

30 / 01 / 2024

Roundhouse Rounds off All Robe Moving Light Rig with new ESPRITES

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London's famous Roundhouse concert and performing arts venue in Camden now has an all Robe moving light rig with a recent investment in 20 x ESPRITE luminaires, fitted with the HP (High Performance) LED engine for the highest output and strongest colours. The order was overseen for Robe UK by Curtis Lewis, their business development manager for the London area.

These fixtures join 82 existing Robe moving lights at the venue – 42 x LEDBeam 100s, 16 x DLF Washes, 6 x DLX Spots and 6 x LEDWash 600s – with the ESPRITES now the primary house rig spot fixtures, and available to all incoming productions.

Roundhouse head of lighting Steve Royle explained that the new ESPRITES are part of a major technical update and an ongoing sustainability drive to make the Roundhouse as energy efficient as possible.

He has held the head of lighting post since 2010 and was instrumental in the purchase of the LEDBeam 100s, DLF Washes and LEDBeam 600s in 2013. At that stage, there wasn't an LED spot fixture on the market that was bright and viable enough to add to the rig, so they went with a set of discharge source fixtures.

Of course, all this has now changed!

While they had enjoyed a great experience with those previous Robe fixtures – all still in great shape and working daily after 10 years – Steve and his team looked at several possible options when it came to choosing the new LED spots.

So, while it was never a foregone conclusion that an all-Robe rig would transpire ... the ESPRITE emerged a clear winner.

“They are incredibly bright and bring a whole new meaning and range of possibilities to how shows can be lit,” he stated, adding, “They ticked all our boxes and more! We needed a flexible, multipurpose light that fulfilled several requirements and that could cover our varied artistic and commercial programmes.”

He was also impressed with the smooth dimming curve and the range of colours, from the delicate pastels to the sumptuous rich saturates.

Steve thinks the ESPRITES are seriously well designed and that “proper thought has gone into making this product and considering the needs of those who are using it and looking after it day-to-day.”

He noted other bonuses like the colour matching between the older and newer Robe fixtures, and continuity is an area that Robe knows is important and is a major bonus for installations and venues that will often make purchases over a few years.

In the Roundhouse, the ESPRITES are rigged on the advance, rear, and mid trusses. The advance truss position is above the audience, so they are ideal for key lighting and specials.

They are also the first moving lights in the house and in these positions with framing shutters, so a cherry picker is not required on most days for focusing generic fixtures which was the procedure previously.

Some older generic profiles remain in the house which still require manual focusing which are now the only non-LED luminaires in the house rig.

Steve remembers back in the day when Robe was first starting out as a brand and observes that “they’ve been very smart about their R ‘n’ D and have produced a string of innovative and interesting products along the way. Robe is constantly thinking out-of-the-box and trying to do different things.”

He appreciates new products like the FOOTSIE, launched earlier in 2023, and sees definite potential for this style of low-profile footlight illumination fixture where sightlines are challenging, and you need something that does not intrude on the floorspace!

He also notes that while lighting trends and fashions do sometimes come in waves, they are still seeing a lot of Robe MegaPointes coming through with touring productions. “It has to be one of the most popular and well-liked moving lights of the moment.”

The Roundhouse house lighting rig is controlled via an Avolites Arena console with a TNP (TitanNet Processor) and a Rock Solid Technologies 'rock switch' at FOH which flips 8 universes of DMX and one Cat5 simultaneously, providing an A/B switching facility between the house desk and any guest lighting consoles.

An average month sees around 20 shows staged in the busy venue which embraces music shows, circus, and other performance arts plus assorted business events.

Profits are ploughed back into the facilities and the venue's charitable work. Thousands of young people take part in music, media and performing arts projects each year at the Roundhouse, including training in backstage roles as well as accessing state-of-the-art studio spaces. As well as this, the venue recently opened Roundhouse Works, a new creative centre for freelancers and entrepreneurs which includes a workspace and a range of studios.

Steve works with an in-house technical crew of 12 including 8 venue techs, two senior techs, himself, and a technical manager, and above them are head of technical and production Ruth Butler plus four production managers.

About The Roundhouse

The Roundhouse is grade II listed and a former railway engine shed, originally erected in 1846/1847 by the LNWR (London & Northwestern Railway) as a 'roundhouse', a circular building with a turntable to turn the train engines around. However, it only functioned as this for about a decade. After becoming a warehouse for several years, it fell into dereliction just before World War II in 1939. It was made a listed building in 1954 and reopened again in 1964 after 25 years, this time as a performing arts venue when celebrated playwright Arnold Wesker established the Centre 42 Theatre Company.

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