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Robe Hypes it up at SXSW

Products Involved

BMFL™ Spot **CycFX 8™** **LEDBeam 100™** **LEDWash 1200™** **Pointe®**

Robe moving lights took center stage along with an eclectic mix of new and emerging musical talent at Hype Machine's Hype Hotel venue during the 2015 SXSW Music Festival in Austin, Texas.

UK-based Lighting Designer David Wolstenholm was engaged as lighting consultant for the event by Hype Hotel's Production Designer / Manager Brian Kim. The two previously worked together for Cirque du Soleil production. David helped create the lighting scheme using the Robe fixtures. He also liaised between any incoming artist LDs and his team which included Assistant LX Eric Kim and Lighting Intern, Lila Neiswanger.

Hype Hotel featured two live sessions a day with five artists per session, complete with lightening quick changeovers, so the lighting requirements were extremely demanding. David likened the incredible vibe of this truly unique event to the craziness and buzz of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and he thoroughly enjoyed his own challenging SXSW experience for the second year.

One of the biggest tasks was to ensure that each artist had their very own lightshow, a job made infinitely easier this year with so many Robe moving lights involved in the high profile venue run by the popular music blogging / aggregator site.

This year's all-action array of show-stopping live performances included Spoon – fresh from winning the 2015 SXSW Grulke Prize for Career Act and headed by local hero Britt Daniel, who brought the house down with their show on Thursday.

Others were ILoveMakonnen Rae Sremmurd, Hudson Mohawke, Best Coast, Odesza and may more, with banging DJ sets from Fort Romeu, Obey City, Heathered Pearls, Monster Rally, Ellie Herring and much more.

On the rig were 8 x Robe BMFL Spots, 7 x Pointes, 7 x LEDBeam 100s, 10 x LEDWash 1200s – six overhead and four for side light – plus 8 x CycFX 8s which were rigged in the roof and angled back to provide a very cool ceiling light effect.

The DJ booth was lit with four Robe miniPointes and two LEDBeam 1000s, and there were also seven MiniMes in the VIP bar area, loaded with custom Hype Hotel video content, which provided a neat and easy solution to brand the area effectively.

The BMFLs proved exceptionally powerful for the compact-sized venue with just 3 meters of headroom, with four positioned on the overhead rig and four on the floor, where they were the only fixtures. They were used for all the high impact moments.

“They are simply a ‘Weapon’,” explained David. “There is just so much sheer light output from them, especially in a venue like this .. and soooo much you can do with them.” He reckoned that a medium-sized lightshow could be built just using around eight BMFLs, and added that he’d “hardly scratched the surface” in terms of creative possibilities during Hype Hotel.

“The color mixing is great, the gobo selection is varied and different, the two prisms are extremely handy ... and the output is just ... well phenomenal!” Like many, he also appreciates the full and completely flat beam field with no hotspots, and the fact that the unit is not big and heavy!

The Pointes were arranged in an arch following the same line as the BMFL Spots. David likes them as a multi-purpose luminaire and so did the camera crew filming the event. They liked the fact that the Pointe is a neat source with a smaller lens which looks very attractive on camera.

The gobos and prisms were ideal for creating big breakup looks and being able to flip between beam and spot mode offered multiple options.

The LEDWash 1200s were run in mode 1 giving overall control of all the LED rings, so he could add a whole slew of additional effects to the ‘flash&trash’ palette.

Two LEDWash 1200s were also the principal side key lighting which is very much part of the raw and moody Hype Hotel lighting aesthetic. Side keys increased the intimacy of the presentation and avoided any scrappy light spillage across the stage where it’s not wanted which can be an issue with traditional above stage front lighting positions.

The tiny LEDBeam 100s were placed at the back of stage tucked in between the gaps of an upstage wall of PARs to break up the uniformity of this effect and also provide a stark in-the-face contrast look for the audiences. David describes the LEDBeam 100 as a “Wonderful little unit” and in particular loves the precise, almost PC-esque quality of the beam and its long optical columns, together with the “Huge amount” of punch for the size. Their fast movement was perfect for the noisier acts and some of the DJ sets!

The CycFX 8s were the stars of the show in some ways, primarily because of the gently raked ceiling positioning which looked fantastic in all the wide camera shots and made “very cool” eye-candy for the crowds, and it’s more unusual to see them used in this context.

The Hype Hotel enjoyed another massively successful year at SXSW which (SXSW Film, Music and Interactive combined) is the highest annual revenue-producing event for the Austin economy.

Photo Credit: Jesse DeFlorio





