

NOTABLE USERS

Vince Foster | Vince Foster Light Design | United Kingdom

© 2010 Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc. All rights reserved. Vectorworks is a registered trademark of Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc.

notable

Vince Foster: Lighting the Way to Stardom



Vince Foster springs to life when he's talking about his passion. A top lighting, set, and video designer in the entertainment industry, he bends light and sound like no one else. Foster is based in the UK, but creates breathtaking shows and events for legendary performers around the world—and across time and space.

THE MAGIC OF LIGHT

In 1978, teenager Vince Foster's life was changed forever. He traveled to The Knebworth Festival in the UK to see his first concert, Genesis. "I just expected to hear the music, but when I saw the show, it was quite magical, with lighting and lasers, and mirrors and smoke, all choreographed to the timing of the music. The pin dropped for me, and I decided that was what I wanted to do for a living. It was like running away to join the circus." Foster was blown away by the collective effect of the lighting designer's work. It was a fledgling field then, full of promise—and completely new.

.....
"It was like running away
to join the circus." –Vince Foster
.....

His big break came in 1993. Foster was the final man called for a lighting crew for rehearsals at a huge Peter Gabriel show, as someone had dropped out at the last minute. He was literally sweeping the stage, and as he watched the rehearsals, they seemed to crumble in front of him. Toward the end of rehearsals, the producer fired the lighting designer; Foster was offered the job on the spot. "It was like Cinderella. One moment I was sweeping the stage,

and then I was at the ball." It was a difficult tour, Foster recalls. He worked long, hard hours, learning as he went. It was backbreaking work. Later he found out that it was groundbreaking too. It remains one of his favorites, since it was his first real chance to create something big.

He counts his recent work for Kylie Minogue as another of his favorites—highlighting and embellishing wild scenes of bold, cabaret-style dancers and backdrops. This tour illustrates how much he relies on the ever-increasing lighting technology. Whereas his plans for the Peter Gabriel show were hand-drawn, his current plans are all done with Vectorworks® Spotlight design tools, and are all computer driven. For one of his Kylie shows, Foster controlled more than 250 "intelligent lights," each with its own processor. His use of the software allowed him to place them in the correct positions, ensuring that they'd have maximum effect on the dancers.

Foster is now considered one of the best lighting designers in the industry, and has been nominated for many of the biggest awards it offers. He is a one-man show-maker, creating displays of light and sound that thrill thousands.

NOTABLE USERS

Vince Foster | Vince Foster Light Design | United Kingdom

© 2010 Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc. All rights reserved. Vectorworks is a registered trademark of Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc.



Left: Vince Foster used Vectorworks Spotlight to create this rendering for Grammy award-winning recording artist Janet Jackson's 2010 European tour.

Right: This rendering shows a light design for singer Nena's "Made in Germany" 2010 tour.

THE MAGIC OF 3D DESIGN

Foster has designed concerts, tours, and events for Janet Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Duran Duran, George Michael, Phil Collins, and many other world-class performers. Currently, he's putting together groundbreaking shows for Nena and the Sugababes. Foster relies on CAD software to make these shows come to life. Though he says, "I can't draw," he drafted his plans by hand until the early 1990's, when he started using a 2D drawing program called Canvas™. Around 1996, a friend introduced Foster to Vectorworks (then known as MiniCAD®) and its 3D capabilities. Foster's world opened up. "It changed my life—big time," he gushes.

With these 3D design tools, he can still create drawings that look like hand-drawn sketches, but they're also extremely accurate "under the trunk" and can be updated easily. Previously, when he was designing a box for the stage, if his hand-drawn plan was off by millimeters, it could translate into a much larger discrepancy on stage, which in Foster's world, is "disastrous." Now, he says, "I can be confident that what I draw will fit in the area I'm designing it for." And, if he needs to make a change, it's much easier. "One of the great features," he points out, "is how you can update at any point and everything updates automatically." With other applications, this is simply not always the case.

Foster needs to coordinate many components for his shows. He depends on Renderworks® to light ceilings and create compelling photorealistic effects. Then he designs lighting plots, places the rigging, and positions motors to hang various objects for the show. He appreciates the software's flexible workflow, comparing its modular processes to Legos. He can move objects around just by dragging and dropping. And like Legos, there are standard pieces and more complicated pieces (like freeform objects) that can be used to build a design. Their dimensions and measurements update as he physically alters them on the screen, so all reports and plans are completely up-to-date and completely accurate. When working with so many different pieces this associativity saves a lot of time.

.....
"Vectorworks has changed my life.

It's a fantastic, amazing piece of innovation."

—Vince Foster
.....

And with regards to saving time, Foster raves about the capabilities of sheet, section, and design layer viewports included in the features set. "Vectorworks

has changed my life. It's a fantastic, amazing piece of innovation." With this technology, he can see many layers and dimensions at once, working with them simultaneously. It gives a 360-degree view of the project at a glance.

The 2010 version of the software also introduces larger libraries of symbols and musical instruments, as well as more lighting companies' trademarked products. So Foster says he can create extremely accurate, robust presentations that model reality even more closely, predicting the desired outcome as reliably as possible. It's a very effective way to present the plan to clients.

And he appreciates that he can do everything—create, model, and present—with the same application, where previously he would be juggling three to get it all done. Now he's got the circus under control, so he can just enjoy the show.

For more information, visit
<http://www.lightdesign.co.uk>