

10 / 04 / 2015

Robe DL Series Provides Silent Solution for Kings Place

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Kings Place is a buzzing hub for music, art, dialogue, social and cultural interaction, events and food and drink in the heart of central London's vibrant Kings Cross area. The multi-purpose venue is ensconced in the contemporary elegance of a large mixed space building designed by architects Dixon Jones backing onto the Regent Canal.

Recently, Robe's DL Series LED fixtures have been installed in its two auditoriums as part of a lighting refit and upgrade.

As well as a leading creative live art and performance forum presenting around 600 arts events a year, Kings Place is a world class, award-winning conference and events venue, hosting leading brands across 10 fantastic event rooms and spaces. In the past 12 months, Kings Place has managed around 350 corporate events from small meetings to multi-day conferences for over 1000 delegates.

The latest lighting installation continues Kings Place's constant reinvestment in its technical infrastructure, allowing the building to provide increased functionality to corporate clients and artists alike.

Priya Taylor, Business Development Director for Kings Place Events says "We're delighted to continue investing in technology so we can offer our events clients the very best".

The lights were chosen by Head of Lighting Alexander Allen, primarily for their silent running, their brightness compared to small size and light weight ... and the power saving potential of the LED light-sources.

Hall 1 is a 420 (including access) seat acoustically isolated and engineered orchestral space. It's utilised for concerts, conferences, AGMs, recitals and spoken word performances.

Hall 2 with a capacity of 200 seated or 280 standing, is a flexible space for the staging of jazz, pop, comedy and folk, as well as product launches, smaller conferences and 'breakout' spaces.

A medium term lighting upgrade was always on the agenda in the technical strategy, as it is important for the venue to offer the best and most appropriate technologies in-house.

When Alex was appointed as Head of Lighting in mid-2014, he instigated the specification of the new Robe DLS Profile and DLF Wash fixtures, with a total of 12 x DLS Profiles and 16 x DLF Wash fixtures delivered by Robe UK via Blackburn based HSL.

Kings Place runs completely independently of any public funding. Its business model is designed to generate financial support for the arts programme mainly through commercial income, conferences, events and ticket sales, rather than traditional arts funding routes, so keen attention is paid to what's new, cool and interesting, together with providing facilities giving it a commercial edge.

The previous moving light installation (a competitor product) was limited in that it could only produce tungsten light, so this time, the requirement was for something that had full colour mixing, was a lot more flexible and versatile ... AND which also emitted perfect tungsten. In addition to the silent running, the DL range - tested exhaustively by Alex and his team - ticked all the boxes including the requirement for the profiles to have shutters, iris and gobo. "We also wanted something new that really utilised the latest technology in a highly efficient manner," explained Alex.

Discharge units with their fans were discounted as too noisy, due to the Hall 1's acoustics amplifying the fan noise.

The space is used for classical and choral performances and has a resident orchestra - The Aurora Orchestra - and a string quartet - The Brodsky Quartet. The venue is also home to London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

The noise output from several different types of fixtures brought in by corporate clients for events was measured, and none were as quiet as the Robes.

That led Alex and his team to consider LED with its reduced heat emissions and more sophisticated cooling methods.

"The DL series had been on Alex's radar for some time, since seeing them and meeting the Robe UK team at the 2013 ABTT trade show. The variable fan settings and the fact that Robe has had the units independently lab-tested and certified as producing less than 23 dBs of noise emission at 10 metres when using pan, tilt and effects ... impressed him.

"This is a company that is serious about their 'silent' feature," he says. Alex and his crew of five even hired some DLS Profile and DLF Wash units - proving to the venue's management team that they were both quiet and efficient - before making their final commitment, and this sealed the deal.

Another strong selling point for any venue emphasises Alex, is the all-inclusive two year Robe warranty, optionally extendable to three.

Currently Hall 1 has seven DLS Profiles and six DLF Washes, with eight DLF Washes and three DLS Profiles in Hall 2, run in both cases by ETC Cobalt / Congo consoles.

Alex and his technicians - who light 90% of the shows at Kings Place - are delighted, as are various visiting crew. Regular evening concerts from solo performances to septets and

sometimes a choir of 30 are now all performed under LED light – something that would have been unthinkable – and unacceptable to many – not so long ago!

Many classical musicians are extremely sensitive to stage lighting conditions and the optimised environment in which they need to work. “The tungsten emulation in the fixtures is so good ... that most people could never tell it is a LED source,” confirms Alex who concludes, “There is a good chance that Kings Place is the first venue in London to switch out all automated units to a LED based source with focusable optics. The tuneable whites in the fixtures are excellent”.

John Harte, CEO of Aurora Orchestra is also impressed. “As resident orchestra, it is always a great pleasure for Aurora to perform at Kings Place. The acoustics are perfect and suitable for repertoire ranging from chamber music to pieces for full chamber orchestra. The light quality available from the Robe units is wonderful. It enables the feel of performing under tungsten and offers great flexibility when blended with other tungsten units. This, the staging and ample backstage area, combined with a vibey front of house space, make Kings Place an all-round outstanding concert experience.”



