of fun working on this,” Halpin concludes. —**Sharon Stancavage** 📸

