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Robe ESPRITES for Singapore Ballet Production

Products Involved

ESPRITE® ESPRITE® Fresnel

Singapore-based lighting designer Adrian Tan of The Light Project recently utilised 32 x Robe ESPRITE moving lights – 16 x Profiles and 16 x Fresnels – to light a production of Swan Lake staged by the Singapore Ballet at Esplanade Theatres by the Bay in Singapore.

Twenty-eight of these fixtures were part of a new lighting package which has been added to the theatre's house rig, and, as Adrian needed a couple more of each type to complete the detail of his design, more were sourced through Robe's Asia Pacific office, also in Singapore.

This was the third re-light of this Swan Lake production at the high-profile venue, the second time that the Singapore Ballet has been accompanied by the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra, and the first time that ESPRITES were used as the main workhorse lighting fixture.

Adrian has worked at Esplanade many times before using their previous moving light systems, and noise was often a battle, not so much with the Ballet, but certainly with opera productions, where fan noise was an issue as singers needed 'pin-drop' silence and no ambient distractions.

Through working with opera shows, Adrian's ears are consequently hypersensitive to any environmental elements disturbing the acoustics, and the quietness of the ESPRITES was something he immediately noticed.

All the ESPRITES were positioned above the stage for Swan Lake, and the trim height of the fly bars was around 10 metres. Adrian commented that the fixture's output was "amazing ... I never needed to go to full, and they worked brilliantly as a top wash."

This staging of Swan Lake was very classical, so the lighting needed to emulate this tungsten aesthetic using the latest technologies, which were never seen to move during the performance, but worked hard throughout.

As a designer, he appreciates the subtlety and texture of the pastel colours, and until this experience with ESPRITES, the warm tones of any LED fixtures were “never warm enough”.

So, he was very pleasantly surprised to find that the warm sunlight glow – at around 3000K – that he desired for this show looked “really nice”, and that generally he didn’t have to do so much colour mixing. Primarily the colour temperature whites covered the very specific tones that he wanted.

For the lake scenes, he arrived at a very satisfactory 5600K tone with all the right nuance and texturing, again without having to spend too much time producing the hue with the ESPRITES.

By his own admission, Adrian is “a stickler” for hyper-sensitive linear dimming and elegant refined pastels, cool steels and decent warm whites, “Most manufacturers can do a saturated blue or a red, but when it comes to pastels, colour mixing, especially using an LED source, it is a whole new art form.”

He noted that creating the beautiful and intricate gobo scenes required for this production was “substantially faster” using ESPRITES and moving lights than it had been previously, and that you had the additional benefit of being able to repurpose those same fixtures that were instrumental in building the gobo scenes, for something completely different just moments later as the story unfolded.

Adrian also likes the colour temperatures of Robe’s T1 range, with which he was already familiar, “Again, the dimming and CTO features are extremely good for an LED source.”

He lights a lot of opera, ballet and contemporary dance pieces, all among the most demanding performance genres when it comes to visual production.

He first used Robe products back in the early days with the ColorSpot E AT series, and even back then noticed the “outstanding” CMY colour mixing, He also does a lot of work at Singapore’s Gardens by The Bay which features installed architectural products from Robe’s architectural brand, Anolis.

“The kit is reliable, well designed and engineered and you know what you are going to get,” he commented.

He has also recently used more of the new Robe fixtures at Esplanade Theatres by The Bay including PAINTES in the Black Box space, and FOOTSIE2s and T32 Cycs when lighting a

hybrid / contemporary dance piece.

These were all part of the same lighting upgrade featuring a total of 170 x Robe products among other lights.

Photo Credit: Bernie Ng



