

Lighting & Sound America

\$10.00

plasma media

Be More Chill

Broadway's Digital Musical

ALSO:

KISS:
The Final Tour Ever

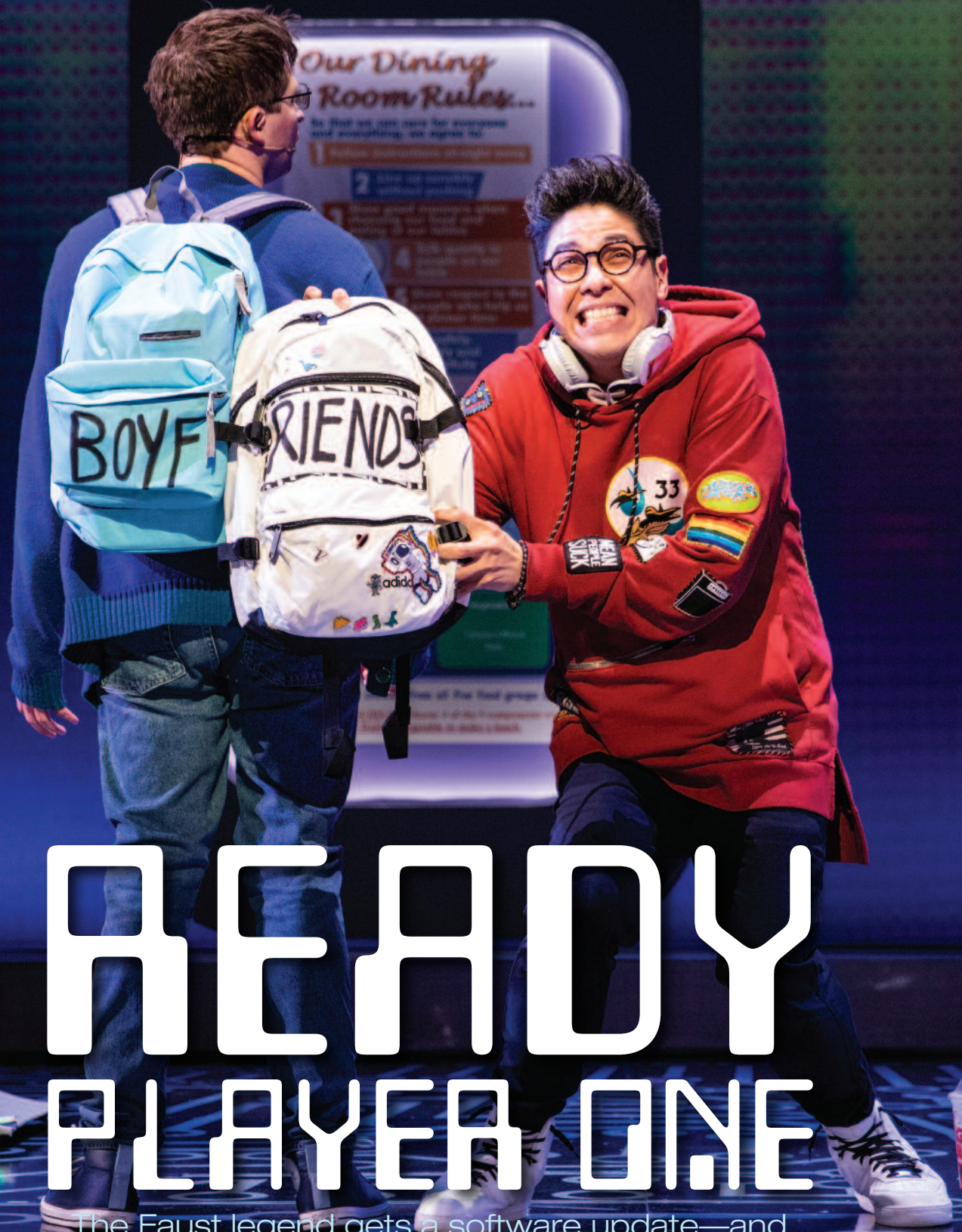
Theatre on the
Celebrity Edge

What's Up at
Harman
Professional?

Introducing
Preevue

Inside the
Milan Network
Protocol





READY PLAYER ONE

The Faust legend gets a software update—and a high-tech design—in *Be More Chill*

By: David Barbour

Lighting

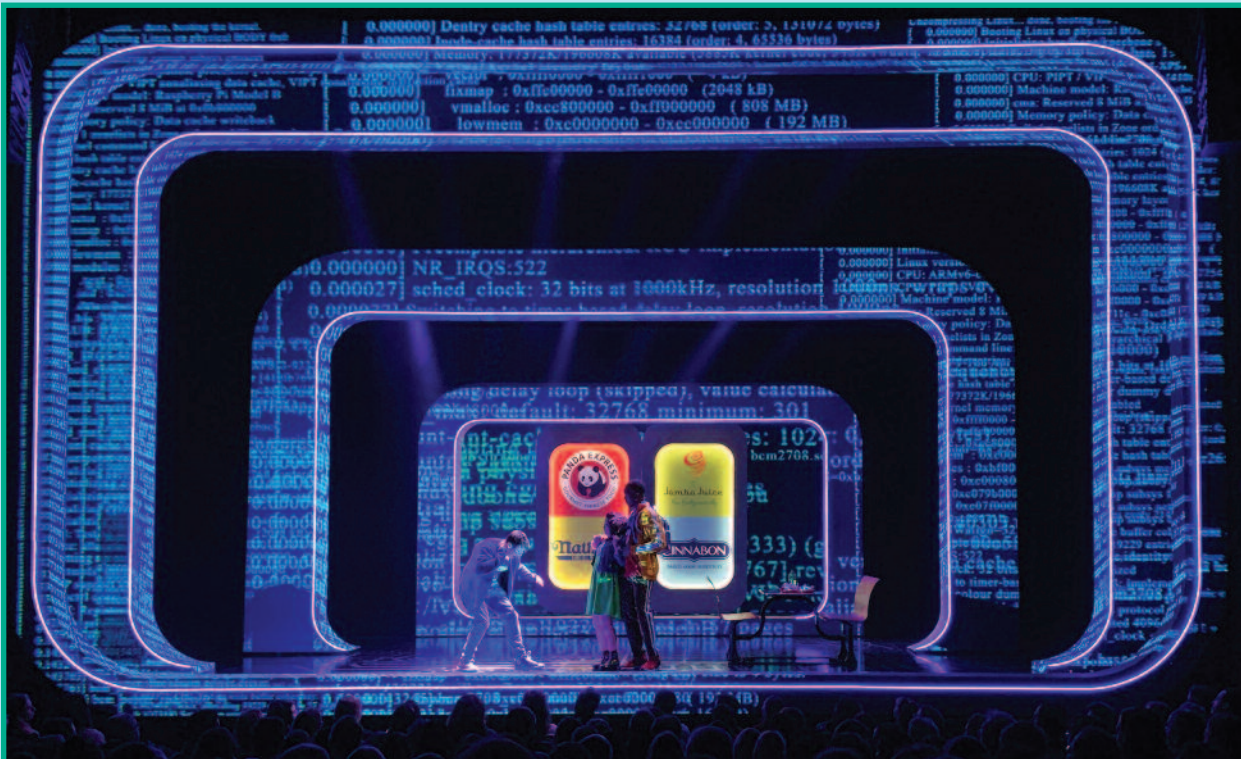
Micoleau, a veteran of the New Jersey production, says, “We didn’t have projections in the original design. With the addition of them, and with Beowulf’s new ideas about how to present new technology in the set, my feeling was that the lighting could take on an expanded role. Previously, it was about defining locations—and, at Two River, it fell on me to represent the technology with yards of LED tape. For New York, I could get moving lights that are an extension of the Squip, acting sort of like his tentacles. The LED tape idea moved to the inside of the portals, intertwined with Beowulf’s e-waste gack and wires. We outlined the inside edges of the portals with City Theatrical QolorFlex NuNeon, which functioned as a critical visual bridge between the lighting and projection design vocabularies.”

Indeed, the lighting design shifts between scene-setting looks and displays that become more and more flamboyant as the Squip enters the story, sowing chaos. Interestingly—and for probably the first time on Broadway—more than half of the moving light component comes from GLP. Micoleau says, “PRG [the production’s lighting supplier] now carries a bunch of GLP gear. I encountered the company at LDI last November and got really excited about GLP’s JDC-1 hybrid strobes, which are perfect for this show. Each one has a RGB face that can be divided into 12 separate ‘pixel’ sections. And the bright white tube can then also be divided into 12 sections and the whole array can be fully pixel-mapped. I could use them as a graphic element that my programmer could play with in

conjunction with Alex’s projections. I have 40 JDC-1s. They’re mostly in the portals, with a few in the house to give love to the mezzanine and upper balcony.”

Also featured in the rig are 11 GLP S350 Spots, brand-new units just coming to market. “We also have seven E350s, which have been out slightly longer,” Micoleau says. “The shutter option on the S350 units [and on the rig’s 30 Martin by Harman MAC Viper Performances] were important because the spaces between portals are very tight. The E350s are focused on the band, where I can get away without having shutters. The S350 was an amazing little find; it’s an LED profile with framing shutters that’s in one of the smallest packages available. GLP is basically loaning us these lights right off the assembly line. The programmer and production electrician said, ‘Be careful [relying on untried technology],’ so I planned on using them only as additional air effects—but they were so useful that I started using them more and more. Every time he turned them on, Brad Gray, my programmer, would say, ‘Damn, they’re fast.’ Once they saw how much we were using them, GLP has supported us with anything we need. Miles Dudgeon and Mark Ravenhill of GLP have been fantastic!”

The well-loved and time-tested Mac Vipers, Micoleau adds, “are my meat and potatoes. Off Broadway, I tried Mac Encore WRMs, because the trims were only 18’. They are a great, great new fixture and worked really well but, in the much larger Lyceum Theatre, I needed the punch of a Viper. They provide most of my sidelight and front specials, along with some positions on the box booms.”



Koch’s imagery, much of it digitally themed, floods the set at key moments.



Key elements of the projection design include a disguise media server and Barco and Epson projectors.

Positions were a constant challenge, Micoleau notes, especially in the transfer. “Every scenic element has multiplied, so there’s no space for lighting positions.”

Also playing crucial roles are 23 Ayrton MagicDot-Rs and 21 GLP impression X Bar 20s. “I wanted needles of light that had unlimited panning and tilting, to be the lights for the Squip and his tentacles. Eric Yapple at PRG suggested the MagicDots. They’re really small and super-fast. They can, for example, do all sorts of fire truck and beacon effects out in the house, and they can do laserlike zaps on the characters—shocks of control from the Squip. I also made a custom position for the X Bar 20s. My associate, Jimmy Lawlor, calls it “the ring of fire”: It’s a rectangular pipe structure that flies in for moments with the Squip. The top and bottom X Bars also serve double-duty as pretend R40 striplights in the play within-the-play production of *Midsummer*. I also have a lot of X Bar 20s hung vertically, which makes for bright and exciting sidelight. I think the unit is a game-changer; I love the single pixel control and the tilt movement. It’s like an MR16 strip on steroids. I’m actually using it on a straight play next.”

The rig also features roughly 116 ETC Source Fours (only 30 of which are incandescent sources), four Vari-Lite VL3500 Spots and three VL3500 Wash units, 13 GLP impression X4s, 13 Color Kinetics ColorBlast 12 TRX units, 14 Chroma-Q Color Force 72s, eight Wildfire VioStorm UV units, 12 Elation Professional SixPar 300 LED Washes (for the theatre’s exterior), two Lycian M2 medium-throw fol-

lowspots, two MDG Atmosphere hazers, two Martin AF-1 Jem fans, and one Antari W-7165 fog jet. Control is via an ETC Eos Ti console, with ETC Sensor dimmers and Leprecon dimmer packs plus ETC Net3 networking; Pathway Connectivity Gigabit switches, RDM/DMX Repeater Pros, and Pathport Octo DMX nodes; ENTTEC Pixelator Mini Ethernet-to-pixel link controllers; and Doug Fleenor Design six-channel relay packs and DMX Merger units. The City Theatrical QolorFlex NuNeon is controlled by the company’s SHoW DMX Neo dimmers. Also used is Environmental Lights LED tape.

The designer adds, “I don’t know how we would have done this without the Off Broadway stint. We made everything more complicated on Broadway, but the basic ideas were already set out. A lot of it involved figuring out the networking. My production electrician, Jeremy Wahlers, who was with me on *The Band’s Visit*, is brilliant in laying out our systems, and collaborates really well with the other department heads to integrate it all. The stage manager calls about 600 cues, but we’re working with time code in some cases, and our music director controls an additional 180 cues, which trigger projections and sound as well.” He notes, laughing, “I told people I was actually intimidated by my light plot. I haven’t tackled anything that complicated before. Brad Gray is so fast and efficient; he and the rest of the lighting team gave me the confidence to tackle all the new technology and really make it sing.”