

Jack White: ANALOG IN BLUE

by Victoria Fausnaught

Concert photos by David James Swanson,

Crew photos by Shelby Cude



Jack White and The Lazaretto Tour have been touring hard since May 2014. With shows ranging in size from the Glastonbury Music Festival in Somerset, England to The Eagles Ballroom in Milwaukee, WI, and everything in between, this is a crew who knows how to adapt and adjust to build a set that perfects the magnificent visions of a visionary artist.

Mobile Production Monthly caught up with some of the crew to talk about production and their current tour while they were in Jack White's hometown for the January 28th show at the Bridgestone in Nashville.

Production Manager, Kit Blanchard honed his skills working as Main Stage Manager for festivals like Austin City Limits, Lollapalooza, Outside Lands Festival, Life is Beautiful Festival, and as a Stage Manager for Bonnaroo. Before that, he toured with Phish from 1997-2012 first as their Production Rigger and later as their Stage Manager. He hired on with Jack White at the beginning of the Lazaretto tour.

Like so many in production, Kit mentioned he has a long standing love with live performance. I asked Kit what in particular he loves about this gig. "One of the things that I really enjoy is working towards Jack's vision," said Kit, explaining "I can use my skill set, these skills that I have acquired over the years to make changes in the way our production is presented, to make it appropriate for each different venue we go to."

Because every show has a different set up depending on the size and type of venue, Kit explained that the crew needs to be able to "adapt the lighting design and adapt to the different acoustic differences in all these rooms to still present Jack White and The Lazaretto Tour as Jack would want it presented." Kit gave high marks to his crew for both their expertise and their adaptability in attaining the "high bar" in production values they and Jack White strive for. "We have an incredible team, from our

Lighting Director, our Front of House Engineer, our Monitor Engineer to all of our technicians. And they're able to roll with the punches."

Chad Brouillette is White's Stage Manager. He started with White in the summer of 2012. He's been touring since 1995 and says it's been one of the best tours to be on, "We're such a small group we're all kind of like a family." When asked about his favorite part of the tour he joked, "the last piece of gear on the truck!" More seriously Chad said what he still loves every single night of White's tour is, "looking out in the crowd and seeing thousands people jumping up and down and chanting all in unison."

Brad Madix is the tour's FOH Engineer and one of the incredible team members Kit mentioned. He spoke about the transition from venue to venue and explained that every day is its own set of challenges, "You're changing from not just venue to venue, but from one type of venue to another." Far from complaining, Brad has taken any challenges in stride, "We're just gonna do what we gotta do, turn that knob we need to turn, and work within that framework and be creative within that framework. And it's great!"

Brad said his equipment of choice is "an old Midas XL4 with a rack full of fine compresses, and junk." On his feelings about still working in analog in a so-called digital age, he explained, "I think it's really a mindset, more than

a gigantic difference in the quality of sound...more about how it affects the way you work and the way you think about what you're going to do." Brad acknowledged it can be fun to experiment with range of possibilities a digital setup offers but the downside is the ease in doing "too much" or making decisions in the moment that takes the sound away from the artist's vision. In contrast, "with analog you have to make a lot of your decisions in advance because you can't just change it from that piece of gear to another piece of gear." And those restraints, Brad argued, "can be good. In a way



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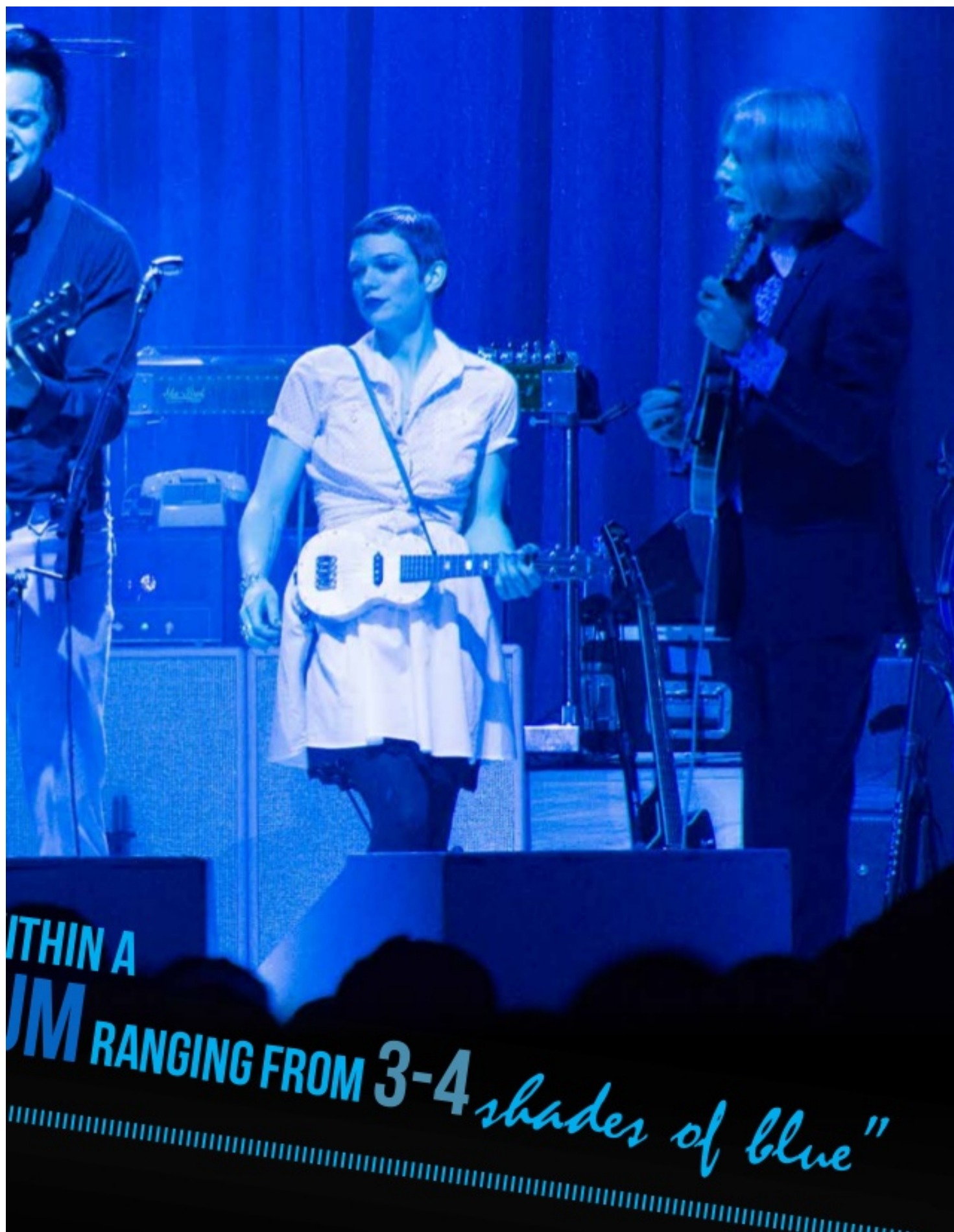
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it makes you think about things, you think things through more thoroughly, because you have that constraint. You can't just go down some blind alley. I think that happens a lot in the digital world, you sort of, screw yourself in a way because you stack one thing on top of another."

Brent Carpenter is the Monitor Engineer for the Lazaretto Tour. He is a long time Clair Brothers employee of 19 years and got his start working at Nashville's Starwood Amphitheater. For the Lazaretto Tour, he is working on a Midas Heritage 3k and using DBX 900 Series Compressors, some slap delay for Jacks vocals, and some simple reverb on Lillie Mae's voice and on the snare.

The new mic he is particularly excited about is the Telefunken M81.

He had never used the M81 before this tour but was won over with the smooth response and nice bottom end. Brent added the mics "have a really tight pickup pattern so you can really get them loud in wedges without feedback problems." Which luckily they have yet to encounter. On White's acoustic, he uses a Neve Pure Path Compressor that is a complete channel strip with a pre-amp, compressor and EQ built in. "I really have kind of fallen in love with it," said Brent, "it's a really nice sounding piece."

Emmanuelle "Gigi" Pedron, has been the Lighting Director for Jack White since the Blunderbuss Tour. Joining with 4Wall Lighting to create a memorable display, she brings a true artistic vision to the Lazaretto tour. She is ever ready

to manipulate the lights just by watching Jack White and following his lead.

Jack White's performance is all within a blue spectrum ranging from 3-4 shades of blue, and I asked Gigi what it's like to work within those parameters. "For me it's a challenge, for any lighting person it's a real challenge to just use one color." She explained she works hard to get people "immersed" in the blue and "treats it as a painting, each song is a different painting" and that is just how she sees it.

For more information on Jack White or the Lazaretto Tour please see:

www.jackwhiteiii.com

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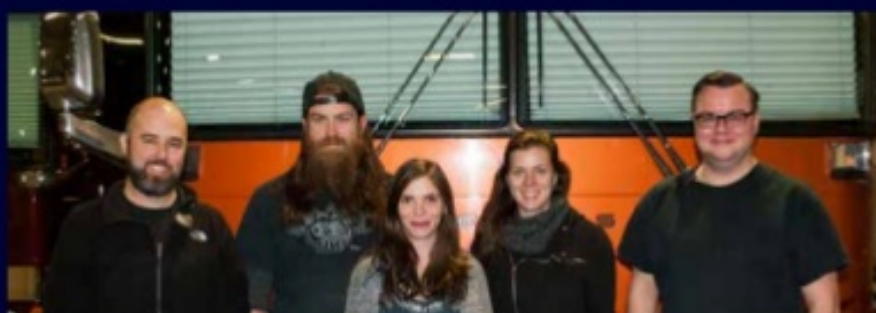


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JACK WHITE TOUR PERSONNEL

LALO MEDINA.....TOUR MANAGER
 KIT BLANCHARD.....PRODUCTION MANAGER
 MOLLY MOORMEIER..... ASST TOUR MANAGER
 REBECCA CHOLEWA.....PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
 BRAD MADIX.....FOH, GIANTS FAN...
 BRENT CARPENTER.....MONITORS STAGE LEFT
 GIGI PEDRON..... LIGHTING DIRECTOR
 ABE DAVIS.....BACKLINE --GUITARS
 JOSH SMITH.....BACKLINE --KEYS, PEDAL STEEL, THERAMIN
 BOBBY SCHAYER.....BACKLINE --DRUM AND BASS
 CHAD BROUILLETTE...STAGE MANAGER/CARP/CORNERMAN
 JOSH BENNETTRIGGER /AUTOMATION TECH
 ROSS BERKSON.....MERCHANDISER
 NAJA BANZ.....WARDROBE AND BACKSTAGE COORDINATOR
 DAVID SWANSON.....TOUR PHOTOGRAPHER
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