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Amsterdam Music Festival Energises with Robe

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Andre Beekmans and a talented team from his Eindhoven, Netherlands based design studio, The Art of Light, created a stunning lighting scheme for the 2022 Amsterdam Music Festival (AMF) a one-day electronic music extravaganza of epic proportions produced by ALDA and staged at the Johan Cruijff Arena as part of the 2022 Amsterdam Music Event (AME).

Andre chose over 400 Robe moving lights to be a major part of the lighting rig, including 166 x LEDBeam 100s, 192 x Pointes and 76 x MegaPointes, which helped make a significant impact for this glorious first post-pandemic AMF.

Andre has lit the event for the 10 years since it started, and with this year being the first since 2019 everyone's expectations were even higher than usual, and he worked closely with event technical production manager Maarten Hoogland from ALDA in creating the set and staging elements as well as delivering the lighting design.

A breath-taking line-up of A-list DJs hit the dex between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. for 10 hours of nonstop pumping dance mayhem including Armin van Buuren, Afrojack, Martin Garrix, Nicky Romero, Timmy Trumpet, Tiësto and more, who thrilled the crowds sonically, while Andre and the team ensured the visuals made it a night to remember!

The big challenge was creating a visuality that fitted the vast stadium space yet also brought the intimacy and special energy of a nightclub.

Taking the multiple crosses of the AMF logo as a visual starting point, eleven giant crosses outlined with LED strip lighting and rigged with additional lights were designed and custom fabricated. Five of these were rigged above the stage – a cluster of three together upstage centre were on a motion control system and flew in and out behind the DJ – which was a visual crowd pleaser!

These three AMF crosses were flanked by two single ones left and right of the stage at the back, with the other six deployed around the other three sides of the football field.

Each 7.5 metre high AMF cross was rigged with 12 x Robe LEDBeam 100s, chosen for their small size, light weight, power, and punch.

Having these set pieces strategically spaced around the stadium ensured there was always a signature brand ident in every direction that people might look or that any of the live camera feeds could be panning, an effect that was magic for all those revelling Insta and TikTok moments!

From the start, Andre had been conscious that this branding should be visible in all the footage and photos, particularly those taken from the DJ booth perspective shooting out across the crowds!

Instead of having a big slab of LED screen upstage, Maarten and Andre were keen to have something more abstract and interesting, more of a LED feature than a bit of TV, so this set piece was created with strips of LED that could work separately or together as one big canvass when needed. It could also be lit from behind to add depth, and the content created by Veemee Visuals was designed to work more harmoniously with the lighting.

“The idea was very much trying to keep the focus on the music and fun and simultaneously present a really cohesive visual picture,” explained Andre, “basically creating this massive dynamic nightclub space filled with energy and great vibes!”

Robe fixtures like Pointes and MegaPointes are a go-to for Andre in this type of situation – their speed, versatility, array of effects and intensity make them ideal for lighting dance music events, as well as reliability as dance shows are a gruelling work out for any moving light!

In this case, six Pointes were rigged on 32 x motion-controlled trusses above the audience across the stadium. The movement brought an additional aesthetic layer to the picture and generated multiple spectacular looks throughout the night, sometimes swooping in dramatically low above the audience.

“To ramp up the club effect, the design really needed lights coming in from all angles and directions,” Andre noted, adding that it was a massive space to fill so they needed lots of bright fixtures, and the moving trusses were designed with Pointes as the optimum

lightsources, combined with 76 x Robe MegaPointes across the stage area. "These two fixtures are a brilliant mix," he stated.

The Pointes and MegaPointes were right at the essence of the design, the MegaPointes were mainly rigged behind and in between the LED video banners for blast-through and other beam-tastic looks – at which they excelled!

Andre's design featured approximately 650 other lightsources including LED strips, floods, and other moving lights, all controlled via four grandMA3 full size consoles (two live and two backup) operated by a team from the Art of Light.

Joining him on the operating shifts were programmer Kasper Iseger; Jaap Kamps who took care of all the LED strips and other 'scenic' lighting, and WYG / previz tech, Kasper Dijksterhuis.

On site they had only one intense evening of programming, and not from the optimum position of being on the football field ... as the grass is only covered at the last moment before doors. Then there are all the guest LDs, which is why they made the WYG suite available.

Many artists did bring in their own LDs or lighting operators, including Michael Seeverens, Armin van Buuren's long time lighting director, an artist also closely connected to The Art of Light. Andre himself operated for the first and last two acts of the night / morning.

"We knew everyone coming to FOH and there's always a highly social atmosphere and plenty of positive camaraderie on events like this as well as each person being on the quest to give each artist a special show!" he commented.

One of the biggest overall design challenges was to ensure that the global set up had enough latitude to cater for the different styles and genres of music but with 10 ADE's under his belt, Andre has amassed broad experience in ensuring fans leave with lasting impressions of a great night out!

The ADF show was a massive success as was the whole 2022 Amsterdam Dance Event which looks forward to being back in 2023 bringing a whole new raft of perspectives in celebrating the vibrance and diversity of dance music from around the globe.

Lighting equipment for ADF 2022 was supplied by Ampco Flashlight.

Photo Credit: Tim van Etten





