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Robe Supports NeFestival in Ostrava

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Colours of Ostrava is usually the largest multi-genre live music and performance festival in the Czech Republic and one of the most popular events on the European festival calendar, offering 22 stages of diverse and vibrant entertainment across four days in mid-July. It is staged in the stunning raw industrial environment of the former Dolní Vitkovice (DOV) steelworks – now tastefully reimaged as an important cultural and heritage centre – near Ostrava in the north-east of the country.

This year, like all European festivals, it was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic and rescheduled for 2021.

However, with the government allowing gatherings of up to 1000 people after June 22nd, it seemed that compact events could become feasible, and so 'NeFestival' (NoFestival) was planned as a much smaller event at the same site to bring the spirit and essence of Colours – music, theatre, lighting art vibes, discussion, etc. – to a small but enthusiastic audience.

SMART Production led by Josef 'Pepa' Ženíšek coordinated all the technical production as they have done for Colours since 2010, and Robe Lighting was again proud to be a technical partner and collaborator in another landmark event in spite of the unusual circumstances.

One stage was constructed on the DOV national heritage area, which is part of the Colours regular site, right under the Bolt Tower that once presided over DOV blast furnace number 1.

The Robe fixtures – 30 x iPointes, 20 x MegaPointes and four BMFL WashBeams were used in a highly symbolic role as 'light towers' to denote the areas that would have been occupied by the second stage and the Full Moon stage in the standard festival layout.

Pepa needed fixtures that were massively bright and intense for this, and these three types were perfect.

In addition to these, 16 x Robe Divine 160 LED wash fixtures were part of the package, with six used during the special 'opener' show created by Cirk La Putyka on the Wednesday, and the other 10 highlighting the Bolt Tower and other imposing industrial elements behind the stage, accentuating a powerful aesthetic for the live streaming.

Robe's JJ Valchar commented, "As always we were delighted to work with Pepa and his team on this highly creative production which was much enjoyed and a rare opportunity to catch some outstanding live outdoor performance this summer. This year we feel our support is more important than at any time before, and we are already all looking forward to the 2021 edition of Colours of Ostrava ... when the entire heritage site will again be buzzing with people and a great atmosphere."

The line up over the four days of NeFestival was planned to be Cirk La Putyka followed by Bosnian avant-garde dub rockers Dubioza Kolektiv the next evening, however they were unable to travel at the last moment, so a selection of excellent Czech bands took the stage.

Friday should have been more Czech bands including 123Min, N.O.H.A and headliner thrash rapper Kapitán Demo, with Saturday's 'Melting Pot' forum for theatres, discussions and debates bringing things to a close ...

But Friday morning things changed dramatically when, without prior warning, the regional health authorities reduced the capacity of gatherings from 1000 to 100, so the event site had to be closed, a decision that has caused some surprise!

This was not before Cirk La Putyka and all Thursday night's bands had delivered outstanding performances to the delight of everyone present.

"It was great – like a sort of holiday and carnival atmosphere after a long time without any events – all of us and the crews were just so happy to be working and doing what we love in producing world-class shows," concluded Pepa.

Highlite Touring project managed by Michal Siska supplied lighting equipment for the main stage, and their crew together with Pepa's SMART Production team rigged the Robes for the light towers. Václav Olšar was the stage lighting designer and LD Jiri "Zewl" Malenak took care of La Putyka's show.

Six days later, the decision to reduce audience capacities to 100 in the area was revised back up to 1000 people, bringing with it the hope of some more potential 'mini-festival' events bring staged over the summer ... if all goes well!

Photo Credits: Filip Kustka, Petr Piechowicz







