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Robe Loves The Colour Purple

The Purple Group in Schijndel is one of the most respected entertainment technology rental companies in the Netherlands and celebrates its 25th anniversary this year having built its reputation on offering fantastic service by fabulous people with the right attitude and a passion for their work ... together with continual investment in the best brands... which in recent years has included Robe!

The company was founded by the charismatic Harry Zinken in 1989. By the time he was in his late teens he was already a seasoned entertainment professional, having launched his mobile DJ career at 14. This was a great success and ran in parallel with his studies which included electronics engineering.

On leaving college he initially embarked on a regular job as an electrician, but soon became bored of a 9-5 routine and quit when 21 to devote his considerable energies to The Purple Group.

Initially, being a DJ, he was into sound – his first foray into lighting was building himself a primitive sound-to-light device. Wanting to ensure that his mobile disco was the best in the area, at that stage still unable to afford to buy a set of PAR cans ... and never short of invention – his first lights were custom built from tobacco tins fitted with domestic light-bulbs made to flash on and off with the ingenious application of ad fluorescent tube starters!

Things have moved on somewhat considerably since then!!!

The Purple Group now has over 50 full time employees ... however Harry has not lost his penchant for imagination and innovation or his love for the industry – and that's why The Purple Group has been such a success story.

It has also been a big investor in Robe products over recent years.

Back to the early years and Harry got his first sound rig operational and soon started to be asked to mix sound and provide PA systems for a variety of local bands, which built steadily into regular work. At this stage he still bought his first lights on an as-and-when-needed basis, with his first moving lights being some scanners purchased around 1994.

Now The Purple Group has over 900 moving lights in rental stock and is one of the busiest and best rental companies in the Netherlands.

They are still working primarily with bands and now also EDM artists – as the genre is hugely popular in Benelux. While they do supply lighting and sound to other sectors, this is where the heart of the company is at.

Harry's first Robes were actually OEM products sold under another brand name around 2001. Sold over the years as the stock was turned over, he still comes across them in various clubs and venues ...

and ... they are still going strong!

His first serious Robe purchase was with ColorSpot 1200E ATs which happened when one of his bands, Di-rect was playing the famous Pinkpop Festival and wanted something that would blow away all the other bands' lightshows!

It had the desired effect!

The relationship with Robe continued to grow and then, when the ROBIN series of products was launched in 2010, the Purple Group's investments in Robe really started expanding.

Their first purchase from the ROBIN series was 36 x LEDWash 300s, quickly followed by over 100 LEDBeam 100s and then, most recently, 40 x Pointes, bringing his current total of Robe moving light products to over 200 ... and counting!

So - what does he like about Robe?

Well for a start, the fantastic service and after-sales support from Benelux distributor Controllux. "They are absolutely always there when you need them," he states.

On the products themselves he comments, "Robe produces very reliable, stable products and their price-to-performance ratio is excellent. Additionally, they are appearing increasingly on band riders and some LDs are even switching from their previous moving light of preference to Robe".

He cites symphonic rockers Within Temptation as a recent example of this, where LD Pim Elbers has changed his spec to Robe.

"The day our first Pointes arrived we told four of our regular LDs that we now had them in stock, and within 24 hours we had three completely re-designed lighting plots using Robes instead of the previous fixtures!"

Product endorsements do not get much more positive than this!

The Purple Group are in the enviable position of having clients clamouring to work with them - because of their great reputation - and Harry says that sometimes lighting rigs will also be designed around the stock that the company carries.

They service a host of high profile festivals including Appelpop in Tiel for which the main stage will feature 140 x LEDBeam 100s and 40 Pointes. They also supply the main stage at the Black MotoCross event which will be Robe led, and the 2014 festival season in the Netherlands kicked off at Paaspop in Schijndel itself headlined by the Prodigy, with LD Andy Hurst's spec including 77 x Pointes, 140 x LEDBeam 100s, 34 x LEDWash 300s and 12 x LEDWash 600s.

Dance Valley is another regular Purple Group summer festival - designed by 250K - and the word on the street is that the 2014 edition will feature over 400 Robes!

That's enough to turn anyone purple with envy!

