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Riverside Theatre Invests in Robe

Riverside Theatres is a multi-venue performing arts centre in Parramatta CBD in the western suburbs of Sydney, Australia. Opened in 1988, its various venues include the 761-seat proscenium arch Riverside Theatre, the 213 capacity Lennox Theatre, and the Raffety's Theatre which can accommodate an audience of 88.

In the last year, the Riverside has invested in Robe DL4S Profiles and LEDWash 300 moving lights for the main venue. These are the first moving lights they have owned and the second batch of LED lights to be installed in the space, part of a programme that will transition the entire complex to more sustainable light sources.

The timing of the purchase was also designed to reduce the need for external sub hires of LED fixtures which had accelerated during the previous season.

Technical co-ordinator Sean Clarke and his colleagues Mike Brew and Josh Stringer explained that both these types of Robe fixture met their requirements for colours – the Robe LED engines are renowned for their excellent colour ranges, and the DL series has been designed especially for theatre applications.

They compared three different brands of LED wash and profile fixtures before making a final decision. They'd already had some good experiences using the LEDWash 300s in another venue, and were impressed with the diversity of the fixture and its ability to zoom right down to a tight beam and all the way out to a traditional wash as well as being able to produce a spectacular blue.

Josh really liked the DL4S Profile's colour mixing, the accurate shuttering and the silent running of the fixture.

A good Litmus test for any light when it comes to noise / silence ... is to have a professional orchestra playing below – known for their acute hearing and being able to hear a pin drop in a haystack! Shortly after the lights arrived, Sydney Symphony Orchestra obliged with a "Pictures in An Exhibition" for one of their schools' programmes ... under a white wash of DL4Ss and LEDWash 300s.

There wasn't a single complaint!

The Riverside theatre's business is primarily as a receiving house to a very wide selection of productions – contemporary dance, music, drama, anything from a simple music programme or spoken word performance to multiple weeks of all-singing-all-dancing musicals. The programme also includes a plethora of cultural shows and events, and with the various spaces in use almost daily, it's essential to be able to turn shows around quickly and efficiently.

The new Robes are now part of the standard house rig offered to incoming shows in the Riverside Theatre, where they can be swapped between different LX bars and the floor.

There's been a universally favourable reaction to the new fixtures from production and lighting designers and operators, and having them in the house has made the workflow infinitely faster and more adaptable.

"People love the new lights - there's been many positive comments particularly from LDs" says Sean, adding "Touring productions will often arrive at our venue with a load of moving lights to hang, and leave them in the truck, instead utilising our in-house Robe rig. The touring technicians are then very complimentary regarding the brightness and colour saturation that comes with using RGBW rather than a plain white light source."

The venue has a long-standing relationship with Robe's Australian distributor, Jands, which delivered the lights, and sees theatre / the arts as a market with great potential for Robe's refined LED luminaires.



