Datapath plays its part at
ground-breaking show at
iconic Stonehenge venue

Engineering the world's best visual solutions

DATAPATH
EXCELLENCE BY DESIGN

BACKGROUND

Visual projection specialists Motion Mapping were tasked with providing visuals for a world first – the only live music spectacular to be hosted at Stonehenge, arguably Britain's most iconic historical site. It was necessary to deliver the highest standard of displays and visuals that would fit the occasion – bringing the stone structure to life with projected visuals, along with a light show and sound that was respectful to the site's heritage.

The unique event was the brainchild of Alon Shulman, a special advisor to English Heritage along with DJ Paul Oakenfold's events company, Universe. Shulman envisaged the show as a fundraiser for English Heritage which would also introduce the Wiltshire monument, parts of which date back 5,000 years, to a new generation.

THE CHALLENGE

"We had the huge responsibility of transforming Stonehenge artistically like never before," says Stuart Harris, owner and creative director, Motion Mapping. Prior to the performance nobody had been allowed to perform at the site in Wiltshire. Even the aptly-named Rolling Stones had been refused permission for fear of pumping bass and large crowds causing damage. This issue was overcome by Oakenfold who opted for noise-reduction technology in the form of silent disco headphones and only invited 50 of his closest friends.

Attention turned to the visual effects. Harris added: "There was a lot of discussion about content, making sure it was fitting with the stones and the type of gig whilst being respectful to the heritage. We used 3D models and software such as Cinema 4D and After Effects to create content and adjust any existing content we had. The night before, we did a test run with the projectors and kit to make sure the day of the show we could get things going in a very short turnaround."

THE SOLUTION

For the projection visuals, Harris uses Datapath solutions for all his video splitting and is a big advocate of the Fx4 controller. In addition, a pair of Green Hippo's Karst media servers also played a key role in the project, with one as a live back up. Harris finds they provide the best interface for precise mapping projects. Datapath's Fx4 controller was then used to split the signal over 100m HDSDI cables to the three Epson projectors.

For Motion Mapping, the biggest challenges were placement and time rather than the surfaces. "The stones are a good surface but we were very restricted about where we could place the projectors as it's a live geological site. This is why we used Epson's EB-L1755u projectors the U03 short throw lenses," Harris added. "As nothing from the test could be left overnight and the public left at 6.30pm we only had 30 minutes to move all the kit up to the stones, set up the control and all the projectors in daylight before the guests arrived. It left us about 10 minutes from the projectors going on to guests arriving. It's times like this when you need to know that your equipment is going to deliver and why we use the kit that we do."

The result was a stunning visual spectacle that has made news around the world. Stuart Harris, managing director, Motion Mapping adds; "The Fx4 my default choice for video controllers. As well as having the power and performance to cope with high quality video, Datapath's Fx4 has never let me down - even in the most demanding applications and environments."

"As well as having the power and performance to cope with high quality video, Datapath's Fx4 has never let me down - even in the most demanding applications and environments."

Stuart Harris, Motion Picture Mapping.

REFERENCE
Datapath
www.datapath.co.uk

Images provided by Motion Picture Mapping.

DATAPATH
EXCELLENCE BY DESIGN