

AUG 2009

Church Production

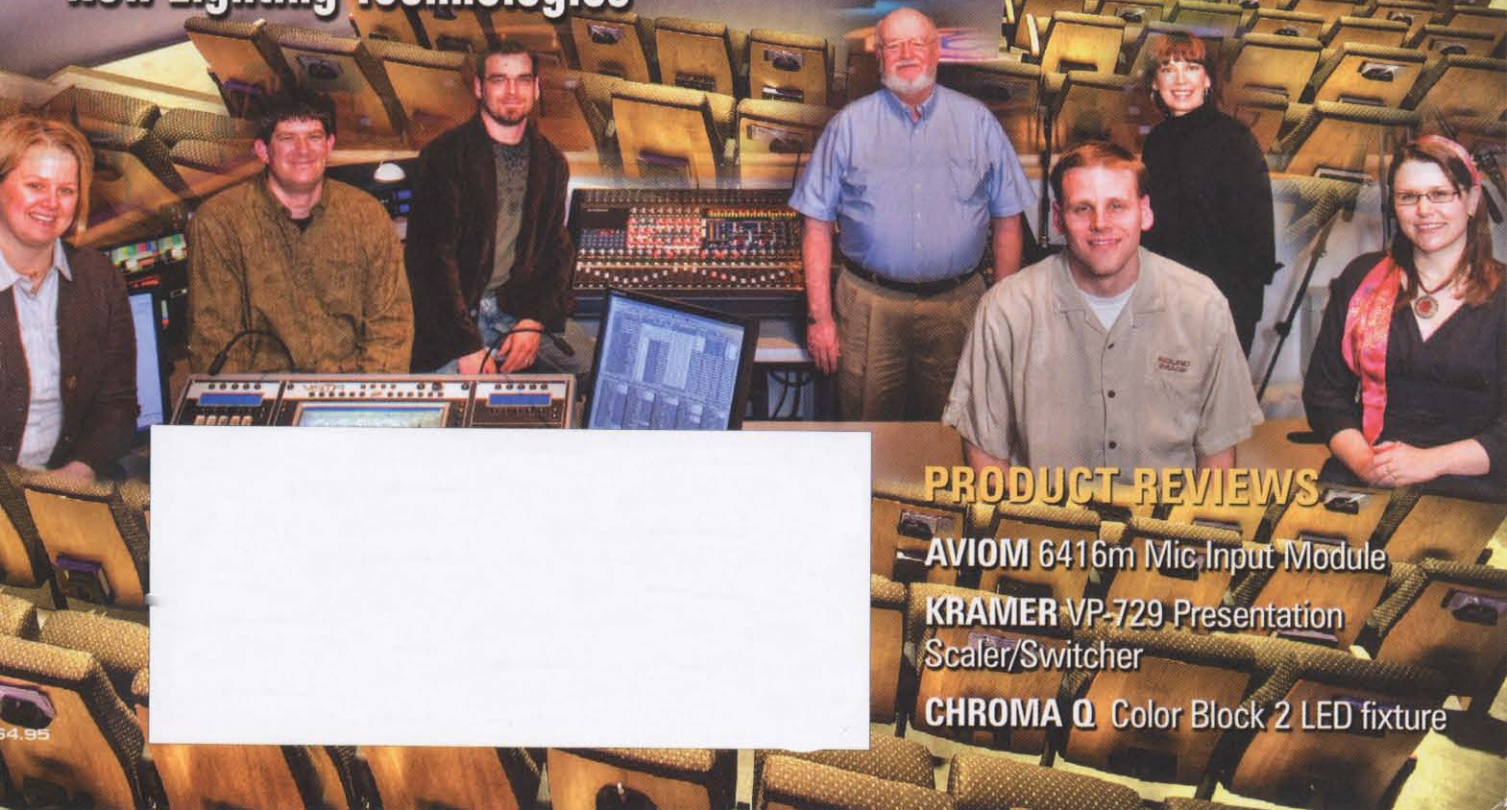
AMAZING GRACE

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CHROMA Q Color Block 2 LED fixture

Chroma Q

Color Block 2 LED fixture

reviewed by: Greg Persinger

For over 10 years A.C. Lighting with the Chroma Q line has been an innovator in color-changing technology adding products such as the Broadway, Cascade, Color Punch, Color Split, Color Web, and Color Block to the lighting designers arsenal of tools. Now they have created a new tool to add to this collection.

Based on the highly successful Chroma Q Color Block released in 2004, the Color Block 2 greatly improves on the original Color Block technology with higher brightness, better color mixing, and smoother dimming.

The new Color Block 2 fixture has the same size as the original Color Block, measuring two 3/8 inches high by four 11/16 inches deep and nine 13/16 inches long. Built with an anodized extruded aluminum housing, each fixture can be used as a stand-alone unit, or you can use the latching system to connect up to five fixtures together to make one large unit. There are also accessories for creating various shapes and configurations as well as numerous mounting options.

The Color Block 2 has an improved color mixing system consisting of four LED cells per fixture that are powered by multiple four-in-one RGBA LEDs that have red,

green, blue, and amber color elements inside. The difference is that instead of the individual red, green, and blue LEDs in the original model, each RGBA LED in the Color Block 2 has all of the elements combined into one LED, as well as the addition of the amber-colored LED. This new LED configuration has several advantages. First when you look at the fixture you see a beam of coherent color coming from each one of the cells, you don't see the individual red, green, and blue LED's like you do in some LED fixtures. Second, with the addition of the amber LED you get much better pastel colors, flesh tones, and better orange and amber colors. Third, the four-in-one RGBA LED design eliminates the multicolored edged shadows you get when lighting something from close range.



company: Chroma Q
product(s): Color Block 2
phone: (416) 255-9494
website: www.aclighting.com/northamerica
price: \$845

When testing the color mixing capabilities of the Color Block 2, I could definitely tell that the quality of the color mixing had been extended with the addition of the amber LED. While the Color Block 2 still retains the nice saturated reds, blues, and greens of the original Color Block, the pastel color range was greatly increased. I was able to make nice pinks and light ambers as well as some nice lavenders. Yellow also looked very good and I got

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some nice oranges and red oranges in addition to the standard range of blues and greens.

The most impressive feature of the color mixing that I found was the ability to mix a nice warm white that made very good-looking skin tones. Since most color mixing LED fixtures don't make very good warm whites this was a huge "win" in my book. I was also able to vary the color temperature of the white light to make a nice cool white as well.

There are two other improvements that have been made to the Color Block 2: higher output and better dimming. The Color Block 2 is noticeably brighter than the original Color Block. This isn't surprising considering that LED technology has improved a lot over the last five years. What is somewhat surprising is the improvement in the Color Block 2 dimming. Chroma Q has updated the dimming in the Color Block 2 to what the company calls Theatrical Grade." I just call it "sweet!"

Technically LEDs are hard to dim without them flickering or jumping on at 5% and coming up to full brightness at about 70%. Not so with the Color Block 2. It has an exceptionally smooth dimmer curve that makes it look like you are dimming an incandescent lighting fixture on a standard dimmer. It is nice and smooth and very even from zero to 100%. This function alone was fun to play with as I tried it with 3-, 6-, 10-, 15-, 20-, 30-, and 45-second fade times. Each time the fade

was smooth as silk and showed the quality of the fixture. The Color Block 2 is also camera safe for both SD and HD cameras and has adjustments to vary the dimming frequency to sync with various camera scan rates to safeguard against flickering on video as the fixture dims.

Like the original Color Block, the Color Block 2 fixture is connected to a power supply via a four-pin XLR cable. Up to five fixtures can be daisy chained together to one feed from the power supply and the power supplies come in two versions — a five-fixture single output unit or a 30-fixture six-output unit. Power draw on the units is so low that you can run 30 Color Block 2s off one 20-amp circuit showing them to be very energy efficient. Total cable length is 200 feet so the power supplies can be located off stage.


The power supplies have a backlit LCD display, two buttons, and a jog wheel for setting the functions of the fixtures such as DMX address and control mode. The Color Block 2 has 16 control modes that give you the ability to control each single cell in the Color Block 2, the Color Block 2 as a fixture, or all the blocks on the power supply as a single unit. Once you have chosen how many cells you are going to control you have several different choices of color mixing. These choices include using hue, saturation and intensity (HSI); red, green, blue (RGB); red, green, blue, amber (RGBA); or red, green, blue and intensity (RGBI). One other addition to the Color Block 2 is a function called Magic Amber.

When using the RGB and RGBI modes to mix color, Magic Amber automatically mixes in the amber LED when the color combination calls for it.

Chroma Q's literature says that the Color Block 2 will wash a 20-foot tall set piece and in my testing I found this to be true. A single block could easily wash a four-foot to six-foot-wide set piece, and a continuous row of Color Block 2's would be great for smoothly lighting a cyc or a large back wall.

One thing to keep in mind if you buy a Color Block 2 is to buy more four-pin XLR cable than you think you will need. Since the power supply is not built into the fixture you can't just plug the unit into wall power and add a DMX cable, as you can with some other LED units. Although this can be a negative if you aren't prepared, it also keeps the unit very compact, so it can squeeze into those tight spaces like behind the drum riser. It also means that installation in coves and ceilings doesn't require any electrical work since the cable is all low voltage.

Overall I think Chroma Q has given the Color Block a nice update in the Color Block 2. It is a great fixture and would definitely be a great addition to any lighting rig and a good tool for any organization to own.

GREG PERSINGER is the owner of Vivid Illumination. He can be reached at greg@vividillumination.com. 



Introducing Color Block 2

- Redefining LED Lighting

The new Chroma-Q™ Color Block 2™ LED fixture combines an exceptional 2nd generation feature set with the original model's modularity and wide range of mounting accessories, making it even better value.



Single color RGBA optics - virtually eliminate multicolored shadows & offer camera friendly output

Radically increased color palette - create vibrant bold colors & subtle theatrical hues

High color rendition index (CRI) of 90 - for tungsten emulation

High light output (530 lumens) - exceptional color brightness & enough to uplight a 6m / 20 foot set

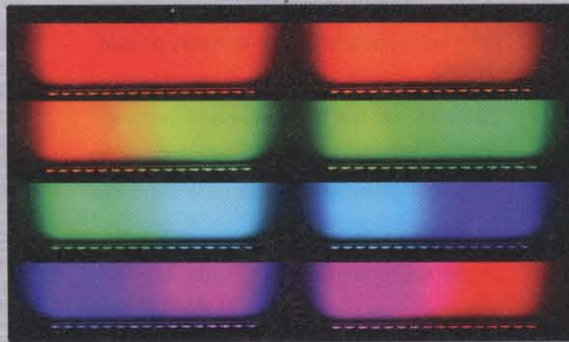
Theatrical grade dimming - smoothness combined with instant strobe-like control of intensity

Modular construction & choice of mounting accessories - configure as a wide variety of shapes

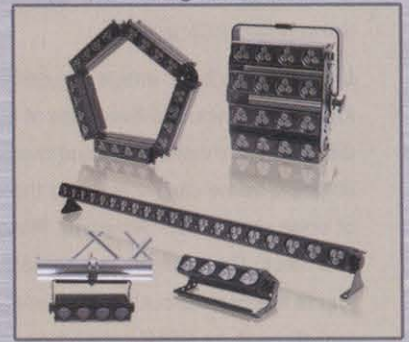
Single color RGBA optics





Radically increased color palette



Modular construction & choice of mounting accessories



 Call us today for your FREE demonstration

 To find out more visit www.chroma-q.com



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