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Robe for Eminem X Rihanna Monster Tour

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Lighting Designer Daniel K Boland specified 64 x Robe ROBIN Pointe moving lights for the much talked about Eminem X Rihanna 'Monster' stadium tour which played six sold-out dates in three key cities across the U.S. - at the Rose Bowl, Pasadena, MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, and Comerica Park in Detroit.

The tour was a massive success and a unique performance collaboration for fans of two of the world's highest profile artists.

Boland has worked with Eminem for almost 10 years, so when the show's set design by Bruce Rodgers was approved, he created a lighting plot that would "cover all bases" for both artists.

He already knew what Eminem would like in terms of look and feel, and when it came to lighting Rihanna, he considered many parameters including that she would be accompanied by dancers, all of which would need imaginative and appropriate lighting. Once completed, the lighting design was submitted to management and also approved.

The dramatic set comprised two large angled 50 mm semi-transparent LED panels stage left and right, flown about 40 feet high on the downstage edge and 10 feet on the upstage edges. There were also three video 'spines', two on the offstage sides of the LED panels and one in-between these two panels, rigged on high speed motors which moved during the show.

The majority of the lighting was hung on these spines, and there were also two tracking video trucks onstage, utilised for closing the space down mid-stage in front of the band.

The Pointes were positioned on the two offstage video spines, and utilised for dramatic aerial effects. They also had the potential for cross-lighting the performance space.

Boland chose Pointes initially as he needed a fixture with a good zoom - particularly if they were to be used for cross lighting - although in the end, they weren't used for this application.

Once the programming phase commenced, the Pointes proved, "So useful in so many other parts of the show that I really regret not getting more!" states Boland.

He likes the Pointe's zoom - 2.5 - 10 degrees for beam application and 5 - 20 degrees in spot mode - and the two prism effects, especially the linear one. He declares himself a "Big fan" of most of Robe's ROBIN range and has used LEDWash 1200s on Eminem's festival lighting plot for some time, as well as utilizing over 150 LEDBeam 100s on The Voice.

The biggest creative challenges for lighting the Monster tour were getting rear and side light into the performance space ... as the stage was effectively dissected diagonally due to the video elements, and also getting the spotlights balanced for the video was an exacting task.

Monster tour Lighting Director Benny Kirkham came on-board a few weeks before the pre-visualisation stage, and he and Boland programmed the show together.

The two have collaborated on many previous projects, and once in pre-visualization for Monster they really maximised the time, which enabled them to start production rehearsals with the full set and lighting rig - at the LA Sports Arena, Los Angeles - well ahead of the game.

At this stage, Boland then had to switch over and coordinate lighting for Eminem and Rihanna's performance at the Lollapalooza festival in Chicago.

He left Kirkham to refine the Monster programming process, and during this period he developed many of the looks for Rihanna's portion of the show, all the time keeping Boland's specific and distinctive oeuvre of lighting carefully in mind.

Also integrally involved in the spectacular Monster tour de force technical production were Video Director Ben Johnson, Set & Production Designer Bruce Rodgers, Production Manager Curtis Battles and Lighting Crew Chief Wayne Boehning.

Lighting and LED screens were supplied by VER.

Photo Credits: Bruce Rodgers

