

DECEMBER 2020

# Staying ahead of the game

Lighting Designer Jorge Tellez details the challenges of a constantly evolving nightclub scene at one of the most dazzling venues in Las Vegas, Jewel nightclub.

For Jorge Tellez, it all started at a Pink Floyd concert on the Division Bell tour in 1994. Simply put, he attended the concert, and it changed his life. At the time he was studying to be a paramedic, but the scale, the rig, and the setting of Floyd's landmark tour led Tellez to fall in love with the Live Events and AV industries.

After gaining some of the best first-hand experience he could in the lighting booth of some of the best nightclubs in Miami, he would soon be drawn to Las Vegas. The city proved to be a place full of inspiration for him, packed as it was with vibrant live performances from renowned artists and theatre companies from around the world, which unleashed Tellez's creativity like never before.

"I was able to attend the biggest concerts featuring some of the best performances and staging the world has ever seen," he says. "From Dancing on Ice and KA by Cirque du Soleil to music concerts from Celine Dion to Metallica, all of these shows have the power of inspiring a Lighting Director to want to recreate that same energy and power in a nightclub and gives you the opportunity to find yourself through the journey."

In Las Vegas, Tellez helped open up Omnia, as Lighting Director at Heart. Working with the Hoxton group, Jorge was rapidly assigned to the Jewel nightclub, which is where he was first introduced to Avolites.

"I had the honour of being trained by Brad White, from Group One," he recounts.

"He sat with me for seven days straight so I could fully understand the capabilities that the Sapphire desk and Titan software offered. I was blown away by the Titan software, the pixel mapping was great, and also by the seamless integration between the two."

Brad White added: "I knew right away Jorge had an amazing eye for creating an immersive environment. At Avolites we always tend to gravitate to users that share our passion for creating unforgettable experiences. After what Jorge had created at Heart, I was truly excited when he moved to head up Jewel. The vision of a fully integrated canvas of lighting, video and effects accelerated us at Avolites in a direction we were already headed."

At Jewel, the main challenge for Tellez was to manage a smaller, more intimate room, but still transmit the energy and the power of the bigger venues. To help him with the challenge, three Ai media servers, a Sapphire touch desk and a wing, 48 Robi points, 48 MagicDots, 54 Ayrton DreamPanels and 6 Ayrton CosmoPix were installed.

"The lighting design created in there was incredible. I really enjoyed setting up the desk and found Avolites very helpful in terms of building the desk, creating my palettes and just organising myself before starting to program," he says. "The two key things we had at Jewel were the 54 Ayrton DreamPanels and then the ribbons around the room, which helped create a great atmosphere. All of these were powered by the Ai server and controlled by the Sapphire Touch. The desk really helps the software, allowing me the creativity to become a better LD."

"Jewel is the perfect sized venue, which combines the nightclub life but also allows for many corporate events, bringing great performances and helping me explore new formats and possibilities."



But Avolites had something in mind that would soon come in to take both integration and creativity to the next level. The company's new Synergy software brings lighting and video together like never before, offering creative programmers a streamlined workflow for all the visual elements on their stage. It offers a proprietary connection between any Titan lighting console and any Ai media server offering greater reliability, flexibility and extended programming abilities, all within an intuitive interface. Synergy unlocks the power of video and lighting allowing them to be used interchangeably, exactly what Tellez has always been after.

Ed Shaw was the video director for Hoxton Group at the time of Synergy's release and he really wanted to get the Synergy technology in at the club. Tellez was enthusiastic at the idea.

"Jorge and Ed Shaw really pushed the boundaries and inspired us to create and continue to improve Synergy and the supporting systems. Wrangling such a complex mix of technology is our goal so the designer can design without getting bogged down with how to create but spend his time on what to create. That concept really shines through at Jewel under Jorge's creative eye and amazing programming skills. No matter where you look or frame a picture it is always a complete, cohesive, immersive scene which, with the ease of programming, he can create at a moment's notice." Added White.

It was just weeks away from the opening of Jewel when Jorge and Ed heard of Synergy but the appetite was growing day after day. Synergy offered the possibility to integrate video and lighting on a whole different level, granting total control from the desk. It is no surprise then to read that Synergy made one of its greatest debuts at Jewel night club.

"It has such a beautiful style of lighting; it took everyone's breath away. I see why Synergy has become such an icon for Avolites. Synergy is really changing the game in the industry. It is such a powerful software that I hope a lot of people get to use and experiment."

LDs need to constantly remain on their feet and stay ahead of what is coming up in terms of the latest technology to be able to satisfy the audience's cravings for new experiences. Jorge Tellez, as with many other LDs and lighting and sound technicians, currently remains constantly eager for any news and measures concerning the reopening of nightclubs post pandemic. He is already investigating ways to work around the different capacities that might feature in the future, and with Avolites Synergy has one of the tools that can keep him, and Jewel, one step ahead.



Jorge has worked closely with Avolites at Jewel. Most recently, he has also been involved in other projects including LimeLightWired.