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Robe Makes Impact for Petar Grašo Tour

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Croatian pop superstar Petar Grašo wanted to make a spectacular impact with his first post-pandemic live shows – which were also the first arena music shows in the country as pandemic restrictions were lifted – so his brief to lighting designer Sven Kučinić was to “make it absolutely awesome” ... basically four little words that any LD loves to hear!

Awesome it was! Sven, who took on the full visual design – lighting, set and video – did not disappoint, and chose to use nearly 200 Robe moving lights to help him achieve the desired results - which were supplied to the production together with the other lighting kit by Zagreb-based rental company, Promo Logistika.

The Zagreb Arena shows were followed by performances in Split and Slovenia in this high-profile mini-tour which delighted the artist’s many fans in the region, going ahead in truly “seat of the pants” fashion as the Covid restrictions relating to large audiences were lifted on the morning of the first gig in Zagreb, which was attended by a wildly enthusiastic capacity audience of 15,500.

Sven has been exceptionally busy during the pandemic as he qualified as a commercial pilot and has been flying planes worldwide in the absence of any live shows! He took a vacation from what’s been his day job for the last two years to design these shows, and admitted it took him “a little time” to get back into the headspace!

Starting with some basic geometric shapes, after some brainstorming, everything then evolved quite quickly as he developed the interesting concept of eight flown cubes, three large ones and three smaller ones, each one containing a 2 x 2 metre LED screen and strategically positioned over the stage and audience.

This accentuated the width and the depth of the stage which was shaped like three diamonds. “The idea with this architecture was to bring a look of grandeur, stature, gravitas,” explained Sven, creating an optical illusion with a more three-dimensional space.

He specified the kit while the two organising bodies – the artist / management and Narodni Radio Croatia – selected the suppliers.

Sven was careful not to spec too much brand-new equipment, knowing that having just emerged from the pandemic, most rental companies are only now considering new investments and he was pleasantly surprised that Promo Logistika already had Robe FORTES, two of which he used as follow spots.

These were positioned right at the back and to the sides of the arena and run manually using the regular follow spot handles, with all the parameters controlled from Sven’s grandMA3 console, allowing the operators to concentrate on accurately following the artist.

Sven was hugely impressed by their power, the quality of light and the framing shutter system and thinks FORTES are “a fantastic long throw fixture in a very compact package.” They were running at only 80% and even right at the back of the venue this was plenty bright enough!

He turned to his trusty MegaPointes as the main effects fixtures with 70 on the rig. They are a go-to multi-purpose luminaire, and on this show the vast number of possibilities they bring to the table enabled him to keep a vibrant array of dramatically different lighting looks pumping throughout Petar Grašo’s energetic performance.

“Before MegaPointe, I’d have to use regular Pointes and then at least one other type of fixture to create enough diversity of looks,” he commented, “but with Megas ... I just need only the one type of light.” As an ‘industry standard’ multi-purpose moving light, he “can’t imagine” doing any reasonably sized show without them!

The MegaPointes were attached to some of the cube structures, and all were dotted over a series of straight trusses above the stage.

Sixty-six LEDBeam 150s were positioned in straight lines with a set of 22 in a row on the upper downstage area and on two trusses of back-lights that hung beneath the lowest cube level. Some were also rigged on the bottom of the cubes, including those above the audience, and the key need here was for a small, punchy, and highly flexible fixture.

They worked as wash lights sweeping across the audience and as beams shooting onto the stage and for crazy fly-out effects which looked fantastic on the wide camera shots.

Twelve LEDWash 600s lit the cyc, and the main front lights for the artist and band were 18 x MMX WashBeams. Sven has a great fondness for this fixture: "They are still hugely capable lights, I have used them successfully on many large shows over the years and they have always been reliable."

In addition to these Robe fixtures, 12 x BMFL Spots on the overhead trusses served as additional key lighting, and there were around 200 other sources on the rig including LED tubes outlining the eight video cubes.

The overall vibe was celebratory - lively, upbeat, athletic pop with numerous big bold beamy looks, vivid colours, animated, fast paced, hi-energy so the visual looks and scenes had to keep coming.

With 24 camera feeds - a combination of operated and remote devices - IMAG and recorded video was another vital element to consider.

Sven did some pre-programming but because with so many last-minute tweaks and a large question mark about whether the already once postponed shows could even proceed on the rescheduled dates, this was minimal. Also, Petar Grašo shows tend to be very spontaneous, so it's not a performance that can be timecoded - operation had to be totally live!

Sven enjoys working this way, using the lights like a musical instrument which he loves. "You get a complete sense of how the lights are an integral part of the show ambience!"

He operated and programmed himself, including the flame effects, and all the playback video feeds appearing on the cube screens were also running via his console, with the IMAG mix that was cut by Kristina Bengez and Viktor Krasnic going to the side screens.

Apart from creating the memorable show that the artist wanted, Sven really loved being back working at a live show with a full audience enjoying that unique rush of energy and excitement that only live shows can capture.

Photo Credit: LumiLas LLC





