

Projects



Client: The Promise
Location: Branson, MO
Project Type: Theatrical Stage Production
Scope: Lighting Design

"The Promise" is a theatrical production of the greatest story ever told that depicts the life of Christ from birth to resurrection. The grandest of these productions ran 2006 – 2010 at the Mansion America Theatre in Branson, Missouri. This multi-million dollar theatrical stage show with a cast of fifty, directed by Michael Meece, was re-created, redesigned and reopened in an all new light.

Michael Meece brought in Donnie Brawner to design the lighting of the show which had to work very carefully in conjunction with the all-new virtual scenic elements. The show features countless scenes from still images to moving video imagery on a 60' X 19' seamless screen which is constantly surrounded and built into various new scenic elements created by scenic artist Brian Rance. The rear screen projection is fed from six Christi DLP projectors integrated through Watch Out software.



"The Promise" has been produced by Meece in Glen Rose, Texas and in Branson, Missouri between 1989 and 2001, but never with the limitless options of virtual scenery, scenic elements designed to work in conjunction with the virtual images and emotional lighting making the whole thing believable. *"The show's virtual scenery aspect really did the show justice,"* says Brawner. *"We worked with Mike in making sure the screen images were able to fill the screen with color so that we had minimal black areas which would reveal ambient light levels. In some cases these are full stage images and others just background pieces looking through hard set openings. Our focus was to design the lighting to work in sync with the screen images and bring a whole new sense of reality to the stage bringing the show to life before the audience's eyes. It created a powerful, emotional product opening night that would have been difficult to achieve without it,"* said Brawner.



Donnie Brawner worked with Associate Designer and programmer Ron Robertson in the design of the show. "Ron and I always work hand in hand in putting these pictures together," says Brawner. "He and I have a lot of experience working together and it makes all the difference when you have a show that's a little outside the box."

Ron Robertson stated that the Mansion America Theatre was a good setting for the production. "The theatre has some excellent positions for what we were trying to do. From an equipment standpoint we had over 100 automated fixtures in our arsenal including sixty-two Vari-Lite 2000 series units, XSpots, PC Beams and Cyberlight Turbos. The house also had over 500 conventionals, fifty-six Morpheus Color Faders and Martin Atomic Strobes that we put to good use."



Meece lobbied to get Donnie and his team included into the show's budget. "I always try to use Donnie on every one of my projects because he knows how to enhance every nuance of the music to heighten the emotion. His instrumental background is a big payoff in the shows outcome. However this was a little more challenging for all of us —to coordinate the virtual scenic elements into the show, together. I think we achieved a 'part movie-part live stage' feel," said Meece. Michael Meece also uses the services of Brawner for his own theatre in Savannah, GA, and the work that he does with Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, TX.



"As creator-director of many live stage shows over the last twenty-five years, I can definitely recognize a skillful, artistically-creative lighting designer when I see one, and Donnie Brawner is one of the best I've ever worked with. I really appreciate his dedication to understanding my creative desires, and then adding his own originality. He is a true collaborator."

**Michael Meece - Creator, Director
The Promise**

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