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Stripping back the Layers for Perpetuum Jazzile

Slovenian lighting designer Gregor "Grga" Smrdelj unleashed his talents for a large high-profile show by Slovenian vocal group Perpetuum Jazzile at the Arena Stolzice in Ljubljana.

With a brief to create something fresh and different, his first choice of moving lights was Robe, and with nearly 150 on the plot ... he produced a unique and different look for the sold-out performance based on a three-tiered set design.

Grga works full time with Event Lighting, one of Slovenia's leading rental specialists... and the show's lighting equipment provider. It was his first gig with the group, so the pressure was on to produce something amazing and memorable.

Grga integrated LED and video into his proposal for the stage and production design. It was at the first production meeting that he suggested having the singers on the three different levels, which everyone liked, so they went with it. "I wanted to make a statement, and the idea was that the full profile of all 44 singers could be seen rather than just the front row and everyone else squeezed in behind with only their heads showing!"

Grga and video designer and content producer Den Baruca worked closely to choose the right style and pitch of screen, which resulted in a 20-metre-wide by 4 metre strip of 5.9 mm surface above top of the set.

Behind each of the three stepped tiers was a 2 x 2 metre semi-transparent LED net product which allowed Grga to light through from behind.

There was not a lot of rehearsal time, but they did get one rehearsal together with the singers and their visualisation system, which gave some idea of how certain lighting and video effects would work in conjunction with the proposed eclectic musical programme.

Up in the roof of the Arena Stolzice, the Event Lighting crew installed seven straight trusses for lighting positions ... two for front lighting, two for back lighting and two for the sides. Ladders were used from the side trusses to get lights into exactly the right low positions for beaming across the stage.

The Robe count comprised 28 x Spiiders, 16 x MegaPointes, 16 x Pointes, 12 x BMFL Blades, 48 x LEDBeam 100s and 24 x LEDBeam 150s... distributed all over the trusses.

While Event Lighting has a large stock of Robe moving lights ... Grga says he would have specified them anyway because they are his moving light 'of choice'.

The Spiiders were used as excellent 'all-rounders' ... for top, back and front light.

The BMFL Blades were on one of the front trusses for key lighting. The shutters enabled them to pick out singers for solos and he programmed some highly effective blade chase that looked uber-cool resembling a barcode scanning effect for a couple of the numbers.

Grga loves the LEDBeam 150. "It's absolutely great little fixture, really fast, fantastic colours and works

extremely well with the Spiiders”.

The Pointes were used as the traditional effect light for which it's known and loved worldwide! Rigged in the rear trusses together with the Spiiders, these were perfect for silhouetting and producing striking beams and dramatic upstage looks.

Eight MegaPointes were on the floor with the other eight on the deck of the top (third) layer of set. They were used for precision looks, some of which were time coded (to the click) to be in perfect unison with clapping and other sonic moments in the singing.

“The aerial looks from the MegaPointes were just what I needed for dramatic punctuations” commented Grga. He likes the fixtures generally for their output and excellent features! “I needed a profile fixture that could compete with the LED screen and hold its own, and MegaPointe hit the spot”.

He observes that MegaPointes also combine well with Spiiders, and using these together is a “great asset” to any designer, easily blending and contrasting beams and washes for so many different scenarios.

The little LEDBeam 100s - used with 10-degree lenses - made good, solid side lighting and for ancillary aerial effects. Grga wanted a strong element of side lighting to the overall picture and using lots of small piercing beams enabled him to create some classy and fluid movement effects.

The LEDBeam 150s - a recent best seller for Robe - were all along the floor decks behind the singers. In addition to the obvious narrow beam effects, they were also used as wash luminaries illustrating the scope and usefulness of the zoom.

Other lights on the rig included 12 x LED strobes, 40 x Sunstrips and eight 4-lite blinders.

Grga's multi layered approach to the architecture and the lighting enabled him to keep the looks dynamic and dramatic for the intense two-and-a-half-hour performance, which ran straight through with no break or interval.

He programmed and ran the show on a Hog 4 console, provided, together with all the lighting kit, by Event Lighting.

Grga really enjoyed working on this show and all its challenges. The main one was designing an arena light show that was not rock 'n' roll but was every bit as diverse and compelling, and to achieve this he mixed that with the more refined disciplines of theatrical lighting.

Grga has worked for Event Lighting for 10 years and is also a programmer and a technician. He designs lighting for around 50% of the shows that the company services, and thinks it's essential to have technical and practical skills as well as being imaginative in order to present realistic and workable ideas that are achievable within the available budgets and timeframes!

Photo Credit: Sasa Huzjak



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Stage