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Robe Gets A Rebel Cause

Products Involved

BMFL™ WashBeam Tetra2™ LEDBeam 150™ Pointe®

In the true spirit of the technoverse, production values were ramped up to the “next level” by the organisers of the 2-day Rave Rebels XXL extravaganza, staged at Palais 12 in Brussels, celebrating a welcome return to live events for this high energy phenomenon that included a stunning production design – lighting and set by Thomas Boets – with 200 x Robe Pointe moving lights at its epicentre.

Thomas chose Pointes, a favourite for lighting the genre, as one of the few fixtures that can keep up with the relentless pace needed for effective techno lighting ... and the energy that goes with it!

The show design brief from the two organisers, Jens Grieten and Nick Ramoudt, who also run the renowned Kompass Klub underground techno venue in Ghent, was to keep it “industrial” – raw, stark, high tech and with a massive impact – like the club’s vibe, but on a super-sized scale to enthrall and keep the surprises popping for 30,000 techno fans over the two nights.

Thomas collaborated closely with several talented creatives including Rene van Dijk, head content creator / VJ and his team, on the overall look of the show, together with lighting programmer and operator Kristof Blancquart and automation designer / operator Rik Uytersprot of Gravity.

Planning this project started months ago – when live shows still seemed on a distant horizon – and it was a really exhilarating and satisfying process, “not just to create a truly amazing space and moments, but even to be working on an actual live event again, with a fantastic musical line-up and a real audience to entertain and impress!” enthused Thomas.

Movement underlined the entire visual concept, with 66 axes of automation installed around the venue.

A 7 x 7 metre ‘picture frame’ centrepiece which tracked over 54 metres from the ‘home’ position just upstage of the DJ booth, out to FOH – and back – was constructed from trussing with a holo-LED surround and filled with a selection of lighting fixtures plus a central blow-through screen for laser 3D logo projections and other animations.

Helping make this frame properly three dimensional was a 6x6 back-light matrix of 36 x Robe LEDBeam 150s, with 20 Robe Tetra2s framing the trussing periphery. Both types of fixtures were picked for their "immense power" and "mind blowing" effects potential.

"When this impressive structure started to move, we could literally create a tunnel of light through this matrix of lights," commented Thomas.

All the show's visual cues were linked via a network running Art-Net and PSN (PosiStageNet) protocols, designed so lighting, automation and video all worked seamlessly together allowing synchronous looks involving lighting content, motion and two industrial robots rigged on special 2 metre plinths either side of the stage.

As a 14-hour event, a dedicated FOH crew was needed to plan and build the show over the complete period in a timescale where the surprises could keep coming and the organiser's brief of creating an extremely streamlined show was fulfilled.

The two large ex-automotive industrial robots - the result of a serious research mission by Thomas, Kristof, Rene and lead robot engineer Bram van Hansewijck - were decorated with LED strips for crazy effects all adding to the fun and sense of 'extraordinary'.

Programmed over several months in their native protocol, this was also decoded and integrated into the show control architecture by networking specialist Roel Apers and systems engineer Joost Potters, allowing the robot motion to be triggered from the grandMA lighting console.

"We wanted to take the audience on a full visual out-of-body experience to match the musical one for the hours they were in the venue, pick them up and spin them around," stated Thomas. "Lighting was a vital component of this very big visual picture, and while there were obviously A LOT of lights on the show, the Pointes at the core set the scene and underlined everything."

Out in the arena rigged on 16 moving trusses were 128 of the Robe Pointes attached to custom brackets so they could attain the exact angles Thomas wanted to get the beam geometry shooting correctly across the venue.

"These were the bedrock for all sorts of 'crazy shit' effects!!" he explained, including all the signature lighting looks.

These trusses also contained strobes pointing up to light the massive roof, plus some helix lights pointed down to light the audience. The structural elements of the fixtures and metalwork itself was highlighted by helix lights beaming down from the mother-grid above.

As well as super quick fixtures with a battery of available effects, Thomas needed the Pointe's brightness to compete with two large columns of LED that flanked the picture frame at the stage.

He specifies Pointes regularly for techno events as "they are the most awesome fixtures for lighting techno - especially with the beam and shuttering effects that are achievable".

Running all the way down the two sides of Palais 12 were two continuous 54-metre trusses - also on motion hoists, dubbed the 'Anacondas' as they snaked down the venue.

Rigged on these were a single Robe BMFL WashBeam at each end and 760 LED strips in between. The beams from these four BMFLs produced a massive square of fat shafts of light framing the whole arena with lighting.

"We simply needed huge beams in these positions, so BMFL WashBeams it was," stated Thomas.

Over the stage above the DJ booth were five 2-metre trusses - also on the automation system - each with two Pointes, a Tetra2 moving LED batten, a moving bounce mirror and a full colour laser and these all flew up and down adding to the overhead mayhem!

Six motion elevators positioned in between the subs stacks each had 2 x Pointes attached which worked in tandem with the fixtures on the five short trusses.

Thomas wanted the Rave Rebels experience to be "totally XXL" trippy and provocative so people didn't really know what they were looking at or how it might be happening, but just aware of "this incredibly rich and all-encompassing optical environment that synched perfectly to the music".

He loves the pumping pace / extreme sonic and visual dynamics of techno music for creating these eye-popping shows that weave together hours of multi-layered imaginative magic and trickery of techno magic.

In addition to all these Robes, around 400 other lightsources completed the design which was operated by Kristof using a grandMA3 console with a GM3 light for backup.

All lighting video and sound equipment was supplied to the production by Lust for Live (the new name for L&L Stage Service).

Also integral to the Rave Rebels team effort were technical manager Sam Elitas, head rigger Rene Bruisten, systems engineer Joost Potters, data processing specialist Roen Apers, video operator / content creators Rene van Dijk and Rodrigo Guzman, laser operator Jeroen Claes, audio operator

Memet Ekici, sound engineer Manfred Kedde and production assistant Joris Bensch. The Site Team was led by Nick Levens and Ilse Wilcox and Thomas Moon was stage manager.

Photo Credit: courtesy Rave Rebels / nachtschaduw





