

Ray Charles Live! Opens with ETC's Eos

Ray Charles Live!, a new bio-musical of the legendary singer, with a book by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, played Pasadena Playhouse this fall; the show is eyeing a Broadway future. The Pasadena production featured **ETC's** new **Eos** control system.



Don Holder, the production's lighting designer, chose Eos to control the entire rig, in part because it allowed him to have only one lighting system. During technical rehearsals, one Eos was used to program the conventionals while another handled the automated and LED fixtures. Both desks contributed to a single show file, using new partitioned control software that allows seamless discrete control by multiple programmers.

Eos' product manager **Anne Valentino** says: "Each programmer worked completely independently, and when it came time to put everything on one desk, they simply turned partitioned control off, added an 'execute' command in the first cue of the main cue list, and the entire show was run off of one 'go' button on one desk. No show file merging was required, no external triggering source. Prior to this approach, shows would typically have a 'conventional' desk and a 'moving light' desk. Both of these boards also had some sort of backup hardware, and it was all synchronized via MIDI during the run of the show. Using just one system with multiple control inputs when needed is a more effective solution, both from a space and cost standpoint."

"With other consoles, you're promised the world, but when it comes down to it, you find out it can't do this, this and this," says **Matt Cotter**, the production's moving light programmer. "That's not the case with Eos. It was built from the ground up to handle mixed rigs, not as a conventional desk with moving light control added on, nor as a moving light desk with conventionals mixed in. And, even though the platform is quite new, it is very feature-rich." At Pasadena, Eos controlled 11 **Vari-Lite** VL2000 spotlights, five VL1000AS, 275 **Color Kinetics** fixtures, four **City Theatrical AutoYoke 10** degree units, and more than 400 ETC Source Four ellipsoidal fixtures and Source Four PARs, programmed into more than 1,000 lighting cues. The production demanded a great deal of multilayered cueing. There were many moments in the show calling for multiple LED and moving light effects, along with overlapping multipart conventional cues, all running simultaneously.



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With Eos, Holder was able to see every cue at the same time on his screens. "Having the ability to quickly edit cues on the fly during run-throughs and previews using two programmers and the partitioned control was incredibly helpful," says Holder. "Cotter could continue to edit moving light and LED effects error-free despite the pace, while the other programmer executed all the 'go' commands and modified conventional levels. Given the limited amount of time we had to create the show, the ease and efficiency of constructing and editing cues with the Eos system was invaluable."

"Eos blends the best of both worlds," adds Cotter. "It is truly the best 'complete' console out there. Because of the way Eos was designed, there is a lot of influence from many of the industry's best, thus making it a desk that both a seasoned moving light programmer and a beginner would be able to sit down at and feel comfortable with in a matter of moments." Holder agrees: "I never felt that I was up against a wall with the Eos system, as I've often felt with other consoles. We were able to achieve any programming result, no matter how complex. It was never necessary to reduce my expectations to accommodate the limitations of the console."

Ray Charles Live! also featured ETC Net3 networking, two Net3 RVIs (Remote Video Interfaces), DMX nodes and ETC Sensor dimming. All the ETC equipment for the show was provided by **PRG Lighting** in New Jersey and **E-Ticket Programming** in Orange County, California. The production closed in December.

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