

# City Theatrical Talks With Light Programmer Alex Passmore on Ed Sheeran's Divide Tour

[Alex Passmore](#) has over 15 years experience working in the entertainment industry. Originally from a theatre background, Alex has acquired a number of stagecraft skills working in various performance roles from different industries. He served for 18 months as Chief Electrician at the Peacock Theatre in London before moving on into corporate and later concert and television environments. Alex has extensive experience touring, initially with large scale classical and contemporary dance productions, and later with a variety of concert tours. We were able to speak with Alex on his latest journey as Lighting Programmer for one of the most sold out shows for 2017-2018 season, two time Grammy winner [Ed Sheeran's Divide Tour](#). We also got to talk with Alex about using [Moving Light Assistant™](#) in a concert atmosphere.



Photos: Ralph Larmann

**CTI:** How did you get started in technical theatre and where did you get your training?

**Alex Passmore:** Most of my training was on the job, hands on experience. I had no formal industry qualification, although I do have a degree in electrical engineering, so I guess that is kind of related. You can say i got my training from all my freelancing I've done over the years. I'm a fast learner, and was able to pick up fast on learning different roles within the entertainment industry.



Photos: Ralph Larmann

**CTI:** What was your first paying lighting job and what steps did you take to get the job?

**Alex Passmore:** My first Job was working for Sadlers Wells Theatre in London, whilst at college. We later moved to the Peacock Theatre when the old Sadlers Wells closed for a complete rebuild in the late 90's. I then stayed on at the Peacock on and off for a few years once the new building opened. The job came through word of mouth – much as has been the case ever since with my career.

**CTI:** How was it working on the Ed Sheeran Divide World Tour? What other tours have you programmed?

**Alex Passmore:** It's a great show, and Ed is a really good performer, so it's very rewarding to see the show come together. Mark Cuniffe (the LD) is very good at envisaging how video, light, and set will come together, with the result that you get a very cohesive, integrated show, where lighting is a (very important) part of the whole picture. It's a great education in "less is more"; and sometimes more is more! My work tends to be split between music, theatre, and events. I programmed Ed's previous US tour as well as his Wembley shows in 2015. Other tours include Tom Jones and Rihanna. On the theatre side, currently touring are 'The Wedding Singer' and 'Le Cage Aux Folles', both lit by Ben Cracknell, and on the event side, the London 2012 Paralympic games opening ceremony, and the Sochi 2014 paralympic opening and closing ceremonies as well as the MTV EMA awards.



Photos: Ralph Larmann

**CTI:** How was using [Moving Light Assistant™](#) in concert touring compared to a theatre tour?

**Alex Passmore:** MLA is a really useful tool, and of course its application does change subtly depending on the environment you use it in. As my background is theatre, I tend to approach most shows from this perspective, and up to date documentation is very important to me. The show is going to be out for at least two years so it is reasonable to expect changes to the format and the system as it moves between territories, as well as allowing for changes to personnel. Any show will evolve as time goes on, but it is important to have a reference of how the show originally looked, and how it was put together in order to provide some grounding for these changes. MLA also gives the ability to update this information on the road as things develop. While we didn't use MLA to document every single cue in the same way that one might on a theatre show, it was invaluable for documenting the focuses of the lights, as well as identifying which groups of lights used which focus – thus avoiding Matt having to unnecessarily update loads of focuses on the road every day that never get used in the show.



Photos: Ralph Larmann