

pufferfish

//Coldplay Viva La Vida

Date: 2008 - 2009

Location: Concert Venues Worldwide

Client: Coldplay – Headlong Tours – XL Video

Products: PufferSphere XL, PufferSphere XXL

Content: Lumen London, Justine Catterall, Richard Turner

Sector: Production

“they’re the most magic balls since John Lee Hooker had about 50 kids.” Chris Martin

It went without saying that they would be required to cope with the demands of a major global tour, offering rugged strength, reliability and portability alongside crisp, bright full-spherical projection

Delivery:

Pufferfish designed and delivered a total of 7 lightweight, extra-strength PufferSpheres with stealth inflation systems and pressure-sensitive inflation controllers. Air inflated spheres ruled out the need to use hazardous gas-based inflation, whilst allowing the spheres to pack down to a fraction of their size for transportation and storage.



Task:

Coldplay tasked lighting designer Paul Normandale with realising their vision of having projection spheres suspended above their audience as part of their “ongoing mission to make a big room feel as small as possible”. The spheres would not only have to be big to carry impact in large arenas, but would need to be moved in and out of view during the performance. They would need to be capable of displaying live camera feeds as well as motion graphics and would need to slot in seamlessly with the show control as a whole.



Pufferfish provided five 2m diameter PufferSphere XL units, each equipped with a Pufferfish SuperUmami lens and powered by single 10,000 lumen Barco CLM R10 projector. Pufferfish also let loose our most powerful PufferSphere ever made, and the biggest single-source internally projected sphere in the world to date. The PufferSphere XXL, powered by a 20,000 ANSI lumen Christie Roadster projector, was used front of house, reaching beyond the stage right into the midst of the crowd. When the success of the tour saw it move to stadiums, a second XXL joined the first ground mounted at either side of the stage.



Speedy and simple set-up/down was key to the logistical realization of the project. The modular units each travelled in two cases; one for the chassis and another for the inflatable sphere. Projectors travelled ready-rigged in the base units, allowing the PufferSpheres to rig straight from their flight cases. A simple yet robust clip system meant the spheres could be attached to the base units and the airtight seal formed with the minimum of fuss and manpower.

The simplicity of using a single projector and linear lens arrangement facilitated easy calibration and quick focusing whilst eliminating any need for projector tracking, edge-blending or warping envelopes. The need to move the spheres at points during the performance and hide them at others was also greatly assisted by this feature. The PufferSphere XLs were suspended from 10 half tonne fixed speed hoists, controlled via a 10-way Kinesys fixed speed automation system with Vector control. This allowed them to move up and down during the show, and to be raised and hidden in large 'sock'-style soft elements, without the projections being effected by the movement.

The content was produced by Lumen London and served to the PufferSpheres via four Green Hippo HD Hippotizer V3s. Hippo operator Ben Miles used Green Hippo's Pufferizer effect to deliver 360 motion graphics and live camera feeds. The Hippotizers were stationed backstage and controlled via Green Hippo's ZooKeeper remote software from Miles' GrandMa Lite desk front of house. Global video specialist XL Video were responsible for the technical delivery of the PufferSpheres with Matt Vassallo making sure the balls kept rolling on.

CREDITS

Coldplay
Headlong Tours
Paul Normandale
XL Video
Special thanks to Des Fallon and Matt Vassallo
Lumen London
Justine Catterall
Richard Turner
Ben Miles
Green Hippo

