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Robe is Icy Cool for Twenty One Pilots Tour

Products Involved

MegaPointe® BMFL™ WashBeam BMFL™ FollowSpot RoboSpot™ Spikie®

Maintaining that delicate balance between enigmatic, arty, alternative popularity and success ... the much anticipated Twenty One Pilots "Icy" tour hit the road this summer, offering lighting designer Tyler "Shap" Shapard the chance to produce an elegant and imaginative lighting design based on atmospherically engineering the mood and vibes - with many dramatic differences - for each song.

A cornerstone of this design was 80 x Robe MegaPointes explained Shap who collaborated closely on this tour with co-designer and programmer Dayne DeHaven. Their creative process involved Shap producing the essential looks and building blocks for each number and Dayne completing the nuts+bolts programming which they finessed together. Shap was also on the road running lighting day-to-day.

MegaPointes are a personal favorite fixture of Shap's and they have featured on the last two Twenty One Pilots tour cycles which included the immediately post Covid "Takeover" tour earlier in 2022, where the band played four different sized venues in six key cities, followed by an international summer festival tour.

Everyone liked the Arena version of the "Takeover" rig so much that this became the starting point for the "Icy" tour, modified, reimagined and with additional lights!

Shap loves the sheer speed and the power of MegaPointes, "It totally bridges that gap between being intense enough for a workhorse light and fast enough for an effects light" he noted, adding that it is a "completely unique" fixture, and nothing comes near to it in terms of "simply being able to do so much" which is the dream of any LD!

The MegaPointes were dotted all over the five upstage / downstage orientated touring truss 'fingers' which gave the whole stage look an aura of architectural elegance and were joined by 21 x Robe BMFL WashBeams being used for primary key light, about which Shap is equally as enthusiastic!

"BMFL WashBeam is an epic great wash light! The framing shutters are fantastic, and when hung on a downstage truss with the zoom rolled right out, they bring an incredible depth to the picture. The intensity fall off is very limited along the BMFL zoom and it blends very naturally, producing that unique even wash right across the stage."

This is "by far" Shap's best go-to downstage truss wash light. For the "Icy" tour he used the BMFL WashBeams constantly in this context, as well as for specials, reiterating the usefulness of that 'deep zoom' effect as a creative treatment, really making the artists 'pop' out onstage.

Eight BMFL FollowSpots with integral cameras were another critical element of this light show.

They are "amazing" declares Shap. He thinks RoboSpot is even more so because different quantities and types of Robe fixtures can be hooked into a RoboSpot and remote controlled, so he can have follow spots all over the rig covering all angles.

For "Icy", the RoboSpots were running fixtures positioned in three different areas - upstage right and left, and the front - keeping the focus on lead singer Tyler Joseph from three different perspectives. Six of the BMFL FollowSpots were on the two downstage trusses with two more on the end of the most upstage truss.

Shap also drafted 36 x Spikies into the floor package, chosen for their minuscule size, brightness and 360-degree rotation.

Twenty were deployed along the top of the low onstage video wall, and the rest dotted around the two 'cry decks' interspersed with a battery of cryo jets and confetti canons. "A great little light with plenty of punch, a good zoom, a prism, the flower effect, fabulous color mixing and super-fast ... all in one very compact unit" he commented.

Shap admits to being "picky" generally about fixtures, and all these Robe luminaires have made different but significant impressions on him and his designs.

The "Icy" arena show design was also based on being able to clone fixtures quickly and painlessly for the international festival section of the tour where they headlined numerous European festivals including the Friday night main stage at Colours of Ostrava in the Czech Republic.

The striking upstage / downstage orientated trusses and double decker stage design offered plenty of three - dimensionality, especially when juxtaposed with the LED screens which were also part of Shap's overall scenic design.

Bespoke show video content was created by Chris Schoenman, and the live camera / IMAG director was Adam Peck.

Shap has worked with Twenty One Pilots for nearly 10 years and enjoys the challenges of working with an artist like Tyler Joseph who has enormous vision and perspective about how the live shows and his music should be presented. He is also extremely tech savvy. "He knows BMFLs, MegaPointes, Spikies, etc., the differences between all of them, and their potential for use in the show" says Shap, "Above all, he knows what he wants."

He also respects the expertise, knowledge, and creativity of his team, so Shap also gets plenty of latitude to evolve a design and bring different elements to the table for each project.

The "Icy" tour gave Shap the chance to add a lot of pyro and other SFX to the show - smoke, flames, confetti, cryo jets, snow cannons, industry bubble machines, sonic booms, all of which was "huge fun" he declares with a massive smile, in addition to using his favorite Robe moving lights, all of which helped transform the show and up the visuality.

Some very cool combined lighting and SFX cues involving bubbles and gobos etc., especially during seminal numbers like "Chlorine" and "Heathens", all help shift the mood, giving each song it's unique aura, narrative, and emotional connection with the audience.

In terms of a creative work, "this show will be hard to lay to rest" admits Shap, however he is already looking forward to future projects and to working with Robe FORTES and some of the other new and exciting LED technology that has come to the market in the last year.

Keeping everything flowing smoothly on the "Icy" road was production manager Rodney Johnson. Lighting, video and rigging equipment was supplied by Solotech, audio by Clair, SFX by Image SFX and automation / staging by SGPS.

Photo Credit: Todd Kaplan





