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Robe Raises Hell at French Metal Festival

Products Involved

BMFL™ Blade BMFL™ FollowSpot LT BMFL™ WashBeam MegaPointe® RoboSpot™

Nearly 300 Robe moving lights and seven RoboSpot systems were delivered by Melpomen (part of the B-Live Group) to the 2019 Hellfest French rock festival, complete with six BMFL LTs from rental company Novelty, claiming a 'world first' for the usage of these fixtures in a festival context.

The event is staged annually at Clisson in Loire-Atlantique, France and claims the biggest festival audience in France – attracting approximately 170,000 – and it is also one of the largest metal festivals in Europe, with six dynamic stages of live action and over 100 artists performing. This year the line-up included Kiss, Slayer, ZZ Top, The Sisters of Mercy, FuManchu, Gojira and Mass Hysteria and many more.

Robe moving lights – 126 x BMFL WashBeams, 126 x MegaPointes, 12 x BMFL Blades and 6 x BMFL LTs plus 7 x RoboSpot control systems – were prominent across the two Main Stages (1 and 2), which production designer Tristan Szylobrit from Light&Day) was tasked with coordinating, together with the requirements of all the visiting LDs.

Tristan has been an operator on Mainstage 1 for several years and is also well-known for his role in designing these two Satanic Cathedrals ... assisted by Technical Director Julien Recoque and WYSIWYG operator Julien Ferreiro.

Robe was an obvious choice, he commented.

"The fixtures are powerful and lightweight and were perfect for this as the stage grids were already heavily loaded with LED screens and other scenic and décor elements brought in by various bands." In addition, the versatility and speed of MegaPointes enabled excellent graphical and highly-structured effects to be created, which look fabulous on video.

BMFL WashBeams fitted the spec for their "clean beams and bright colours" which worked in daylight, dusk and darkness.

Both MegaPointes and BMFLs have been designed as festival workhorses and are usually available in big quantities from multiple providers.

A lighting highlight of the event this year was arguably a 'world first' festival use of the six BMFL LTs which were supplied to the event by Novelty.

Main Stages 1 and 2 were built side by side so the daily running schedules could be 'flip-flopped' and run efficiently.

Four of the six RoboSpot controlled fixtures were positioned on one of the Main Stage area delay towers which was stage right (house left), with the other two on a structural element located on the house right side of the audience space.

Completing this arrangement were four BMFL Blades – eight in total – also RoboSpot controlled, mounted on the front truss of each stage.

In total, seven RoboSpots Base Stations were used to control these 14 fixtures.

Three BaseStations were dedicated to the 8 x front truss BMFL Blades on the two stages and the other four for the 6 x BMFL LTs used on both Main Stages. Two of these were dedicated to the four BMFL LTs on the right side of the auditorium and two for the two on the left side.

The seven RoboSpot BaseStations – and their operators – were located under the stage.

Tristan stated that using these “brought a significant advantage compared to traditional follow-spots.

They are easy to transport, assemble and operate, and relatively straightforward to learn and use.”

They managed to organise and coordinate some training sessions and a bit of prep work in between the set changes.

“We were very happy with the results considering it was our first time using the system,” he states, and he appreciates Robe making constant refinements like a new inbuilt switch for the cameras which gives more precision.

The colour accuracy has also enhanced. This parameter was operated together with master dimming, colours and effects by Greg Valla positioned FOH running a dedicated house follow spot lighting console.

The seven RoboSpot operators had control of the lights’ pan, tilt, iris and zoom functions.

Working closely with the OB truck, the intensity of the follow spot luminaires could be best matched to the artists’ complexions and finessed further with the addition of the BMFL’s minus green filter and other features.

The BMFL Blades on the stage front trusses had excellent angles of fire and were able to add fill-light far better and more consistently for camera than would have been achievable with a standard follow spot.

Vincent Murzeau from Regie Lumière – also part of the B-Live Group – co-ordinated the follow spots with Greg Valla who also communicated with the bands’ own LDs and they constantly monitored feedback from the video team throughout the event.

The RoboSpot network was partly designed by Yves Venet to guarantee optimal running of all the elements along the chain of command and ensure everything was clear and intuitive.

Each RoboSpot station was connected via an RJ45 port on a fibre switch console.

The BMFL Blade controlling devices (for the front truss fixtures) were connected via DMX to the house lighting control console, with the BMFL LTs being directly connected to a “regie” switch station at front-of-house.

All these elements were supplementary to the lighting network which was designed and set up by Anthony Le Fur, with nothing left to chance in Tristan & Julien’s design and execution!

Two fibre optic network loops were run between all the stages and control rooms.

Seven pairs of fibre optics were available to hosted productions for direct and independent connections from the control room to each stage - all in addition to the existing loops dedicated to the basic equipment, RoboSpot control and video.

Splitters were dedicated to the RoboSpots and other RDM devices as this protocol is essential to the good functioning of the RoboSpot / BMFL pairing.

Photo Credit: Jean-Luc Poumarat







