

7.6.2016

Mayday for Robe

Products Involved

CycFX 8™ LEDWash 800™ Pointe®

Over 350 Robe fixtures rocked the main stage of the 2016 Mayday dance event at the Westfalenhalle in Dortmund, Germany, specified by lighting designer Ronnie Santegoeds from Netherlands based 4Light, who was asked to create a jaw-droppingly memorable lightshow by promoters, I-Motion.

The eleven 20th anniversary concerts staged by Scala & Kolacny Brothers at the Stadsfeesthall in Aarschot, where their whole concept which is now world famous started ... was a great opportunity for him to utilize nearly 150 Robe fixtures to deliver these memorable and visually compelling sold-out performances, playing to 750 people a time.

The award winning women's choir is conducted by Stijn Kolacny and accompanied by Steven Kolacny on piano. Their material is an eclectic mix of special arrangements from well-known artists like Coldplay, Metallica, Radiohead, U2, Nirvana and many others, interspersed with their own material. As you might expect, it veers from classical to rock to full-on techno; from raw and intense to delicate and ephemeral in the same breath!

The 20th anniversary shows featured around 70 members of Scala and also had a narrative, running through Scala's timeline and highlights from the last 20 years. They are constantly touring worldwide, and Kristof has been the lighting and visuals designer and operator for the last four.

The biggest challenge was shoe-horning the amount of production needed to deliver the show of this stature into the venue, which offered a 20 metre wide stage, but with no more than 5 metres of headroom and almost no wing and backstage space. It was also optimised to fit as many seats as possible with the demand for tickets sky high!

The lighting rig included 9 x Robe BMFL Blades, 40 x LEDBeam 100s, 38 x CycFX 8s, 22 x 600E Spots, 24 x CityFlex 48s and 12 x LEDWash 600s.

A row of 20 x CycFX 8s along the back were rigged to low profile truss. These were above a 20 metre wide 10 mm pitch LED screen which formed the backdrop and integrated seamlessly with the lighting.

He wanted a big wash at the back to cover the whole stage, and with the output and effects, the CycFX 8s were “perfect” explains Kristof. Being only 10 cm deep, they made an extremely neat linear statement, virtually flush with the truss. The other 18 were positioned along the front of the stage, positioned unobtrusively in the footlights positions. “Together they gave a fabulous even wash coverage which was nice and tight and easy to focus”.

The 12 x LEDWash 600s were hung around the sides and front of the stage on scaffolding and used for illuminating the audience during the song “Evigheden”, where members of the choir stand out amidst them. He also used them for strobing and a few other surprise funky effects!

The nine BMFL Blades were on the advanced truss which was tight to the roof above the front rows of audience. Ideal for general washes and specials, “It’s pretty awesome being able to do everything on just 9 lights,” stated Kristof.

The LEDBeam 100s were scattered all along the back truss which was actually two ground supported trusses side by side, one facilitating lighting and the other the LED screen.

“The LEDBeams are great for long, low spaces like this where you can really increase the sense of depth by using them judiciously. Being reliable, light and small, you can squeeze a lot into a small space!”

The 600E Spots were also chosen for their small and neat dimensions, and rigged along the top and bottom rails of the back truss, creating breakups onto the floor, hard-edged beamy looks and and slow movement effects.

In the side wings Kristof created special boom positions and rigged the CityFlex 48s to provide a contrast to the front light. The video was used intelligently to introduce another layer of texturing in specific songs.

TCF also created content for the show which was stored on an AI media server triggered by Kristof via his ChamSys MQ console with Playback and Execute wings.

All the equipment was supplied by Belgian rental company L & L Stage Service based in Herentals.

Stijn Kolacny underlines the importance of the lighting and Kristof's role as both designer and operator, "Our live shows overturn many people's conventional expectations of a choir and the lighting and visuals are an essential element of that experience".

Stijn personally likes the Robe LEDWashes in particular and the way they can cRonnie is a regular LD for Dutch hardstyle dance producer / promoter Art of Dance, which whom I-Motion co-promoted the most recent Syndicate event at the same venue.

On the strength of his work for that event, he was invited to produce the production lighting design this leading house / trance phenomena.

The Robe count was impressive – 202 x Pointes, 121 x LEDWash 800s and 28 x CycFX 8s – all supplied by leading Netherlands based rental company, The Purple Group.

Ronnie created the visual design - lighting and video – working with Chris Das who coordinated the technical preparations for lighting supplier, Purple Group from Schijndel, Netherlands.

The two frequently work together, so there's lots of creative synergy, teamwork and a fluid workflow when it comes to designing environments like this. The brief from I-Motion outlined the large scale 'arena feel' that they wanted for the show, which was relatively straightforward in terms of structure.

However, making it look good and last over several hours of non-stop pumping house and trance music ... is a lot harder than many imagine!

"We wanted to involve the whole venue in the lighting and visuals show" explained Ronnie, "The stage needed to look massive, so we based the design on a series of circles and lights ... blasting energy out into the crowds and drawing everyone in to the stage set up while simultaneously making the whole room look more interesting".

The stage was framed by three large horizontal curved trusses – the largest measuring 20 metres and the smallest 10 metres. There were four circular trusses – measuring 30, 15, 10 and 8 metres – positioned above the 20,000 audience.

Most of the LEDWash 800s were installed behind the over-stage trussing circles and used to shine through and highlight the shapes.

The Pointes were scattered all over the trussing circles, and used for effects lighting shooting all around the venue.

“The Pointe is light in weight and highly versatile” states Ronnie, “The prisms are great as are the frost and zoom functions, and they are perfect for lighting this style of event”.

The most galvanising aspect of lighting a show like this is having enough variety on the lighting rig to deal with the myriad of musical styles embraced.

Key considerations when lighting a hi-energy dance show like this are having a large number of fixtures to provide spectacular back lighting looks for the stage and those eye-catching, all-enveloping scenes scooping the audience up in the action that Ronnie mentions above as well as having enough latitude to also provide good set illumination and varied general show lighting.

The LEDWash 800 Ronnie thinks is “punchy”, compact and has a good output.

Lighting for the Mayday 2016 event Main Stage was programmed and operated by Bas Knappers from Netherlands based creative production company, Live Legends.

Ronnie, a freelance lighting professional for 10 years, first used Robe products in the early years of the brand with the ‘XT’ series, which was followed by the AT series when that was launched in the mid-noughties. He now frequently uses the latest Robe products in his designs.

He’s more recently visited the Robe manufacturing facility in the Czech Republic and is “very impressed” with the way the process is managed.

“Robe is producing a many versatile products and it’s clear they are interested in the end users and their needs and requirements.” He concludes.

Photo Credit: Ralph Larmannhange colours extremely slowly and subtly, “helping to create a real magical environment for the more delicate pieces of music”.

Kristof has been a Robe user for several years and was one of the first LDs in Benelux to beta test the prototype BMFL Spots – in the Pussy Lounge arena at Tomorrowland 2014 – just ahead of their launch.

“I like the diversity of Robe’s ranges, and the fact that there are multiple choices of fixtures, so you can keep going to Robe whatever the style and genre of show you’re lighting,” he observes, adding that he thinks the manufacturer is also good at keeping a few jumps ahead of the competition!

Scala and Kolacny Brothers have used Robe lights on their touring rigs and riders for a very long time – way before Kristof was involved ... and are probably one of Robe’s longest-running touring artists!

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland





