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Sonalyst Goes All Robe for Strictly Live

Products Involved

BMFL™ Blade BMFL™ Spot BMFL™ Wash / Wash XF MMX Spot™ MMX WashBeam™

The current completely sold out Strictly Live 2016 UK arena tour produced by Phil McIntyre Entertainments is thrilling audiences in arenas around the country ... this year for the first time with an all-Robe moving light rig including 130 x BMFLs, over 80 of which were newly purchased by rental company and long-standing tour supplier, Sonalyst.

New presenter Great British Bake Off host Mel Giedroyc is stamping her humour and personality on the show, directed for the sixth year by characteristically acerbic judge Craig Revel Horwood, and it's being hailed as the most exciting and 'best yet' live rendition of the BBC's blockbusting series which features 7 celebrities and their professional dancing partners with some great footwork and harmony! While Richard G Jones returned to add style and elegance to the lighting design, joining Craig in the judging hot seats are Len Goodman and Bruno Tonioli. The tour's technical direction is once again co-ordinated by Andy Gibbs.

The BMFL Factor has brought a massive new energy and edge to lighting the show, due to the substantial investment in new Robe BMFL Washes and Blades by Sonalyst, following on from their purchase of BMFL Spots in 2015, which were also specified for the 2015 tour. This was hugely successful and such was the power of the new Robe fixtures that the designer reduced the overall number of fixtures.

Fifty BMFL Washes, 32 x BMFL Blades and 48 x BMFL Spots are deployed on the 2016 rig, together with 25 x Robe MMX Spots, 18 x MMX WashBeams and 30 x ColorBeam 700s - the latter in silver housings around the perimeter of the dancefloor.

With tight get-in and outs on the tour, several of the overhead trusses have been converted to HUD pre-rigged. The compact size of the BMFLs means they fit perfectly into this and can remain in the trussing for transportation.

Last year with BMFL Spots introduced for the first time, over 30 other fixtures could be dropped from the rig. This year with the boost in BMFL power, more lights have gone, resulting in a streamlined and versatile lighting rig kicking out increased lumens onto the dancefloor as the dancers enthrall the audiences with their panache, chemistry and footwork.

The BMFL Spots are also used for various specials throughout including beaming onto a huge 2 metre mirror ball right in the centre of the dancefloor which is flanked by eight 80cm balls - one of a number

of Strictly 'signature' visuals.

The BMFL Spots in the sections of HUD truss over the dancefloor provide impressive top light and gobo work. "Last year when we first introduced the BMFL Spots we were delighted to find we could get so much more out of fewer units," states Richard.

Sonalyst bought the XF version of the 50 x BMFL Washes, which has an additional effects module. The units are scattered all over the rig including 12 a side on the two main side trusses giving "fantastic coverage across the main dancefloor and B stage area," enthuses Richard, "especially for a relatively expedient amount of units".

The barn doors (also with the XF version) are excellent for producing refined side light for the IMAG cameras and eliminate unwanted light spillage so the source can be concentrated exactly where it's needed and wanted.

The bulk of the BMFL Blades are rigged on a diamond shaped truss over the main dancefloor and utilised for all the 'specials' as well as being worked into highlighting the judges and presenter areas, and also for the elimination sequence at the end, a task for which they also replace previous older fixtures that were unreliable.

The shutters help to bend light neatly around the curvature of the set and in separating the judges from the band who are positioned closely upstage of them.

"Everyone involved in the show can see the difference," states Richard. "They appreciate how crisp, clean and contemporary it looks". Included in that list of people is IMAG director Tony Grech, as the new and more efficient lighting dramatically enhances the quality and dynamics of the camera shots he can choose for his mix.

They are touring eight follow spots but with 16-24 people onstage at times during the main production dance numbers, the smooth even BMFL coverage helps maintain the Lux levels everywhere they are needed.

The MMX Spots and MMX WashBeams are rigged on the famous Strictly LED arches where they light the band and provide backlight, floor fill and general eye-candy behind the judge's area. There are also some MMX Spots on the deck and at the bottom of the video arches.

The lightshow was programmed by Chris Hurst onto a grandMA2 light console ... and looking after it day-to-day on the road is Alex Murphy.

Discussing Sonalyst's new investment Rory said, "I decided to invest heavily in BMFLs in 2014, and was very excited to be able to increase our range to include the new Wash and Blade fixtures. I have been very impressed with their ability and power, with the feature sets and not least the reliability and continued excellent service and support from Robe. I am looking forward to a busy year with our expanded BMFL range".

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland





