

FRANÇOIS AUDOUY

PRODUCTION DESIGN / WORLD BUILDING

FOR AWARDS CONSIDERATION



2021

COLDPLAY X BTS: MY UNIVERSE

DIRECTOR
DAVE MEYERS

“

[Coldplay] really don't believe in any boundaries or separation of anything really...the song 'My Universe' is about someone being told they can't love a certain other person, or can't be with this race, or they can't be gay—whatever it might be.

CHRIS MARTIN



Chris Martin and director **Dave Meyers'** vision for "My Universe" was a science fiction story set in a time of isolation, where music serves as a unifying factor. It's the story of three bands jamming on separate planets, attempting to transmit their music throughout the galaxy with the help of a renegade disc jockey, **DJ Lafrique**.

To say the concept was "far out" would be an understatement, but the sheer audacity of designing such an ambitious and complex video (with a short five-week prep and shooting in Barcelona, Spain nonetheless) was at the same time intriguing and daunting. As I've learned in the past, designing music videos isn't for the faint of heart!

"My Universe" would be the second released single from an elaborate concept album by **Coldplay** called "Music of the Spheres," with overarching imagery and themes that blend between the individual tracks.



THE UNITING POWER OF MUSIC... IS UNIVERSAL



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POSTER ART © PARLOPHONE RECORDS

The idea would be to blend the music of three rebel bands: Coldplay, **BTS** and a third fictitious band called **Supernova 7**, made up of six aliens and a robot drummer.

These bands would be connected via “Holoband” hologram technology by DJ Lafrique, all while a mysterious enemy ship hunts for the rebel musicians. As they are tracked, the three bands continue their defiance right up until the end.

As I began assembling research imagery, the Spanish production services company recommended local Art Director **Jon Blud** to me, a Welsh transplant to Spain who would lead the art department on the ground there.

Concurrently, design development ramped up in Los Angeles, coordinated with a team of illustrators at design studio **One Pixel Brush**, based in Prague, overseen by Art Director **Shaddy Safadi**.

I next hired Barcelona-based Set Decorator **Joan Sebator**, who immediately started breaking down the sets and shopping for hundreds of salvaged mechanical parts to create the gritty “dirty sci-fi” aesthetic.



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‘My Universe’ is really about the power of music to bring people together, to inspire against all odds. It’s really a performance video with different bands on different planets jamming. It just happens that it’s in outer space.

DAVE MEYERS



In the introduction of the video, we push past our galaxy's multicolored planets—the “Spheres”—designs of which were inspired by the album lavish artwork included in the liner notes.

We are drawn to a distinctive shape amid the space junk orbiting the planet Floris. A closer look reveals a spaceship made from mismatched slabs of metal-like patchwork, overlaid with graphics and odd markings. The design of the spaceship evolved to feature a heart-shaped window—a nod to the “love button” given to me by Chris during our kickoff meeting.



Inside the ship, we meet DJ Lafrique—played by actor **Joe Diao**—running a illegal radio station from her steam-punk radio station whose walls are covered with thousands of layered stickers and alien band posters—inspired by the interior of 1979s New York club **CBGB**.



CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH



VIDEO STILL © PARLOPHONE RECORDS

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CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH

COLDPLAY X BTS—MY UNIVERSE



SET PHOTO BY FRANÇOIS AUDOUY

The process was a “napkin sketch and references” based workflow, simply because of the tight schedule and nature of leaning into found items that would anchor the set dressing.

For example, DJ Lafrique’s “captain’s chair” started out as a vintage barber chair, upholstered in purple leopard fabric and peppered with recycled hardware and discarded electronics.

Some of the interactive light effects were simply Christmas laser lights aimed into wall-mounted plastic bowls. The spirit was design improvisation, with the goal to have fun with the process.

The amount of detail required for the interior of the space ship required that Joan Sabater chip away at this set non-stop for three weeks.

The space ship was made by a dedicated team with Joan leading the dressing and construction by **Por Fun Decorados**. The ship included 650 lit buttons, 300 feet of flex neon tube and a dozen practical video displays.



CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH



CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH

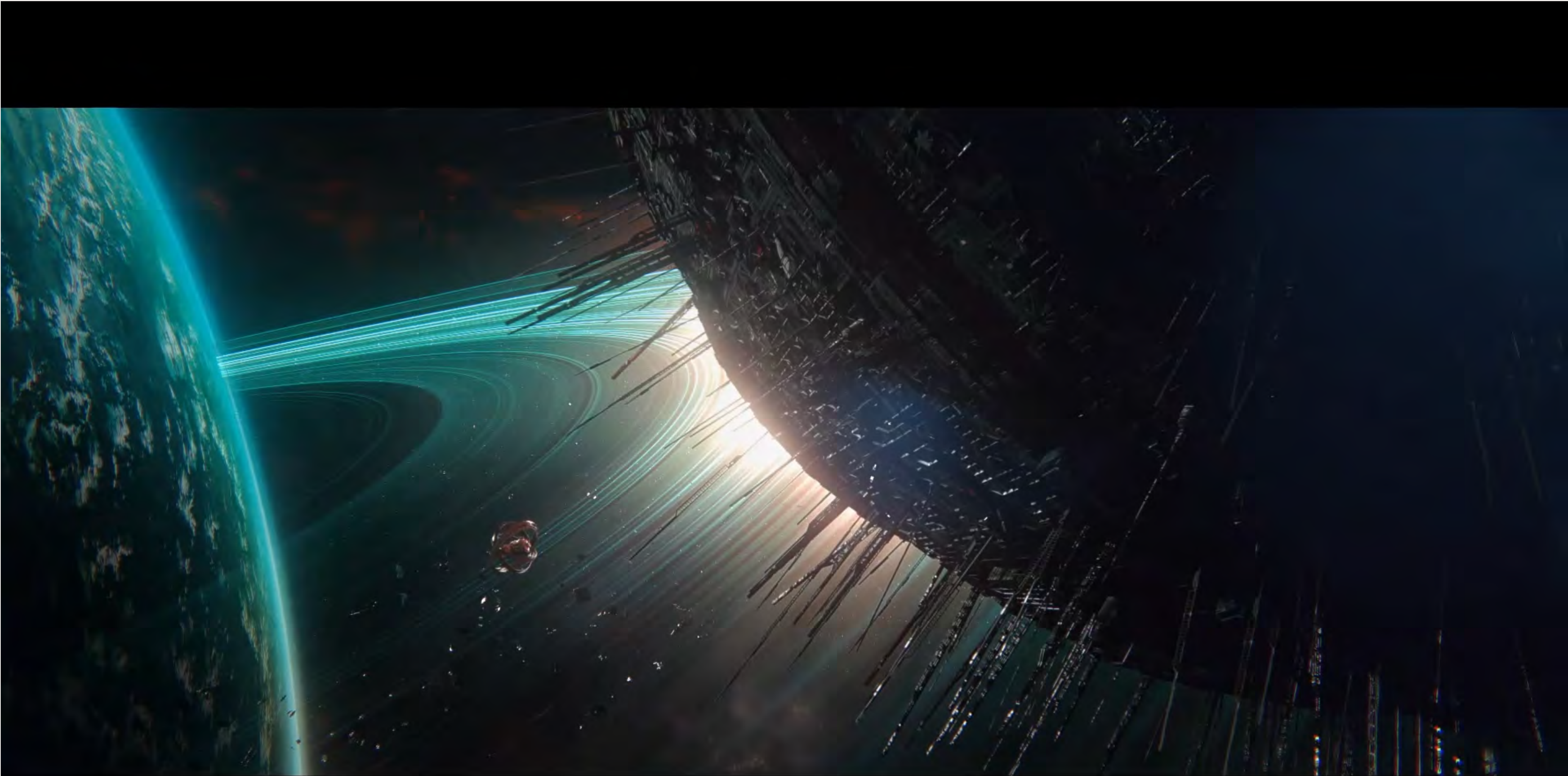
Like on my past video projects, One Pixel Brush would design the 3D concepts in Blender so that final assets could transfer directly into the visual effects pipeline.

“

With COVID-19 dominating the news for months, I may have been subconsciously inspired by the shape of the Novel Coronavirus when designing the enemy ship.

FRANÇOIS AUDOUY





MUSIC VIDEO STILL

COLDPLAY X BTS—MY UNIVERSE



CONCEPT BY AARON SIMS CREATIVE

Introducing Supernova 7

To design the diverse characters comprising the band Supernova 7, I called upon renowned specialty creature designer and concept artist **Aaron Sims** and his company of collaborators.

Dave Meyers had detailed descriptions and references for the high energy performers, and described them as a band of funky misfits. They would include:

Blaze

Played by actor **Rober Gómez**, Blaze is a tree-dwelling alien who loves to dance. His fur is yellow and purple and his eyes stick out on either side of his face like a chameleon. He's got a chill, groovy vibe and plays the hell out of his maracas.



VIDEO STILL © PARLOPHONE RECORDS

Loop & Switch

Loop and Switch are two smaller animated band mates. They're not like anything we've ever really seen: A combination of tiny gnomes with platypus faces and furry arms and robot feet like they were created in a lab. They bounce up and down on their shared instrument—a multi-tiered chime system.

Eko

Played by **Lizeth San Martin**, Eko is a humanoid alien with an alternative/aloof/grunge vibe to her. Facial markings, piercings, and lots of metal jewelry. She's kind of goth and emo and jams on her electronic piano-like- instrument fashioned from a disused six-foot long ionic blaster.



CONCEPT BY AARON SIMS CREATIVE



CONCEPT BY AARON SIMS CREATIVE

Kasio Mars

Kasio is the fashionable frontman of the bad. More of a humanoid with super big ears (or a they horns?). He has handsome, luscious long locks of hair. He's kind of cocky and loves center stage, mostly singing, but will occasionally play his bizarre large string/chime/xylo instrument.

When actor **Larry Balboa** came in sporting facial hair, Dave said "don't shave it off. I've never seen an alien with a mustache."



SET PHOTO BY FRANÇOIS AUDOUY



MUSIC VIDEO STILL

COLDPLAY X BTS—MY UNIVERSE



Dorean Delorean

Dorean is a muscular, imposing robot with an intense stare / glare that he channels into furiously intense percussion playing. His instruments are made from recycled bombs, communication dishes and various salvaged spaceship parts.



The lumbering robot was a practical build, with CGI arms for most of the drumming shots.



CONCEPT ART BY AARON SIMS CREATIVE

“The goal was to make Dorean Delorean look heavy but in the end it only weighed five kilograms (11 lbs.) so that we could have the actor in there puppeteer the character without needing too many breaks.”

JON BLUD



SET PHOTO BY JON BLUD

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CONCEPT ART BY AARON SIMS CREATIVE

COLDPLAY X BTS—MY UNIVERSE



CONCEPT ART BY AARON SIMS CREATIVE

Angel Moon

Angel Moon is an angelic, translucent and luminescent alien. She literally glows with purity and kindness. She floats, never touching the ground. She is known for her delicate, architectural fashion, and plays a dainty unique wind instrument that almost looks like a piece of modern art.

Actor **Maria José Retamozo** played Angel Moon with her flute-like musical prop, which was actually just an off-the-shelf Güiro, a Latin-American percussion instrument.



SET PHOTO BY FRANÇOIS AUDOUY



Prosthetic Makeup Mold Turntable



Planet Floris & Coldplay

Knowing that we would be shooting in Barcelona, one of my first exercises was to scour the internet for intriguing locations that could serve as canvases for our unique planets.

The first lucky find I stumbled upon was an empty municipal swimming pool complex that had been abandoned for decades, located less than an hour's drive from downtown Barcelona in a small town called Rubí.

What made that location even more attractive as a location was the fact that the local authorities would allow us to do practically anything we wanted to the site, as it was slated for demolition soon after our shoot.

We brought in a Bobcat and started breaking down the pool structure and adding color with paint and graffiti.



CONCEPT ART BY FRANÇOIS AUDOUY

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Lead painter **Phillippe Boonen** commanded a team of scenic painters to embellish the existing graffiti that covered the site by adding their own of alien symbols, designed from full alien alphabets that had been commissioned by Coldplay, and created by Argentinian Graphic Designer and Artist **Pilar Zeta**.

I augmented the look of the existing overground ruins by painting all the existing weeds on site various shades of pale blue and lilac—simply painting the plants with automotive spray paint.



CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH



CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH

I was surprised to observe that the hearty weeds looked great until right up to the shoot—never wilting. We augmented this existing flora with some silks and other greenery and also installed a new scenic tile floor to the bottom of the pool area.



“

When I’m without you I’m crazy.
We are made of each other baby.

You, you are, my universe
And I, just want to put you first.

And you, you are my universe,
And you make my heart light up
inside.

COLDPLAY / BTS



GRAPHIC DESIGN BY FRANÇOIS AUDOUY



REFERENCE

I designed a rusty “NO MUSIC” sign that we all decided was the perfect metaphor for the “My Universe” song after Chris spray-painted a large “ALL” over the top of it.



VIDEO STILL © PARLOPHONE RECORDS



Planet Calypso & BTS

While the BTS portion would be shot on stage in Seoul, South Korea two weeks after the Barcelona shoot, it was very important to lock down the design of the world beforehand so that lighting in the green screen stage would be realistic to the computer-generated backgrounds.

Their planet, Calypso, was designed as a crumbling alien shipping port, with giant rusting structures disappearing into an ominous sky.



VIDEO STILLS © PARLOPHONE



We initially explored a design for Calypso focused on a crumbling sea fort, inspired by research imagery that I had found of World War II-era defensive forts in the North Sea.

Shaddy and his team at One Pixel Brush iterated on this and illustrated portals in the sky, dropping alien junk into an angry sea.

Several weeks down this cul-de-sac, we pivoted to pursuing a new concept inspired by images of the abandoned shipping ports in Dudinka, Russia.

There was something evocative about the idea of BTS performing on a massive helipad-like structure, attached to a massive rusty crane.



CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH



Planet Supersolis

Back in Barcelona, we came across an abandoned cement factory called **"Cementera Sant Feliu Ubicación."** It was a sprawling factory cut into a picturesque hill that could be well suited for the opening scene of a James Bond film.

While scouting, I was struck by how massive overhead pipes resembled rocket thrusters of a giant spacecraft, so I quickly sketched this idea on my iPad and presented it to Dave.

He sparked to the idea right away, so we transitioned to developing the idea further using the concept team at One Pixel Brush.

Although much of the cement factory structure would be replaced via CGI, the existing texture of the site proved to be an invaluable reference for the VFX team.



SET PHOTO BY FRANÇOIS AUDOUY

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CONCEPT ART BY ONE PIXEL BRUSH

COLDPLAY X BTS—MY UNIVERSE



Knowing that there would be CGI set extension and manipulation, the art department focused their efforts on the area immediately surrounding Supernova 7 by installing 3,000 feet of vinyl graphics on the ground, which took two days to install and seat.

The SPFX team installed flame throwers, nitrogen and sparking mechanisms into the bowels of the structure, all to simulate the effect of a rocket on a horizontal launchpad.



VIDEO STILL © PARLOPHONE

Dave described that the concept for the props should be that the band recycled alien weapons to use as musical instruments.

We embraced a "cheap and cheerful" approach, utilizing found objects like fake knives, toy guns and Nerf shooters. These inexpensive props were simply glued together and then unified by some colorful paint and wrapped fabrics.



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Production Designed by François Audouy

ART DIRECTOR

Jon Blud

SET DECORATOR

Joan Sabater

ILLUSTRATORS

One Pixel Brush
Aaron Sims Creative

SET DESIGNERS

David Brufau
Manuel Romero

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

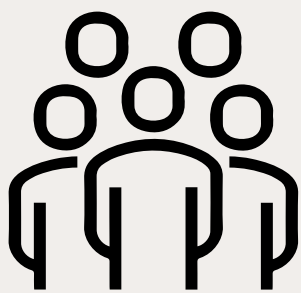
Pilar Zeta
Lucía Venturini



Shot on location in Barcelona, Spain.



Shot on stage in Seoul, South Korea.



Many thanks to the entire cast & crew!

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