

10.5.2018

Snow Time for Robe

Products Involved

ColorSpot 700E AT™ ColorWash 700E AT™ LEDWash 600™ Pointe® Spiider®

Irish hip hop artist, rapper and music producer Rejjie Snow burst on the scene in 2013 and has just released his much awaited debut album 'Dear Annie' to a buzz of excitement and critical acclaim. He has also just completed a 34 date UK and European tour, which was exceptionally well received.

Creating some cool and atmospheric lighting was LD Chris Yeomans, who for the three largest gigs on the tour - Dublin's Olympia, The Roundhouse in London and La Trianon in Paris - he specified Robe moving lights as the main part of a striking design.

The core rig comprised 25 Pointes arranged upstage in a 5x5 grid; eight Spiiders were positioned between the columns of Pointes, and six LEDWash 600s on the floor at the sides for 'wing washes'. Lighting was supplied by London based Colour Sound Experiment.

The artist wanted to be silhouetted for much of the show so he could lurk in the shadows and play with the negative spaces, so Chris immediately thought of the grid effect as a neat way to achieve this, adding requisite degrees of drama and to fill the stages of all three 'featured' venues. He also wanted the overall aesthetic to be stark and minimal.

Once that wall of lights was established as a design focal point, Chris - whose background is in the frenetic and innovative world of club lighting - knew he needed a multi-functional fixture to ensure that different looks, scenes and textures flowed for the whole show without getting repetitive.

"The Pointes' combination of prisms, the great gobo selection, frost and zoom were more than enough to create the multiple looks needed for each track". Spiiders were chosen as a wash light with "a bit more" to offer, so the flower effect and the on-board macros ended up being key to some of the signature looks.

For Chris, the LEDWash 600s along the sides of the stage were a "no brainer"! "It is a small and great looking fixture "for all those at the front of the audience, which produces nice even washes, tight beams, deep saturated colours or subtle pastels. They weren't just used as side washes, but audience washes and beams too throughout the show."

The grid of lights was rigged to a 10m metre wide 5 metre high ground support structure. This added a little time to the build process for Chris and Colour Sound technician Alex Bratza plus three local crew, but once in place, the rig was positioned extremely speedily including an outline of pixel-mapped LED batten frame around the perimeter.

In addition to these, he used selected elements of the three house rigs, which included some of the Robe fixtures in the Roundhouse, the Robe ColorSpot and ColorWash 700s in Dublin and the house generics in addition to their special package in Paris.

For the London and Paris shows, set designers Ducktape Collective constructed some crazy looking metallic structures and pyramids onstage related to the alien spaceship inspired Rejjie logo and 'Dear Annie' album references and artwork. A giant metallic inflatable tube which lurked behind the wall of Pointes also made an appearance at the Roundhouse, highlighted with lights from the house rig.

Chris commented that the set worked really fluidly with the lighting and the music.

Even with the upstage wall of lights, the overall lighting image was raw and spare. The five columns of Pointes and row of Spiiders running through the middle surrounded by the LED frame was a neat and lean look. Chris reckons that the concept would not have worked with a larger floor package, or with additional light fixtures in the 5x5 grid. "This was a perfect balance. It looked striking but minimal, and I was able to get many combinations of looks using these fixtures".

He operated the show using an Avolites Tiger Touch II. Most of the Pointe effects were programmed in the Key Frame Shape Engine which made programming straightforward and by adjusting the parameters, some interesting 'accidental' and unexpected results were evolved.

He was keen to mimic the tempo and vibe of the album in the lighting - a complex mix of dark down tempos, persistent hip hop beats and upbeat melodies.

A favourite show moment was the intro track "Hello", an instrumental with a long build, loaded with heavy percussive beats - "this gave me lots to work with in showing off the rig at the start of the show". It was followed by the first number, a dark and down tempo piece immediately bringing a definite shift in lighting ... and it went on from there, each song with its own distinctive ambience.

Chris has used Robe products many times through his professional career which started at the Gatecrasher superclub in Nottingham back in the days of the ColorSpot and ColorWash 575 series! He went on to use Pointes in the house rigs at Egg and Ministry of Sound. He still works the occasional shift in Heaven which also has Pointes. Knowing the fixture pretty much inside out made it a natural choice.

He's also used Spiiders in a few clubs and has put them through their paces in that demanding environment, however this was the first time he's used them on a live show.

More recently he ran MegaPointes at Ministry and was "hugely impressed" with the prisms, gobos, the "extra bonus of CMY colour mixing" and the light weight.

Robe's Viva CMY is another favourite which is starting to gain traction in clubs with some recent high profile installs in Asia.

Right now, Chris reckons that Robe is "perfectly placed in the market, and introducing great products for multiple applications". He thinks they are listening to the user base and taking comments, suggestions and feedback on-board.

He really enjoyed working with Colour Sound, where Alex Ryan was the account handler. Both the Alex's plus friend and LD Francis Clegg were invaluable in contributing touring knowledge and

experience for Chris who is now getting familiar with the logistical and cultural elements associated with this new environment.

About Chris Yeomans

Chris is currently working full time at one of London's most legendary clubbing experiences, Ministry of Sound as assistant production manager, and is due to go back to the rough and tumble of freelance life this summer to focus on lighting design for live music events.

He started out training as a sound technician and music producer at Confetti - a creative technologies college in Nottingham, and aged 18 applied to work as a sound technician at Gatecrasher in the city. On his first shift, he was informed he had to also operate their Avo lighting desk and 'busk' a show ... on lighting!

A big electronic music fan, his sense of adventure and appreciation of good dance music kicked in! From there he found the excitement of running lights at large scale club shows invigorating and fun, especially when superstars like Eric Prydz, Calvin Harris, and Sasha rocked up to play and learned to engage with the performance and add an extra element of energy to the events with lights!

Chris later moved to London to study music industry management at university, and - long story short - became head of lighting during weekends at Egg in Kings Cross. Realising the spirit of lighting and visuals was part of his DNA, he established 'FADE Lighting' and began freelancing in some of London's coolest club venues before heading to the Ibiza sun, where he worked hard during the season as a lighting operator and AV technician.

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Photo Credit: Ant Adams



