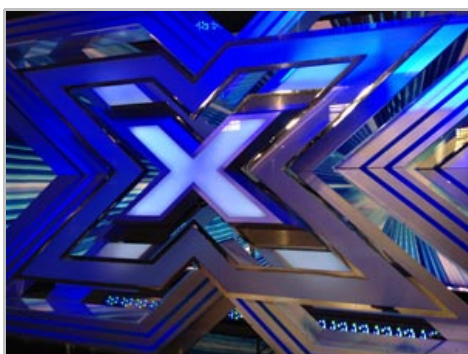




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ELP supply lighting for new look X Factor auditions

This latest 10th series of the X-factor certainly has some noticeable changes. The biggest production surprise was that early auditions have moved away from theatre venues filled with thousands of fans and returned back to a hotel room setting. This was, of course, how the early shows were originally set.

Spectacular arena venues are still on the agenda this year but further down the audition line and almost certainly at the 'boot camp' stage.

The return of Sharon Osbourne to the judging panel has been the big news in front of camera. Behind the scenes there have been some significant changes too. A new Lighting Director (Tom Sutherland) and a new crew chief (Craig Broughton).

"It's been fantastic to be asked by the producers to step up to the role of LD" admits Tom Sutherland. *"I've been board operating on the X Factor auditions over the last four years and I programmed the live shows last year, so I feel as though I know the show inside out."*

Through account manager Barry Denison working closely with HotCam, ELP supplied the lighting and rigging equipment for the latest round of auditions which took in venues around the country including London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and Cardiff. And it's these varied UK locations which set the production lighting agenda.

This time the main look of each audition room was much fresher and lighter than the windowless hotel rooms of old. This meant packing much more lighting gear into a compact area. Having a big window backdrop behind the judges also helped. But when is window not a window?

Answer - When it's a 16m x 4m video wall supplied by Anna Valley displaying a perfectly chosen urban setting for each city location.

"The challenge was to make it look as 'real' as possible" remarks Tom. *"The brightness of the screens in the background meant that I had to have enough punch up front. And that's why I opted for a boxed truss solution which allowed plenty of 'get-out-of-jail' fixtures to re balance brightness as required"*

Tom used an assortment of ELP fixtures including: 2.5kw Arri soft lights, Par 36 Chrome Cans to downlight onto the window effect video wall; Pulsar Chroma Batten 50s to provide a blue glow on the truss. Battens nearer the judges were nudged up to give a blue kick and texture to the panel; ColorBlaze LED fixtures were used to skirt the foot of the set and direct wash light upwards; And finally ELPs range of handy battery operated uplighter kits provided a bright filling around the room which as quick and easy to deploy.

ELP also supplied all the rigging hardware for head rigger Dave Morrell and his team to create the 12ft SuperTruss ground support structure which could be raised or lowered to fit the variation in venue ceiling height. ELP's 0.5 metre truss blocks provided the crew with enough height adjustment options.

As Crew Chief Craig Broughton explains. *"We needed a quick turnaround system which would work in any hotel style location. We only had a short time window to set up ground support before the other departments came with set, video screens and cameras. The SuperTruss system was ideal"*

Craig was in charge of a team which included electrician Simon Carris-Williams and Rigger Joe Gee.

Lighting Director Tom Sutherland was quick to thank everyone involved in the project saying *"Production have been very pleased with the end product and things have gone smoothly. It's been a real team effort and I'm delighted to*



have the support of many good people. Craig, Barry and the ELP team have been brilliant. I'll envisage something and those guys work hard to turn my vision into well-functioning reality"

Tom seems to have it well figured out. Alex Mildenhall is his WYSIWYG genius who helps the LD render and visualise concepts. Then it's over to ELPs Barry Denison and Crew Chief Craig Broughton to bring the ideas to life. Vision Supervisor Luke Chanterll provides the final quality control.

The end result? A sharp looking prime time TV show.

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