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Robe is Non Stop Live with Vasco Rossi

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“It’s a rock ‘n’ roll show!!” ... yelled Italian superstar Vasco Rossi repeatedly about a third into his epic set at the Stadio San Nicola in Bari ... although I don’t think there was ever any doubt about that as 50,000 adoring fans screamed their appreciation of the showman and provocateur who is arguably Italy’s biggest and most successful singer / songwriter ... and rock ‘n roll star!

Lighting the Non Stop Live 2018 stadium tour spectacularly was the artist’s long term LD Giovanni Pinna, who included over 300 Robe moving lights on the rig – a mix of MegaPointes, Spiiders and LEDBeam 150s - all supplied as part of the lighting package by Rome based lighting rental company, BOTW, and used to create plenty of excitement and hi-impact. The starting point for the tour design for Giovanni and the Vasco creative team - was the show-stopping event in Enzo Ferrari Park, Modena last summer, Vasco’s one and only live appearance to celebrate 40 years of mainly-thrills-with-a-few-spills in entertainment ... in front of around 250,000 people, the largest rock concert in Italy to date!

The Modena Park design presented a simple, bold, raw industrial looking set and both the artist and his management wanted a continuity from this. As a seasoned performer, Vasco is so charismatic that the enormous but essentially streamlined and Spartan look works brilliantly as a performance backdrop.

So this aesthetic was evolved to become the basic look and feel of the 2018 touring show. Lots of video and movement was right at the heart of this with a central screen 18 metres wide by 10 metres high (perfect 16:9 aspect ratio), with two 12 x 12 metre side screens ... all three of which split into two horizontally to give some variation.

Over the stage were four 6 x 4 metre ‘satellite’ screens cladding the front of four trussing pods which were also rigged with lighting fixtures, and these tracked upstage / downstage and also flew up and down. With these and the splitting big screens, Giovanni was able to transform the stage architecture highly effectively with automation cues.

All the screen surfaces were 8 mm semi-transparent, and Giovanni positioned substantial quantities of lighting behind that could blast through, bringing a real 3D quality to the stage.

The set back wall at Modena was made up of scenic panels outlined with LED tape overlaid with a semi-transparent graphic image and the supporting scaffolding skeleton visible for additional depth, and for the tour, a re-scaled version of this was also present. In front of the panels were silver scaffolding pipes and lights were spread out across the whole expanse firing in from the back.

A series of trusses were installed over the main stage area, and above the side screens were box truss 'pods' for lighting, which was another detail that was initiated in Modena. The side pods on the tour were each rigged with 50 moving lights.

The touring production had a roof which was missing at Modena, so Giovanni seized the additional rigging points to hang front and key lights.

As with lighting any stadium show, the key element is that you need LOTS of lights and you have to think seriously HUGE in terms of impact!

With Vasco's show it was important that all the action was full-on from the first to last chords and that the energy could bounce off the stage, enwrap the supercharged audience and pull them into the vibes and emotion of the performance.

As with the Modena show – where Giovanni used over 550 Robe fixtures – he wanted to use just one type of profile or spot ... and this time he chose Robe's new MegaPointe, with 135 of the luminaires scattered all over the rig – above the stage, on the back wall and on the side pods, etc.

For the primary wash light, he picked Robe Spiiders ... and these were also deployed everywhere he could fit a fixture, and used to wash the vast stage space, PA wings and runway out into the audience at the front with light.

It was the first time that Giovanni had used MegaPointes fully on a show, and they worked hard in every song of the 2.5 hour set! "I am REALLY pleased with them ... it's an incredible fixture," he declared with a large smile, adding that they have proved totally reliable and endured some atrocious weather.

He loves the MegaPointe intensity which has worked well for their stadium show ... and the double prism system, which featured distinctively in the show and also all the many other effects he was able to create with over 100 MegaPointes. He certainly didn't run out of choices!

Spiiders are now one of his go-to fixtures for any show! He had also used around 200 of them in Modena for the main wash and appreciates the Spider for all the same reasons as the MegaPointes – reliability and high brightness being at the top of the list as well as "their colours, incredible zoom and the very nice tight, definite beam. They are ideal wash and beam lights and generally a great fixture that achieves exactly what we need".

The LEDBeam 150s he admits were a "Great – and very nice - surprise" ... for their size and power.

They were all deployed on the floor on this tour and were extremely noticeable throughout the show, creating great looks in combination with the top rig. "The huge zoom is an

excellent feature and it makes them infinitely useful for this sort of close work on the artists. Eight LEDBeam 150s on vertical poles were dedicated just to producing a more edgy style of low level cross and key lighting on the band and risers.

Small and unobtrusive, they are ideal to have in close proximity to performers.

Vasco has a very special bond with his fans, so seeing them is essential, and to this end, Giovanni used around 200 blinders, some of which also doubled as strobes.

There were also additional beam lights scattered around as practicals and for filling in the back-of-camera shots for the IMAG mix.

A remote follow spotting system controlled around 30 luminaires dotted all over the rig, including front and side key lighting fixtures and both MegaPointes and Spiiders.

Giovanni used a trusty grandMA full size console to run the show, and there was another one for the playback video.

The very talented and friendly creative team included video screens / content director and disguise server operator Marco Piva who was stationed at FOH and they worked very closely with live camera director Peppe Romano from Except to create the visual WOW factors needed to fill the stadiums. All have worked together for over 10 years on Vasco and other projects and share a noticeable imaginative synergy.

"It's essential to have a good visual fluidity and as we all know one another well, this comes extremely naturally," says Giovanni.

Set designer Claudio Santucci for set builders Gioforma has also been involved in Vasco tours and live shows for some time.

PRG provided the screens and the Kinesys automation system which was operated for the show by Jimmy Johnson, with movement also a vital element of the creative picture.

PRG's crew chief was Bart de Cleene and BOTW's was Fabrizio Moggio. "Both have been fantastic," stated Giovanni.

Lasers were from ER Productions, designed by Ross Marshall ... and the pyro and flame system was from Parente - the effects - fire and confetti - were also fired from the lighting console.

The audio vendor was Agora and the assertive and crystal clear FOH sound was mixed by Andrea Corsellini.

Everything was kept in order and running smoothly on the road by production manager Riccardo Genovese.

The biggest challenge on this one was the gruelling schedule - with no days off and a large and complex rig. They were also hammered by erratic weather on a couple of occasions as severe storms and flash flooding battered the Mediterranean and southern Europe!

But of course ... the show went on!

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland







