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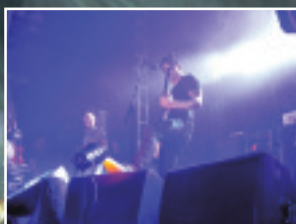
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## Eros Ramazzotti

The Italian superstar's  
latest European tour

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# Eros Ramazzotti



Italian pop star and Sony BMG recording artist Eros Ramazzotti recently embarked on the first European leg of his *Ali e Radici* world tour, a world-class production including a lot of firsts. The tour is due to include venues across Italy and the rest of Europe before heading to the Americas in May. Mike Clark reports on the latest Ramazzotti production . . .

Produced by Trident Management in collaboration with Live Nation Italia, this 10-truck tour features a production design by Lemon and Pepper. The project and show direction is by Serge Denoncourt.

Lemon and Pepper's production designer Giorgio Ioan explains: "The idea behind the tour's title - *Ali e Radici* (Wings and Roots) is that no matter how high you fly, you're always tied to your roots. In this case, Eros's roots were imagined as the industrial suburbs of a large city, based on which set designer Guillaume Lord built two huge stacks of four containers (full-scale, but built in thermoformed plastic) with rough, rusty exteriors. These are transformed by the spectacular projections into a cathedral,

a photograph album, a tree during the four seasons, and more. Our job was to put everything together and solve the various technical problems involved."

## Set & Rigging

Lemon and Pepper called in Teyco, a highly specialised new company founded by two trade veterans - Giuliano Luvisotto (founder and MD of Litec for 18 years) and Vincenzo Mazzilli, who provided trussing and bespoke fabrication.

Due to the ambitious set design, the show makes a rather unusual use of Cyberhoists. These, instead of raising and lowering trussing, move 'fifth wheels', similar to those used to rotate cranes, to rotate containers containing props or scenery such as the interior of a train compartment, for example.



Backstage, seated at his MacBook Pro, Steve Waddington of Vertigo Rigging (UK) programs and controls the Cyberhoists (supplied by Italstage of Naples) and explains: "We're using eight Cyberhoist CH1000 1000kg motors to track and pivot the eight backline containers, split into four groups of two. One motor tracks a pair of containers and one pivots the upper or lower one, according to their position. Four 500kg CH500 Cyberhoists are used to raise and lower the stage-centre container, inside which Eros arrives and leaves at the end of the show. Standard Cyberhoist CHM software handles control and power distribution."

#### Lighting

Lighting designer Baz Halpin had already worked with Ramazzotti, when he was DP for a DVD the artist recorded

at Rome's Olimpico soccer stadium; he was also LD on a previous tour by the Rome-born singer.

Halpin explains: "This is definitely a video show, so the big issue was to get the right balance between lighting and projections. It's an arena rock show, so must be big, so we decided in advance when projections would dominate and we'd come down on lighting. However, we also have [Komaden] Image-Mesh screens in the containers, which can either duplicate the main images or beef them up, so if we want a song with projection, but also want big lighting, we bring in the Image-Mesh."

Regarding the actual lighting, the LD continues: "Another tricky thing is that Eros's songs are hugely dynamic and his audiences love to sing along, so

## Tour Credits

**Tour manager:** Jerry di Pirro  
**Production director:** Giorgio Ioan  
**Production manager:** Stefano Copelli  
**Project & show director:** Serge Denoncourt  
**Project team director:** Nathalie Goodwin  
**Musical director:** Claudio Guidetti  
**Video content production:** Olivier Goulet (Geodezik)  
**Video content co-design:** Gabriel Coutu Dumont, Isabelle Painchaud  
**Production design:** Lemon and Pepper  
**Set design:** Guillaume Lord assisted by Olivier Landreville  
**Load out manager:** Marco Silvaggi  
**Loading coordinators:** Dario di Giulio, Ettore Monaco, Dmytro Hunchak  
**FOH sound engineer:** Jon Lemon  
**PA:** Davide Grilli  
**Artist monitor engineer:** Stevan Martinovic  
**Band monitor engineer:** Umberto Polidori  
**Backline techs:** Fabio Oliva, Massimo Flego, Miguel Vargas, Alessandro Carli  
**PA techs:** Fabrizio de Amicis, Matteo Armellini  
**Lighting designer:** Baz Halpin  
**Lighting director:** Kathleen Anne Beer  
**Lighting tech:** Nicola Tallino  
**Dimmer tech:** Ivan Russo  
**Electricians:** Roberto Torbidoni, Nicola Visentini, Emanuele Vangelatos  
**Video director:** Emigiliano Napoli  
**Show content director:** Marco Bazzano  
**Camera control:** Saverio Maris  
**Pandoras Box operator:** Marco Astolfi  
**Projection responsible/cameraman:** Matteo Plantamura  
**LED display:** Roberto Catrambone  
**Image-Mesh LED display techs:** Francesco Ferro, Alessandro Caglio  
**Cyberhoist operator:** Steve Waddington  
**Head rigger:** Emiliano Bitti  
**Riggers:** Filippo Lattanzi, Simone Bugatti, Andrea Lazzarini  
**Catering:** Marco Tiberia, Maurizio Gambino, Walter d'Ambrosio

## Suppliers:

**Management:** Radiorama  
**Tour production:** Trident Management in collaboration with Live Nation Italia  
**Audio & lighting:** Agorà  
**Displays & video:** STS Communication, Le Grandi Immagini  
**Set construction:** Teyco  
**Staging and Cyberhoists:** Italstage  
**Catering:** Giro Mangiando  
**Trucking:** Trans Show





you're often tempted to go bigger, but after the first night, the majority of the notes I took were to pull back on some songs."

Explaining the choice of fixtures on the rig, Halpin says: "The Clay Paky Alpha 700 definitely gives you a different brush in your paint box. I knew that so much of the lighting was going to have to take place on the stage, and I like to have lighting at lots of different levels, but with the containers filling up the entire back wall, I couldn't have anything between the floor and the top of the containers, so everything had to come from directly above the stage. As anybody will tell you, putting a light straight down is not the best way to see the beam. But, with the Alpha Beam, you can do just that - you can have a really big angle and still get a good beam, even in a dark corner. I like the shape of them and now you can have gobos, rotating gobos and colour wheels. They're also super-reliable, really quick and really small. I think it's almost an all-700 rig - we have the 700 Spots - which are great - and the Beams, and we're also using Martin MAC 2K washes.

Halpin adds: "We also have a special using a Zap Technology MiniBig fixture inside one of the containers. The director wanted one of the containers to spin around for one song, a window to open up and a big shaft of light to come out and light Eros. Giorgio Ioan found an aluminium Venetian blind which we control via DMX, so it comes on and tracks across the audience until it reaches Eros - the effect is amazing."

Very much a hands-on LD, from the FOH platform Halpin enthuses: "Martin desks are huge in America and I specifically asked for two Maxxyz consoles for this show. They're the quickest, and really reliable. I like to do all my own programming and, with the Maxxyz, I can program something quicker than I can say it! The lighting director on the show, Kathleen Ann Beer, who worked with me on the Tina Turner show, also has a good understanding of the desk."

Halpin adds: "The most difficult thing here is to find the balance between theatrics and rock'n'roll. In the latter, lighting becomes a visual extension of the music, whereas here it's slightly deeper and theatrical. Gabriel [Coutu Dumont - content co-designer] has done wonderful things with the visuals - for the dynamic pieces in Eros's songs, he's often done something really beautiful and subtle, but emotionally big, so slamming in the lights at that point would detract completely from the atmosphere."

#### Audio

Audio and lighting contractor Agorà gave the tour exclusive use of its recently purchased L-Acoustics K1 system, being used here for the first time in Italy. Veteran PA system designer Daniele Tramontani says of the K1: "They're very efficient - the manufacturer put 10 years' experience with V-DOSC to good use. The sound is cleaner, it's rigging facilitated, the enclosure construction is improved and has a better top end - I think they'll soon become a reference point for other systems."

Tramontani explains that when designing the system, as well as the acoustic aspects,

other factors to be taken into consideration on such a large, important show include avoiding obstructing projections or sightlines for the camera crew and the spectators.

After set-up, design and tour start-up, Tramontani left the PA in the capable hands of system engineer Davide Grilli and then Antonio Paoluzi. Grilli says: "After testing the K1 rig at production rehearsals, the configuration chosen is 14 K1 enclosures per side on the main hangs. We put four K1 bass units below each array to test them during rehearsals and on the first night. We've got 11 SB28 subs on the floor on either side of the stage in cardioid format, and four more stage-centre. Seating runs right up to the side of the stage in some venues, so we've also got side arrays with eight V-DOSC and six dV-DOSC."

Due to set width, two centre clusters are flown from the stage roof, each with six dV-DOSC. 16 Meyer Sound M1D are installed along the stage front.

Grilli says: "I must say that the K1 has a great impact, great sound and great off-axis coverage - 90 degrees over the entire frequency range."

At the FOH DiGiCo SD7, Jon Lemon (The Cure, Oasis, Pink Floyd and many more) explained: "I'd only previously used the SD7 with Smashing Pumpkins. As I went right on to Janet Jackson after their tour and didn't have much time on band rehearsals, I decided to just stick with D5 for that.

"Sound quality is a lot more extended, particularly on the high end. This is obviously down to the processing power, which is great on these consoles. The multi-brand compressors built into the system are great - I'm using a couple, and quite a lot of onboard effects, such as delays and reverbs. I love being able to run the console off my laptop, so during





Above: LD Baz Halpin.



Right: The video crew.



Above: Monitor engineers Stevan Martinovic (left) and Umberto Polidori.

production rehearsals, I can sit at the desk and do a lot of things, rather than doing them on the touch-screens - the networking is really solid. With the two engines, everything works so seamlessly - I've not had the slightest problem, even running the console 10 hours a day at rehearsals."

Under the huge stage, Stevan Martinovic and Umberto Polidori helm the two monitor desks. Martinovic explains: "Umberto uses a DiGiCo D5 for the band and I have a DiGiCo SD7 for the artist's monitor set-up, which comprises an array with eight L-Acoustic Kudo on either side of the stage and two SB28s under a grille at the centre of

the stage. Eros also has in-ear monitors and four Clair Brothers wedges along the front of the stage."

Polidori continues: "The musicians all have in-ear monitors and the drummer and keyboard player have a subwoofer each for more poke at the bottom end."

With nine band members, plus 16 channels of sequences, click tracks and SMPTE for video sync, channels total about 70 and Klark Teknik splitters feed the signals analogically to two DiGiCo stages boxes for the FOH system and two for the monitors, ensuring two completely independent signal paths.

#### Video

STS Communication is one of Italy's best-known specialist video contractors in the entertainment field, so was a natural choice for the Eros Ramazzotti show as video plays a key role in the concert, requiring a complete mobile production unit backstage. The set-up includes a Hanabi HVS-3800 video switcher, eight Coolux Pandora's Box media servers and three Pandora's Box media players with the latest (4.5) software. Instead of passing through the servers, live coverage played out on the LED screens is converted from DVI to SDI and keying effects added by the mixer, which feeds it directly to the screens, reducing delay on the cameras' images to a minimum.



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## EQUIPMENT LIST:

### LIGHTING

60 x Martin MAC 2000 Wash XB  
 52 x Clay Paky Alpha Spot 700  
 56 x Clay Paky Alpha Beam 700  
 12 x Martin Atomic 3000 strobes  
 71 x DTS DWE inline 4-lights  
 40 x Coemar PAR LED  
 2 x Zap Technology MiniBig  
 3 x Coemar 1200 followspots  
 4 x Lycian 4kW followspots  
 2 x Martin Pro Maxxyz consoles  
 96 x 2.5k channels of GrandMA dimmers

### AUDIO

L-Acoustics PA: 16+16 K1 cabinets plus 4+4 K1 subs; 12 + 12 + 4 SB 28 subs; 6 + 6 dV-Dosc (centre clusters); 10 + 10 V-Dosc (side); 6+6 dV-Dosc (side)  
 20 x L-Acoustic LA8 (power amp/processor racks)  
 Front-fill: 16 x Meyer Sound M1D  
 FOH console: DiGiCo SD7  
 Monitor consoles: DiGiCo SD7, DiGiCo D5  
 Monitors (artist): 8+8 L-Acoustic Kudo; 2 x SB28  
 4 x Clair Bros wedges

### VIDEO

200 x Barco MiStrip bars  
 80sq.m of Komaden Image-Mesh LED screen  
 8 x Pandoras Box media servers  
 3 x Coolux Media Players  
 1 x Coolux Media Manager  
 2 x GrandMA lighting consoles  
 6 x Barco FLM R20 video projectors  
 4 x Sony DXC-55W cameras  
 3 x Toshiba "lipstick" micro cameras  
 1 x 60x HD Long throw lens  
 1 x Fully automated track with motorized telescopic pedestal and motorised pan/tilt/roll head  
 1 x Flex track dolly and tripod equipped with custom made roll head  
 3 x Pan/tilt/roll heads for Toshiba lipstick cameras  
 Mobile production unit with a Hanabi HVS-3800 video switcher, multiviewer and large LCS monitors



Video content is by Olivier Goulet for Geodezik - a multimedia company specialising in video content production and system design for stage shows by artists of the calibre of Justin Timberlake, Cher, Cirque du Soleil, Bette Midler, The Killers, Linkin Park, and Tina Turner. For the Ramazzotti show, content was co-designed by Gabriel Coutu Dumont and Isabelle Painchaud.

Goulet enthuses: "I've used this system since 2005, for projects such as the Cirque du Soleil's *Macau* show and in Las Vegas with Cher. It's my personal favourite and I'm the first to use the latest version of Pandora's Box - the 4.5. We're using the MA Net - I'm impressed with the new version - all the features are there and it's a lot faster. The containers move a lot during the show, but the crew only does one focus, as Pandora's Box allows us to do 3D shapes based on one map, so I map the containers flat and when they rotate, the images follow the movement."

For the high profile spectacle, STS fielded several custom products, including a Hexagon motorised track,

a camera roll system on two cameras, three-axis (pan, tilt and roll) movement systems on a pair of micro cameras and a computer-assisted control set-up for the camera used on the track.

During rehearsals for the performance of songs in which the entire production runs in perfect sync with the music, the STS team stored dolly movements that could not be carried out in real time, but were recalled and run automatically during the actual show. Communication between the operator's desk and the camera is via standard Ethernet 10/100 connection and each movement mechanism has its own IP address, enabling the entire system to be perfectly interfaced with the outside world.

STS general Alessandro Rosani explains: "The two Toshiba micro-cameras with wide-angle lenses, used for close-ups of the drummer and keyboard player, are mounted on special three-axis movement systems (pan, tilt and roll), which were also custom-made for the Ramazzotti tour and are connected to the same





standard Ethernet network as the main cameras. In the control room, we use a portable computer to control movement or call up presets. Graphically, the preset buttons show the image of the scene that will be covered."

STS developed the products with Tecnopoint from Ceriano Laghetto, near Milan, a company specialising in remote controlled and manually operated virtual set equipment and robotics. The nine-member STS Communication video team led by Emigiliano Napoli (four cameramen and five at the control set-up) also mans a control system (with hot backup) which features Coolux Media Manager software for the Pandora's Box Media Servers. This in turn is controlled by the GrandMA consoles (twin desks for backup). All connections are in fibre optics to ensure utmost quality - the Barco FLM R20 projectors seem to be close, but 200m cables are required to reach them up in the trussing.

Napoli adds: "Apart from the new version of the software, a rock show with a system of this size and complexity is not a frequent event and the entire system is

also on hot back-up. This is also the first time the Win Vision 8.75 LED 8mm screen has been used in Italy. As well as having a very high impact, the 90 square metre screen has no delay on its image feed-out."

Having worked with some of the world's leading artists, Halpin said of Lemon and Pepper's production standards: "Although there is more touring experience in the UK and the US, I think a lot of the UK productions have a sort of snobbish, elitist attitude, but this Ramazzotti tour and the previous one I worked on with Lemon and Pepper are right there with the top players - all the right equipment, the guys know what they're doing and are all one hundred percent committed to the show. It's a huge undertaking and has one of the most complicated sets - 10 metres high, with eight of these custom containers containing LED, lighting, scenic areas inside and even hosting some vignette performances - it's mind-blowing 3D motion and every detail has been studied carefully. It's a truly world-class show."



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