

The Vari-Lite VL2600 PROFILE ensured The Sun Came Out on NBC's 'Annie Live'

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Posted on March 31, 2022



ANNIE LIVE! Pictured: Celina Smith as Annie. (Photo by: Zach Dilgard/NBC)

New York, USA - US TV Network, NBC, recently ran a star-studded, live broadcast of the hit musical Annie. 'Annie Live' was broadcast to a TV audience of over 5 million, with 350 watching in the NBC studio. Multi-genre, award-winning lighting designer Bob Barnhart lit the production, evoking mood, atmosphere, and a vivid sense of time and place. Having previously worked on NBC's live broadcast of 'The Sound of Music', Barnhart knew that he required a lighting fixture with maximum technical and creative potential. To that end he selected the VL2600 PROFILE from Vari-Lite, a [Signify](#) (Euronext: LIGHT), entertainment lighting brand.

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Photo by: Virginia Sherwood/NBC

"I wanted a 'Swiss Army Knife' luminaire. A fixture that can perform multiple tasks, without compromising on creativity," he explains. "Live television specials can be like uncaged animals. Even with the most basic shows, we can face multiple challenges. We're often short on time and in this case we only had four days for camera rehearsals."

Productions like this can also be tight on budget and Barnhart was looking for a multipurpose fixture that can deal with every possible lighting task, including scenic dressing, key lighting of characters, mood-setting washes and direct face lighting for camera close ups. Space was also a constraint: "Instead of four lighting rigs, each dedicated to the individual scenes, I had to use one very tightly packed rig to light them all in turn. This naturally had an impact on the time I had with each."

In response, Barnhart designed a lighting rig packed with over 350 VL2600 PROFILE luminaires: "I

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like to keep my lighting plots simple," he explains. "Annie Live was a three-hour marathon, and, over the course of the show, each individual light had at least 20 unique jobs to do. When it came to level and color, the scenic elements had to look the same in close ups as they did in wider and 360-degree panning shots. The VL2600s performed impeccably - we didn't have a single failure."



Pictured: Taraji P. Henson as Miss Hannigan — (Photo by: Virginia Sherwood/NBC)

Amazingly, Barnhart only had one full run-through of the show before the live broadcast. This was his main opportunity to ensure that every shot made sense in terms of environmental and atmospheric continuity, angle and level. From the earthy darker colors of the orphanage to the rich opulence of the mansion, the live broadcast oozed drama and theatricality. Every shot evoked a sense of place, time and mood, seducing the TV audience with Annie's charming story.

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Pictured: (l-r) Celina Smith as Annie, Harry Connick, Jr. as Daddy Warbucks, Nicole Scherzinger as Grace Farrell — (Photo by: Virginia Sherwood/NBC) Pictured: (l-r) Celina Smith as Annie, Harry Connick, Jr. as Daddy Warbucks, Nicole Scherzinger as Grace Farrell — (Photo by: Virginia Sherwood/NBC)

Pre-programming opportunities were also limited: "As with all creative pursuits, performer

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blocking and camera positions change during the process. This means I need an adaptable fixture that is small, yet powerful enough to give me as many options as possible," Barnhart explains. "Finding the right key light at the appropriate angle for every shot, with the right level of softness, looking as good in close-up as in a wide shot, while maintaining continuity can be a complex balancing act."



(Photo by: Virginia Sherwood/NBC)

For this reason, Barnhart always consults the programmers he works with before choosing a fixture. "We want to know if a fixture is easy to program. Does it move fast enough? Does it return to its programmed focus and position with precision every time? The fact that the shutter goes all the way across the beam was a welcome time-saver as we were focusing to scenic elements fast. I didn't always have time to move the light to get the right shuttering. The VL2600 also has a good zoom ratio, a nice flat field and the frost configuration enables me to produce a seamless wash with minimal loss of output."

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Cast of Annie Live! (Photo by: Eric Liebowitz/NBC)

Another significant consideration for Barnhart was setting the white balance with the cameras. "I prefer to use an LED fixture that features a single white source with an onboard dichroic color mix system. We achieved better intensity and less pixilation than mixing color using a multi-color LED Engine. From a television standpoint we will always correct the light, but it doesn't take much to do that with the VL2600, so I don't lose output there either."

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Pictured: (l-r) Taraji P. Henson as Miss Hannigan,
Tituss Burgess as Rooster Hannigan, Megan Hilty as
Lily St. Regis — (Photo by: Eric Liebowitz/NBC)

As Barnhart says: "You don't always need a fiesta platter of gear in your rig to achieve a dynamic, versatile lighting design. You just need the right size-to-output ratio in the fixture and enough flexibility in its capability to cover all bases. The VL2600 PROFILE does exactly that."

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About Signify

[Signify](#) (Euronext: LIGHT) is the world leader in lighting for professionals and consumers and lighting for the Internet of Things. Our [Philips](#) products, [Interact](#) connected lighting systems and data-enabled services, deliver business value and transform life in homes, buildings and public spaces. With 2021 sales of EUR 6.9 billion, we have approximately 37,000 employees and are present in over 70 countries. We unlock the extraordinary potential of light for brighter lives and a better world. We [achieved](#) carbon neutrality in 2020, have [been](#) in the [Dow Jones Sustainability World Index](#) since our IPO for five consecutive years and were named [Industry Leader](#) in [2017](#), [2018](#) and [2019](#). News from Signify is located at the [Newsroom](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#). Information for investors can be found on the [Investor Relations](#) page.

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Pictured: (l-r) Taraji P. Henson as Miss Hannigan, Tituss Burgess as Rooster Hannigan, Megan Hilty as Lily St. Regis — (Photo by: Eric Liebowitz/NBC)

About Vari-Lite, Strand, and Zero 88

For over a hundred years, we've been blending innovative engineering and a love of performance to create the high-quality solutions that drive some of the world's most extraordinary experiences. With advanced optics, innovative control, and complete end-to-end entertainment lighting system solutions for installation and rental, [Vari-Lite](#), [Strand](#), and [Zero 88](#) enhance the passion and performance of artists around the globe, whether that's a school play or a world tour. Vari-Lite, Strand, and Zero 88 are part of the Signify portfolio of brands.

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