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Robe Gets Academic in Dublin

The newly refurbished Academy live music venue in Dublin has re-opened under new independent ownership and management in a blaze of glory, complete with Robe moving lights in its three performance spaces ... which were specified by leading Irish rental and installation company, Production Services Ireland (PSI).

PSI's Sean Pagel project managed the design and installation following his very successful recommendation of Robe fixtures at the Limelight in Belfast - run by the same management team - which they loved! Since then, Alan Simms and Phil Donaldson have also visited the Robe factory in the Czech Republic where they were greatly impressed by the set-up, so when they took on this latest live entertainment venture, they again wanted the latest Robe technology in the house.

The Academy has three performance spaces - the 850 capacity Main Room, the Green Room which holds around 450 people and the Academy 2 in the basement which can cosily fit about 230 friendly people.

The philosophy behind the technical installation was to put the venue on the regular touring circuit map and ensure that visiting productions would have good quality in-house production so they didn't need to bring in their own productions.

Robe products at the Academy include Pointes, LEDWash 600s and LEDBeam 100s, as well as FT500 Haze machines.

Main Room

The stage in here is 8 metres wide by 6 deep with a decent 5 or so metres height to the grid. The space has a balcony and standing areas on two levels - classic music hall style.

Above the stage, lighting fixtures are attached to pre-existing LX bars in the roof, and Pagel specified a new 4 metre diameter circular truss which is flown above the dancefloor to add an extra dimension and enable the lighting to reach out and draw the audience into the action. This is essential particularly for the club nights.

The moving lights comprise 16 x Pointes, 10 x LEDWash 600s and 14 x LEDBeam 100s, which are distributed between the over-stage bars and the circular truss.

These were all chosen for flexibility, reliability and because they introduce a wide range of options whatever the performance onstage.

The control console is an Avo Tiger Touch II and PSI also supplied two 3 Watt lasers together with other lighting fixtures including strobes and LED battens.

In the **Green Room** the stage features a curved back wall with a variable depth between 3 to 6 metres, and the design challenge was the low ceiling, which was actually dropped down further in this latest round of renovations to boost the sound-proofing between it and the main room.

Compact fixtures were needed. This was both to suit the installation and for health and safety reasons – so they were out of reach to potentially over-enthusiastic punters!

Robe's little LEDBeam 100 – one of their most successful and certainly the smallest and cutest fixture – ticked all the boxes.

A total of 10 LEDBeams are arranged with 4 at the back of the stage, and 6 at the front attached to the Unistrut steel system in the ceiling.

They are joined by more LED PARs and battens. Above the dancefloor PSI has designed a unique ceiling feature with LED battens that adds energy and excitement to the environment and immerses everyone on the dancefloor in the action

The control system is an Avo Titan Mobile console with a touchscreen laptop.

The Basement was in many ways the most galvanising space to light. With even less headroom than the Green Room and a small stage, it really is possible to reach up and touch the ceiling! A series of structural pillars also permeate the space.

With these restrictions, again there was only one choice of moving light with the LEDBeam again the fixture of choice. Small, light, fast and offering numerous options for colour and effects, the fixture was tailor made for applications like this. Six of LEDBeam 100s are used above the stage, together with LED PARs.

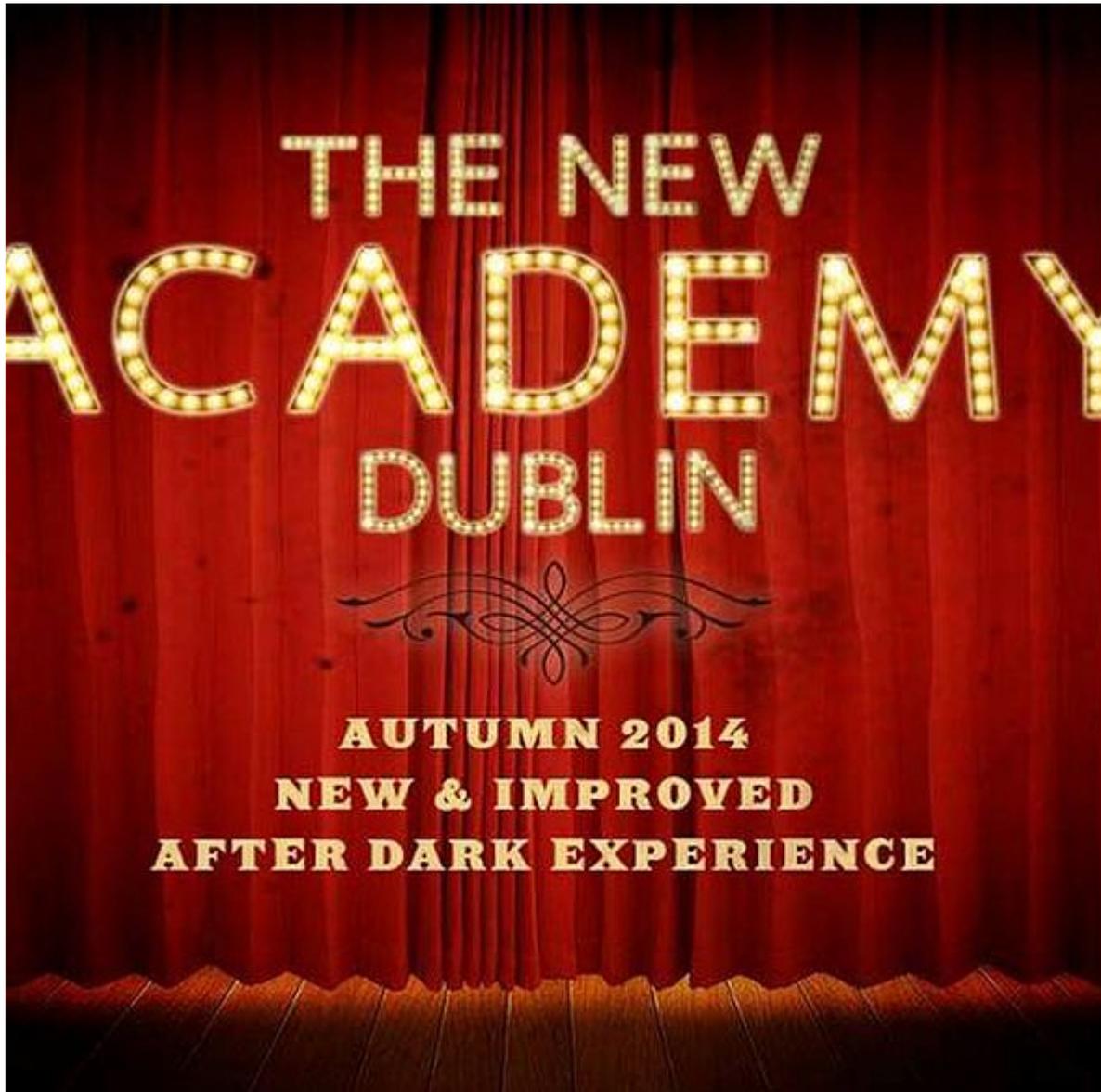
At the client's request, Pagel designed a series of custom LED tape fixtures in special containment which reside above the dancefloor and are also controllable through the Basement's Titan Mobile controller.

Lighting throughout the venue is operated by a crew of regular freelancers.

"It is a really excellent project in which to be involved," states Pagel, "I think it will be highly successful, and the client – admirably – wasn't prepared to compromise on the production values – and that is a rare thing right now! They really appreciate the advantages of good lighting ... and good-quality fixtures!"

Already there is a buzz and chatter amongst many Dublin lighting designers and programmers who are talking about the Academy, and it's a great showcase for Robe to illustrate first-hand how these products are ideal for installation scenarios.

PSI – one of Ireland's leading lighting and rigging rental companies with bases in Belfast and Dublin – has been using Robe products prolifically since 2007, and has a large selection in rental stock. The company is busy across a whole range of events from corporates and industrials to concert touring, music based events and festivals.



Venue