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Anolis Lighting Scheme for Southampton Mayflower Theatre

The exterior of the Southampton Mayflower Theatre brings an extra dazzle of warmth and vitality to a usually busy city centre (at time of writing we are in the UK's second Covid lockdown) illuminated with an Anolis – a Robe business – lighting scheme which was installed by Lighting Technology Projects (LTP).

Built in 1928, the venue is a Grade II listed building with a prominent central location and seating capacity of 2300, making it the largest theatre in the South of England.

Anolis products were recommended for the architectural installation to the theatre's Chief LX Neil Kingston and their Head of Technical Operations, Rachel Fox, by several people, including those running the O2 Guildhall, another leading Southampton live performance venue – which is also externally lit with Anolis – as well as by contacts at cruise company Carnival UK which is headquartered in the city.

With these references, Neil was confident that Anolis would withstand the environment!

He and Rachel further consulted with Simon Gooding from Anolis UK and Keith Elms from LTP and collectively they made the decision to go with Anolis, choosing fixtures from two popular Anolis RGBW ranges of luminaires to ensure that the landmark venue received the right lighting treatment!

Mayflower's previous RGB LED exterior lighting installation had become tired and was battered and eroded by the winds and salty air of the seaside explained Neil, so these were replaced with three Anolis Divine 160 RGBW 40-degree units with barn doors, six ArcSource 24MC 11 narrow degree fixtures and four ArcSource 24MC 7 narrow degree lights.

All the ArcSource 24s are fitted with the top hat extension. The shuttering accessories are to facilitate the tightest and most accurate focuses in all cases.

The three Divine 160 units are positioned on the foyer canopy and evenly wash up the whole Mayflower front façade.

Each Divine 160 produces almost over 15,000 Lumens and are housed in a weatherised IP67 and IK10 for continued high performance in the toughest conditions.

Available in RGBW, RGBA and PureWhite LED chip variants and with several beam angles, the Divine 160 is an ideal fixture for large surface area lighting like this.

The 10 x ArcSource Outdoor 24MCs are mounted on standard brackets and are used for precision up-lighting of the venue's deco columns and side turrets. Despite their small size and footprint, these fixtures produce strong and distinctive beams of light.

To minimise impact on the front façade and maximise the cost-efficiency of the project, the Anolis fixtures are fitted in the same positions as the previous lights and are controlled via a mini-Mac running ChamSys lighting control software.

The signature look is red – to match Mayflower's rich interior period feel and their branding – however, the lighting scheme gives scope and flexibility to match the theme of the current show or event.

The selection and quality of whites and the colour changing was therefore important when choosing fixtures as it is changed for every show and the façade can also be lit for special occasions.

This year it's turned blue in support of the NHS and the 'house' red has been a boost to the various LightItInRed events staged to raise awareness of the challenges facing the performance industry during the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're delighted," stated Neil, "the building looks great and really stands out with these lights."

Like most venues, Mayflower has been closed during the pandemic, but their Mayflower Musical Youth Theatre (MMYT) team has continued working online with young people to develop singing, dancing, and acting skills and there have been other socially distanced youth engagement events and initiatives taking place.

Photo credit: Courtesy Southampton Mayflower



