ELEMENTS CLUB

BEIJING, CHINA
APAC

With a 10-year history, Elements Club was due a new lease of life. It's been injected by DR Lighting and Basz Design & Live Operating.

It's quite a natural step for a DJ to transition into a club owner, and this was the case for Mark Zhang. After successfully founding the prestigious Coco Banana club, Beijing, the former DJ got a taste for nightlife hospitality from a different perspective. So much so, that he has recently moved onto another venture of the same ilk, in the form of Elements Club - a venue located in Beijing's upmarket East Side that exudes luxury and cool.

After deciding to redesign the club, Mark made contact with Daniel Richardson of DR Lighting - an LD with 15 years industry experience, who also has a Masters degree in Chinese Medicine and is fluent in Chinese. Now based in the UK, Mark was aware of Daniel's work through his seven-year stint in China and was impressed by his designs. In turn, Daniel contacted long-term collaboration partner, Bas Scheij of Basz Design & Live Operating based in The Netherlands to work on the project with him.

• Above The visually striking setup at Elements.

The first contact was made in November 2017, and after several meetings with the club owner, Daniel and Bas presented their ideas and were asked to design the entire club, including club layout, concept interior design, audio intros and a timecode system. Bas elaborated: "We were asked to design a next level lighting set up, with a '360º feeling' to make people feel that the entire club is one big dancefloor. Mark was very open to new ideas and asked us to be original and not to copy any other international known club, which can be quite common in China. The brief was to design a completely original lighting set-up, never before seen in a nightclub."

He continued: "We were asked to use local Chinese brands for this installation. After reviewing Chinese fixture brands, we decided to use Fine Art and PR Lighting as they came closest to our specific needs for high output, smooth dimming, fast movement, fast colour change, fast zoom, and above all reliability and after sale service compared to other brands. As the club is open seven days a week we chose LED fixtures only, giving the club not only lower power consumption but also a longer lamp life."

The main configuration is based on four large squares of lighting, each with three concentric smaller squares inside. Daniel and Bas opted to keep it simple and use only three different types of moving heads for the show lighting - one spot, one wash and one beam - but all were used in large quantities. A total of 55 Fine Art 420L Spots, 88 PR Lighting XLED 6007's and 66 PR Lighting Junior 150W Beam moving head are included in the inventory, alongside two Fine Art Fine 600L Performances. "With such an impressive setup and large number of fixtures, having too many different types

of fixtures would have become overwhelming," Bas explained.

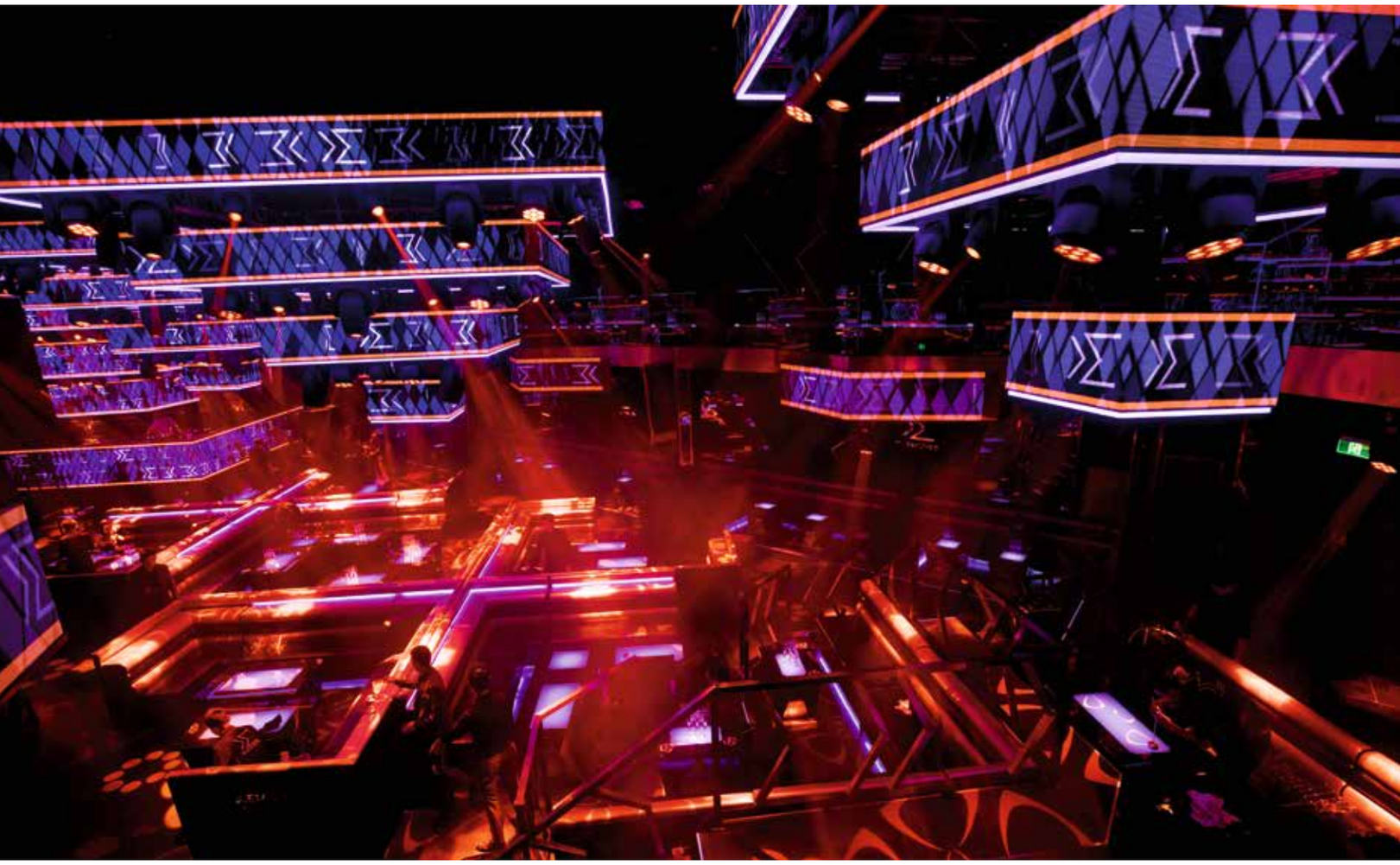
Each of the fixture types are used throughout the entire club, giving LDs the ability to use one fixture type at a time to light up the club. The intelligent lights work in conjunction with 16 Fine Art Fine 850C Strobe LED strobes, allowing specific attention to detail that can be timed in accordance with the music playlist. For key lighting, the designers used a spot fixture with a framing shutter system, to highlight the DJ without affecting the area around the DJ booth. While all of the decorative lighting can be controlled via the lighting console - an MA Lighting grandMA2 - as well to be part of the lighting show.

"MA Lighting's grandMA2 has become the business standard for shows nowadays. The console's endless possibilities and stability made it an easy choice for us," Daniel said. "Another reason we chose this console is because a lot of performers will bring their own LDs. These days, especially in the electronic music industry, a large proportion specify MA Lighting grandMA2 on their rider. We designed a system giving guest LDs the ability to use their own show file, which can be uploaded on the night, giving them the possibility to control the show the way they're used to, ensuring the best quality show for everyone who comes to the club."

With the lines between lighting and visuals blurring ever more these days, it comes as no great surprise that the visuals fell under Daniel and Bas' remit for Elements Club. The visual set up is an important and integral part of the design, which follows the shapes of the set throughout the entire club. The 4mm LED tiles are mounted on the outside of every square and the entire balcony, to create a true 360º club feeling as people can watch the setup from every angle. "This was one of the very important basics during our design process, to give the audience a real club feel, instead of feeling like they are watching a concert. The visual setup was perfected by a next level visual content package, created by our partner DVizion from The Netherlands," added Daniel.

To control the visual setup, Elements Club is using Resolume Arena 6 software, with an Akai APC midi controller. Resolume was chosen because it is the most common VJ software for this type of visual setup, it's easy to use, has a clean interface and is a stable platform. Bas takes back the story: "From the very first moment we started designing, we wanted the setup to be able to move, to create high impact moments and have the possibility to refresh the look and feel during the night. We chose to use winches for movement of each square, giving the possibility of moving them all the way up to the ceiling, as the clearance of the club is only 8.5-metres. It was important to us that the LD could control the automation, so we configured it to be triggered via the grandMA with safety controls on a separate console next to the grandMA."

Asked what makes this project different from any other, Bas replied: "Its originality and detailed design. The shapes of our lighting and video design are also repeated in the interior design throughout the entire club, it is wholistic. A difference to other installs is that we designed the whole club based around the light and video



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setup, instead of first designing a club and then adding video and lighting in a later stage."

The club itself actually has a rich history dating back over a decade, and once the older interiors were removed, it was a large space to work within. Bas and Daniel did a lot of research on the choreography of clubs and how people move from room to room. "Elements Club is a beautiful, fresh, and engaging space. Our design incorporates technology into the architecture in a way that the technology becomes an integral part of the environment. You arrive in a timeless way, up a grand staircase and passing through multiple portals. These corridors and video walls create an ever-changing environment as guests enter the main club, which help set the tone and the wow factor for the main room," furthered Bas.

Bas and Daniel are also assisting the club with updating its audio system, which is currently a work in progress, but once complete, the technology at Elements Club should sit hand-in-hand to deliver an all-round clubbing experience.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

LIGHTING & VISUAL

1 x MA Lighting grandMA2 lighting console; 55 x Fine Art Fine 420L Spot moving head; 66 x PR Lighting Junior 150W Beam moving head; 2 x Fine Art Fine 600L Performance moving head; 16 x Fine Art Fine 850C Strobe LED strobe; 88 x PR Lighting XLED 6007 moving head; 173-metres custom-made LED strip; 4 x Antari F-4 haze machine; 2 x 15W laser; 1 x Resolume Arena VJ software; 1 x Akai APC Midi controller; 1 x Resolume video server; 268 x LED video panel, P5 0.5-metres x 0.5-metres; 1384 x LED video panel, P4 0.265-metres x 0.128-metres; 32 x Zhonghui remote control winch; 24 x 0.5T chain hoist

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