



World Cup Closes in With First Large Format Projections in South Africa

The Closing Ceremony for the FIFA 2010 World cup at Soccer City stadium, Soweto, Johannesburg, featured the first ever large scale video projections to be integrated into a live show in South Africa.

The ground-breaking extravaganza that brought the tournament to a close just before the Final was produced by the VWV Group. UK-based The Projection Studio's Ross Ashton was appointed as projection consultant for this aspect of the show by Mik Auckland, part of a specialist team from Jack Morton Worldwide, who brought their experience of producing large, high profile events to the equation.

All the projection hardware and software solutions were supplied by E/T/C Paris working for Gearhouse South Africa, the event's main technical contractors, who also supplied lighting, audio, rigging and power for the acclaimed Closing Ceremony that wrapped up one of the most successful World Cups in great style.

Ashton's role included overseeing the entire projection process, from selecting the equipment supplier to assisting Johannesburg based content providers, Ministry of Illusion (MOI), optimise the imagery to work on a monumental scale.

On site, he worked closely with the E/T/C Paris team led by Partrice Bouqueniaux, with whom he has a long history of collaborating on innovative and spectacular projects. He also co-ordinated between the show caller and the host broadcasting service (HBS) with information about which video clips were coming up next.

Ashton comments, "It was a huge privilege to be asked to work on this, and all the visual departments including lighting really pulled out the stops to ensure it was a memorable show fitting the occasion. E/T/C Paris are the best known experts in this field and it was great to be working with them again, and also with MOI, who produced an impressive array of images".

The dramatic 55 metre square projections in the middle of the field-of-play - onto a cloth covering the pitch - were delivered by 18 x Christie 18K Roadster projectors, mounted on 2 platforms flown in the roof of the upper concourse of Soccer City, along the east and west (long) sides of the venue. The projectors were configured in 16:9 format and rigged in 3 stacks of 3, covering the pitch that was divided into 6 target areas.

The content varied from digital scenery like lakes and mountains to colourful graphics, moving patterns and texturing and flag insignia. PIP video replays of the sporting action were inserted into the overall picture, and all these and other images helped differentiate and push along the fast paced 30 minute narrative.

Each projector received its own video feed and keystone correction to eliminate discrepancies between their optical centres, optimising the smoothness and brightness of coverage across the full surface area.

E/T/C's powerful proprietary OnlyView PC-based system was used for control, programmed and operated by Yan Kaimakis. Eighteen active OnlyView servers, one per machine, were utilised, with another 18 running as a hot backup system - a major stipulation of the original tender document - and data was distributed via a fully redundant networked system.

Footage for the stadium's 2 x Lighthouse high resolution LED screens was edited by locally based VLS and also output via the OnlyView system, with a pitch projection feed from OnlyView also sent to the host broadcaster to be available for their mix.

The projections have been a great talking point as has the Closing show and the tournament generally, all helping to raise South Africa's profile as a destination for world class sporting and entertainment events.

Photos Ross Ashton / Louise Stickland