

Advanced Search





Help Meet  
The Altman Family  
\$125,000 Challenge



[Gear](#) | [LDI](#) | [Master Classes](#) | [Concerts](#) | [Staging/Rental](#) | [TQ](#) | [Venues](#) | [Architainment](#) | [Design Gallery](#)

## COLLABORATION IN CONCERT



Sep 1, 2004 12:00 PM, BY BOB AND COLLEEN BONNIOL

House lights down. The crowd screams as the PA starts thundering with sounds of marching, helicopters, and tank treads: the intro for Nickelback. Chris Maeder's stark and ominous beams sweep the crowd, searching. As the volume increases, the crowd reaches a pitch, and it makes our hair stand on end.

The Kabuki drops, and a 30' high, full stage wall of flames erupts. Just when you thought it can't go up a notch, it does.

The Nickelback logo appears, bleach-ed and burning, on the LED screens backing the stage. A final build, and the band crashes into "Flat on the Floor," accompanied by pyro, light sweeps, and on-screen explosions.

That's just a taste of the Nickelback/3 Doors Down double-bill, which was supported by new favorites Puddle of Mudd and Thornley. In a season rife with cancellations and disappointing ticket sales, the tour was a potent antithesis, selling out nationwide and presenting some old fashioned, hard-hitting rock and roll to boot.

To many of our concert brethren, this FOH experience is old hat, but for us, and probably for many designers, the venues are usually a bit more modestly sized. It was an electric experience to be designing for a big crowd in a big venue, and hitting those cues was an emotional peak. We had been waiting for an opportunity to work on some media for Nickelback since we met LD Chris Maeder when he programmed our lighting array on *Parsifal*. This tour presented the perfect opportunity. It also provided an interesting view of two LDs' contrasting styles and designs coming together in one show under one rig for lighting and projection.

### NICKELBACK: OUT DAMNED SPOTS

Subscribe to



e-newsletter

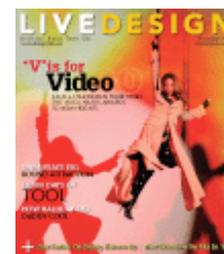
## RESOURCE CENTER

### TOOLBOX

- [Live Design TV](#)
- [Industry Sourcebook](#)
- [Design Gallery](#)
- [How-Tos](#)
- [JobZone](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Subscribe to e-newsletters](#)
- [Subscribe to magazines](#)
- [LIVEBLOG](#)

### RELATED SITES

- [Broadcast Engineering](#)
- [Digital Content Producer](#)
- [Electronic Musician](#)
- [ESTA](#)
- [Mix Radio](#)




Stay  
current with  
industry  
news, product  
developments,  
events  
and more

### LDI NEWS

**[From The LDI Show Floor](#)**  
 Nov 3, 2006 2:24 PM

**[LDI Has Record Year Awards Best Debuting Products](#)**  
 Nov 1, 2006 12:00 PM,  
 Marian Sandberg and  
 Michael S. Eddy

**[Tomcat's Hoist And Truss Workshon At](#)**

For Maeder, this summer's double bill followed a busy year of touring, with Nickelback making stops in Europe and Australia, as well as bouncing coast to coast across North America. The Nickelback rig featured a prominent wall of light upstage, a development Maeder attributes to a German television appearance in 2003. "The show had a grid of pipes on the back wall of the stage, hung with a lot of instruments — Martin Mini-Macs, maybe," he says. "The band really liked it better than the traditional overhead light show."

Hung extensively with Martin Professional MAC 250 automated heads, as well as Atomic 3000 strobes and conventional ACLs, the back truss array added a scenic element to the production, and it scaled well with varying sized venues. "We could omit the bottom layer if trims were short or dropped off the side sections in restricted width. The look and programming of the show remained consistent," says Maeder. The wall demanded that the traditional onstage backline was regrouped to the side stages, allowing the wall to "land" on the upstage edge. Says Maeder, "It was key to the look that the upstage view be unobstructed, that the lines of the rig not be broken."

Maeder has been with the band for about three years, recommended for the position by Larry Thomas at Christie Lites (who also supplied the gear for this tour). Nickelback's show featured an opulent largeness to it — rock and roll done big and without apology. The band is comfortable with what it takes to move a stadium along sonically, and their energy absolutely engages the crowd. This high bar of performance was met in the lighting, with looks that went from minimal and mysterious to sheer power in the tremendous back light potential of the rear array.

"I always start by lighting the band. They're the center of all the looks," says Maeder. "We didn't run spots at all. The band doesn't like their look, and neither do I. So, each player had lights specifically for them, and we had the side zone lighting from the onstage sticks of truss."

### 3 DOORS DOWN HITS BIG

Impressive enough in its own right, the Nickelback light show got a "moving" improvement from Matt Mills' 3 Doors Down rig. Mills and 3 Doors Down had embraced a moving overhead light show for their winter and spring tour prior to this summer's pairing. The rig consisted of four trusses hung with two MAC 2000 Profile fixtures and three MAC 600s on an articulating system provided by Schoenberg Systems. The trusses moved to form arrays of lines, diamond shapes, and dramatic high and low trim positions. Combined with Chris Maeder's wall of light, the moving overhead show became, literally, the over-the-top feature.

"We moved out of the clubs and into small theaters on the tour when [the song] 'Kryptonite' hit big," says Mills. "We started making the four moving trusses a signature thing. The band definitely knows what they like — keeping things simple and powerful." Mills added a further detail to the design by canting the onstage side towers in by about 20°. "They really gave a great geometric look without a lot of effort."

### VIDEO IN

3 Doors Down played a benefit concert this spring that gave Mills an opportunity to try lasers, big video, and pyro in the show. "The band ended up liking all of it, so we planned it all into this summer's production." 3 Doors' break

### INDUSTRY EVENTS

- [LDI](#)
- [Master Classes](#)
- [EDDY Awards](#)
- [Wally Awards](#)
- [USITT Rising Star Award](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

- [Remix](#)
- [Sound & Video Contractor](#)

### SEARCH OUR SOURCEBOOK

This Directory ▾

Company Name  Category  Both



### FREE ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Want more information on the latest products and advertisers listed in Live Design magazine? [Click here](#) for a quick and easy way to request Product Information online.

### E-NEWSLETTERS

#### [Live Design Wire](#)

The Live Design Wire provides weekly updates on all aspects of the live entertainment design and technology industry, including business news, people and project profiles, trade show updates, product reviews, and Seen & Heard, our journal of events and shows seen by the Live Design staff.

- [View Sample](#)
- [Subscribe](#)

#### [Live Design TQ Now](#)

Live Design's TQ Now offers up to date information on designers, technicians, and manufacturers involved in all aspects of theatre—lights, sound, sets, costumes, projections, makeup, etc—from around the world, with special emphasis on project profiles and technical how-tos.

- [Subscribe](#)

### [LDInstitute 2006](#)

Nov 1, 2006 11:18 AM

[Lasernet's CEO Celebrates 30th Anniversary At LDI 2006](#)

Oct 27, 2006 5:02 PM

[LDI Has Record Year, Awards Best Debating Products](#)

Oct 25, 2006 1:07 PM,  
By Michael S. Eddy and  
Marian Sandberg

**We got your show BLOG right here!** Live Design's editors will be reporting on the conferences, exhibit hall, events, people, (gossip) and all the happenings. Check it out and check it often—you won't want to miss a thing!

[View the blog](#)

Please click here to complete a very brief survey and enter a drawing to win one of five \$50 Amazon.com gift certificates

Thank you!

out hit, "Kryptonite," was accompanied by a tour-de-force of all these elements, with a cool retro comic book feel that matched the spirit of the lyrics. Red and green lasers split the air, with a wonderful toxic yellow/green backlight; animated kryptonite crystals tumbling and comic book cells appeared on the screens. "The video element is something that really interests me," continues Mills. "I really want to integrate a [High End Systems] Catalyst or other media server into our show and work out custom content for the band's winter tour."

The 3 Doors Down video show (by IMAG Video of Nashville) featured an extensive use of live cameras combined with music video footage and custom content fed off DoReMi V1 decks. IMAG provided the extensive deck, camera, and switcher system, as well as the Barco D-Lite 7mm LED video screen that hung in three separate sections upstage.

IMAG Video also provided a High End Systems Catalyst 3, which was used to provide all of the custom content for Nickelback. The band likes to use video with a light touch, interspersing some songs driven by content, with others featuring limited image magnification, and in some cases, no video at all. It made for a dynamic set that didn't overbear the audience's natural tendency to watch television.

We had roughly two months to create the media for four Nickelback songs, "Flat on the Floor," "Leader of Men," "Hero," and "Figured You Out." With "Flat on the Floor" as the opener, we knew we had to hit hard. The band wanted a racing feel to the video content, with a street drag culture bend, so time lapse footage of driving perspective from Seattle city streets was combined with flaming borders that defined each of the three screens. A final go over with color grading to match tempo with the song made these clips ready.

"Leader of Men" demanded a psychedelic look, achieved through the use of photographed classic oil pan technique, combined with surreal cloud tank footage and an almost subliminal flashing of other trippy images.

"Hero," from the *Spider-Man* soundtrack, featured aerial footage of the Manhattan skyline, color graded to a golden bronze, which flared into flying cloud perspective footage with the final chorus.

"Figured You Out," the show closer, was an homage to the fans, with swooping crane shots of the crowd going crazy, optically distorted, color inverted, and finally treated with security and video camera graphics to give a real surveillance feel. The Catalyst 3 proved to be a joy to program, and the show came together very quickly for us. Mode Studios associate Tommy Hague handled the Catalyst programming via an MA Lighting grandMA.

Show changeover was a smooth event, with Mills and Maeder programming separate shows that were recalled from disk for each set. A short conventional fixture refocus was easily completed as the band gear was shifted.

The combination of these shows was only complicated by communication challenges: both bands were on tour in the planning stages. Explains Mills, "Chris and I have a really longstanding relationship. Ultimately, that helped to ease the process of coming to a consensus about what we should do."

Flash, finally, to the first number coming to an explosive, crashing conclusion; the crowd goes wild. Chris Maeder turns from the console and smirks at us, as we geekily jump around. Indeed, it is old hat for him, but for us, it was a mind-blowing experience. Bring on the rock and roll!

*Bob and Colleen Bonniol of Seattle's MODE Studios are past recipients of the ETS-LDI Projection Designer of the Year Award (2003). They are also regular contributors to Entertainment Design.*

**[Want to use this article? Click here for options!](#)** 

© 2006 Prism Business Media Inc.

[Back to Top](#)

BROWSE ISSUES



[| Home](#) | [| Subscribe](#) | [| Prism Business Media](#) | [| About](#) | [| Contact Us](#) | [| For Advertisers](#) | [| For Search Partners](#) | [| Privacy Policy](#)