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Robe Lights 2019 TPi Awards

Robe was again thrilled to be a major part of delivering a stunning production design for the 2019 Total Production International (TPi) Awards, produced by TPi Magazine, part of Mondiale Media... and staged at the Evolution venue in Battersea, central London.

The event honours some of the best creative and technical achievements in the world of entertainment technology, and was this year hosted by stand-up comedian and actor Romesh Ranganathan, bringing his incisive wit and side-splitting humour to the party for the first time. Over 300 Robe fixtures were used by lighting designer Nathan Wan and associate LD Andy Webb to ensure that the 1600 plus attendees and award winners were treated to a dazzling visual extravaganza, a task for which they worked closely with the video team from Visual Edge. The Main Room theme for this year featured a 1980s big rock show - think GNR / Van Halen classic LA rock - lots of extravagant hair and glitzy neon, skulls and fast motorbikes! This was Nathan's creative starting point.

Two other areas were also imaginatively lit for the occasion - the Reception / Foyer and Robe's own VIP room which proved popular for special guests who wanted respite and a few moments to chill away from the relentless networking action and hubbub of the main area.

Robe used the opportunity to give some of their NRG (Next Robe Generation) initiative students the change to work hands-on on a high pressure, high-profile gig.

Nathan was joined by Alex Merrett from the University of South Wales in Glamorgan as assistant lighting designer, and Owen Yelland from Kent-based Rose Bruford College worked as lighting systems tech for the second year following his success and aptitude for the job at the 2018 event.

The main bar area - an extremely important space as the entry portal where everyone walks to gather for the show-stopping evening ahead - was designed, programmed and operated by Espen Karlsen, also from Rose Bruford, assisted by Ben Linwood from Guildford School of Acting.

The vibey Robe VIP lounge lighting design was a collaboration between Jasmine Williams from the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff and Georgia Wren from LIPA (Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts).

Nathan commented that once again, the standard of NRG hopefuls who applied for the available crew posts at TPi 2019 was "really impressive", and it was difficult to choose the six! He added that - although it was ironic to have to even comment on it - but it was also great that women made up one third of the team this year!

"Andy and I really enjoyed working with all the NRG students. They bring vitality, fresh perspectives and lots of enthusiasm to the project, and I hope it was a character-building experience for them to

know what it's like being under pressure at the sharp end of the industry".

The challenges of lighting Evolution for this event include dealing with the low headroom, especially with the amount of production in the space... as well as being judged by the Who's Who of the technical production industry in the room!

Four long diagonally flown lighting trusses were installed in the roof, following the contours of the 'winged' video screen design, meeting up in the centre of the room, and Nathan approached it as a multi-zoned space, with a nucleus of fixtures in the middle area that were available to pull the visual focus to the stage at any time.

Sixty MegaPointes and 50 x Spiiders - Robe's best-selling moving light to date - were right at the heart of the rig... chosen for their versatility and multifunctionality, giving Nathan plenty of variety for the big spectacular signature looks.

Fifty of Robe's new SuperSpikies were also key lightsources on the rig, and these were used for making razor-sharp beamy contrasts and accents cutting across the washes together with 64 x LEDBeam 150s. Vital and elegant key lighting was provided by 20 of Robe's new T1 Profiles, an LED source with a rich high-quality output and a range of excellent tuneable whites - among other features - that are perfect for camera.

"Overall coverage of the room was also tricky and required lots of detail" elucidated Nathan, together with getting the right ambience... cool and intimate for the dinner section of the event... lively and animated for the Awards section.

Additionally, it's the third year that Nathan and Andy have delivered lighting for this event... so ensuring it looks different and fresh each time is paramount. "It's very easy to go with what you know works, but we make every effort to push the parameters each year" stated Nathan.

Four Robe BMFL Blades running as a RoboSpot remote controlled follow spot system were positioned around the room, each optimised for pick-ups in their particular quarters of the room, so those accepting Awards could be easily picked up as soon as they stood up from their tables... and followed on and offstage.

In the reception area, the Robe crew worked with ArKaos who provided the dynamic video mapped central screens forming a large box above the bar.

This also dictated the positioning of the lighting trusses and the fixture choice by Espen and Ben, who deployed a combination of Pointes, MegaPointes and Tarrantulas - Robe's biggest LED wash beam. This ensured they could get the bright-and-ballsy ambience needed for this space, the hub of the pre-show anticipation and excitement.

Upstairs in the Robe VIP area, Jasmine and Georgia created a total contrast... with a tranquil and more sophisticated environment to provide respite from the freneticism and adrenalized action of the Main Room.

Lighting control for the main room was an Avolites Arena console running with a TigerTouch II as backup, with TigerTouch's in both the Bar / Reception area and Robe VIP. The Bar / Reception console was running ArKaos Kling-Net protocol to pixel map the Tarrantulas and other pixel-fixtures.

In addition to supporting the show, Robe's UK and International teams and their guests enjoyed a fantastic evening, with Robe again sponsoring the 'Lighting Designer of the Year' Award, which was presented by CEO Josef Valchar and won by Tim Routledge - whose recent credits include Sam Smith, Rita Ora & Stormzy as well as X Factor UK.

Other winners of the night include LCR for the first time, picking up 'Favourite Lighting Rental Company' and Universal Pixels who walked away with the 'Favourite Video Rental Company' also for the first time.

Roger Waters' incredible 'Us + Them' tour (Lighting designer Pryderi Baskerville) won the 'Live Production of the Year' and Richard Turner took the 'Des Fallon Video Visionary of the Year' title in an action-packed evening.

Congratulations to all nominees and winners... and thanks to TPi and Mondiale for another incredible evening of networking, fun and recognition for a vibrant industry that keeps innovating and using technology with great imagination... to entertain so well.

Photo Credit: Lindsay Cave





