



A *dance* through *life*

What is it about the visual imagery of new show *Life As We Know It*, now showing on Pacific Dawn, that so bedazzles all who see it?



Back to the future

Audiences get to see an amazing array of steampunk-inspired costumes.

This ambiguous version of 'life'—of the unexpected and unpredictable—was exactly what Nigel and the team wanted to highlight.

Exquisite costumes are crucial in portraying the world of *LAWKI* to the audience, with each outfit being specifically designed to represent the various characters and personalities in the script. Nigel says with a laugh that his trademark—"lots of detail"—is definitely stamped on the costumes in *LAWKI*.

The scale of the production is vast, with 24 different costumes designed just for the steampunk themes. A typical show has about 10 numbers with eight costume changes each, which adds up to a lot of clothing. Costume colours are also heavily influenced by steampunk: earthy gold, copper, bronze and other natural tones feature in an array of attention-grabbing materials and textures.

Many hours were spent designing each outfit, Nigel says, let alone making them. "It normally takes me about three hours to draw each picture of what I think a costume should be. Then I'd usually take about five hours working on stick figures, gradually subtracting and adding things to the characters. I colour them in, then eventually submit [to the producers] for approval."

Complementing the costumes are dazzling LED screen displays. The stunning visual effects in the show (largely accomplished through the use of LED technology and animation programs such as Adobe After Effects for cinematic effects, and Apple Motion for editing motion graphics) play a critical role in portraying key emotional, reflective and entertaining moments throughout various stages of life.

Scott Ogier, general manager of cruise and creative for Grayboy Entertainment and visual designer for *LAWKI*'s LED imagery, says the production team were determined to be anything but predictable with the visuals. "From this detail came the choice of imagery for the screens. As the costume style was steampunk, many of the

There's something magical about live theatre. Perhaps it's the way energy, colour and spellbinding stories combine to enrapture audiences and transport them to a place outside themselves. New stage spectacular *Life As We Know It* is a tremendous example of a show that takes the viewer on one such emotional journey.

Yet it's the striking costumes and state-of-the-art LED screen imagery that everyone is talking about. 'Original', 'edgy' and 'visually exciting' are just some of the words used to describe the look and feel of this production. And the essence of its success is in its creators' seamless integration of performer and technology.

One of those creative talents, renowned costume designer Nigel Shaw, is responsible for the 'steampunk' element woven into *LAWKI*. He says he chose the theme because it fitted in with the production team's emphasis on the modern and the unseen. Steampunk typically plays with alternate history—think, for example, the steam-powered machinery of Victorian Britain thrust into a post-apocalyptic environment.

Like clockwork

The images on the LED backdrop are designed to match each song that is performed.

visuals began to take on the style of a futuristic world meshed with the industrial era."

The images that dance across the screen took about two months to design, and then more time to 'tweak' and perfect once rehearsals began with performers and costumes.

A technical triumph is delivered in a scene in which three singers appear to transform into angels and fly, helped by the illusions of LED imagery. Scott says of the take-your-breath-away scene: "It's one of those moments you wouldn't be able to create any other way except with LED."

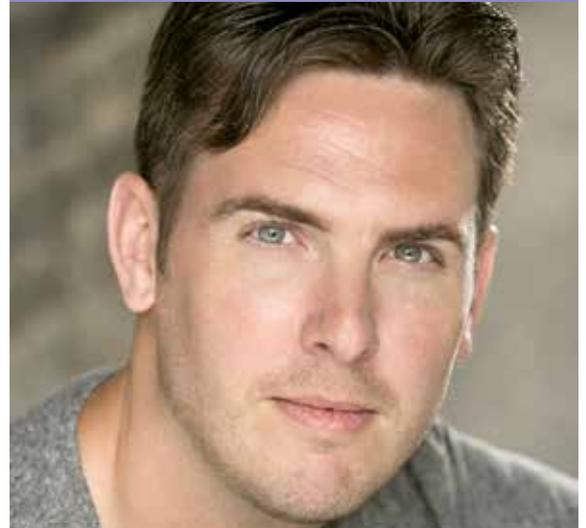
He adds: "As the theme of 'life' is so broad, it gave us scope to really take each section of the show to many different levels. We added a lot of interaction with the screen content and the performers onstage. The illusions created by performers integrating with the LED screens added the exciting edge we were after, and gives the show some of the wow factor we were aiming for."

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Scott says this production is a must-see because it's so different from other stage productions—at sea or on land. "It offers such a great journey for an audience member and there are many moments where an audience member reflects on their own life and experiences because of this. It was such a bold move away from other variety-styled shows onboard ships and the risk to go there has worked really well." ■



Meet one of the stars



Nicholas McBride has been a production vocalist and guest entertainer with P&O Cruises for nearly four years.

Entertainment was his passion from an early age and he has been performing professionally around the world for more than 10 years.

"I started working for P&O Cruises in 2009, starting on Pacific Dawn as lead vocalist; I enjoyed my experience so much that I haven't gone home! I've now worked on Pacific Jewel and Pacific Pearl, too. I feel privileged to star in our new show *Life As We Know It*, working closely with renowned choreographer William A. Forsythe.

"Having worked on cruise productions for more than seven years, it is fantastic to perform in a show that differentiates itself from typical cruise ship entertainment. It certainly wows audiences and the response to this new show has been stupendous.

"Having now worked as production vocalist on all of the P&O Cruises fleet, in all 10 of its current production shows, it's wonderful to see the progression that the shows are making."

It's show time!

Life As We Know It is now showing onboard Pacific Dawn. Check your *Pacific Daily* for times.

THE ORIGINAL BIG COLD BEER IS BACK.

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18+

FOR PEOPLE
OVER THE AGE
OF 18 ONLY