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Robe helps Redefine the Look for Idols SA

Beteiligte Produkte

ESPRITE® MegaPointe® RoboSpot™ BMFL™ WashBeam Spiider® Pointe® Spikie®

LEDBeam 150™ LEDWash 800™ LEDWash 600™ LEDBeam 100™ ColorWash 2500E AT™

ColorSpot 700E AT™

Idols South Africa 2021 underwent its most substantial visual transformation for a few years with a shift of venue, from the State Theatre in Pretoria to Studio 10 at the Urban Brew complex in Johannesburg. This moment was seized by the show's long term lighting designer Joshua Cutts of Visual Frontier, for a radical re-think, and for the first time in 17 Idols seasons, he presented a lighting co-design created collaboratively with Andre Siebrits, also from Visual Frontier.

The pair relied heavily on Robe moving lights – over 200 were specified on the rig, plus two RoboSpot remote follow spotting systems – to assist with a fresh new aesthetic that takes the SA edition of the show production to 'next level' status.

Due to Covid regulations, a large live audience was still not possible this year, so Josh and Andre embraced this effective restriction by redefining the look and optimising it for the multi-camera direction of Gavin Wratten, who also had some clear ideas about visuality.

Taking a 'bare stage' approach was a bold and confident move that utilised lighting plus all the negative spaces in the room to create the drama, depth, and diversity.

"It had to look completely different from anything before but also very contemporary," explained Josh, "and for this we needed multi-purpose fixtures to be at the core of the rig."

The backbone of the slick modern lighting look was created with Robe ESPRITES and MegaPointes with 24 of each type.

The rig was enhanced by having the two RoboSpot systems controlling six BMFL WashBeams – also a first for an Idols SA series.

The RoboSpot systems controlled four front and two back BMFL WashBeam luminaires, bringing precise control of key lighting.

“It was a case of the right kit for the right space!” commented Andre, explaining that the clear uncluttered stage area and the way it was lit evoked the huge depth and perspective shots that Gavin wanted.

With a high gloss-black floor and large sections of upstage LED video screen complete with a central entrance – the LED reflections produced great bounce-back along the stage floor – the ESPRITES, MegaPointes and other Robe moving lights were all chosen for their power and flexibility plus other key features like the CMY colour mixing.

Both Josh and Andre use Robe products regularly and enjoy the range and the reliability of the fixtures.

The ESPRITES were rigged above the centre stage area with the MegaPointes arranged in striking horizontal left, right and centre lines running lengthways down the studio, producing a sense of linear elegance and numerous effects as the ‘show workhorses’.

Both fixtures are “light in weight, bright and proved perfect for lighting artists, bands and judges as well as creating big gobo looks, stage washing and those glorious ‘international’ scenes that we wanted as a signature for this season,” elucidated Josh, who has been involved with lighting every Idols SA since the concept started there in 2002!

Having the lines of MegaPointes and the pool of ESPRITES tied into the way the RoboSpot BMFLs were used as they were also a vital part of the lighting and stage geometry.

With all six follow spots run from the two BaseStations positioned at FOH near to Andre and Josh, this was an excellent set up for producing more interesting spot lighting effects whilst tying up less crew! Using the RoboSpot system also made it practical for the first time ever to have rear follow spots on an Idols SA show! “All of this further boosted our adaptability and ability to react at short notice,” observed Josh.

In between the MegaPointes in the studio roof were 24 x standard Robe Pointes and joining them on the rig, 24 x Spiiders for overhead washes, plus 24 x Spikies and 24 x LEDBeam 150s for whizzy fun effects and beam looks.

Josh and Andre appreciated the colour matching and “excellent consistency” in colouration that exists between all the different Robe fixtures, which all helped speed up the programming process

and is highly effective for television lighting scenarios.

In addition to some the most recent Robe technology on the rig, some favourite 'legacy fixtures' included LEDBeam 100s, LEDWash 600s and 800s and even ColorSpot 700s and ColorWash 2500E ATs which are still going strong!

These and all the other lights on the rig were programmed and run on a grandMA3 console.

Challenges as always include creating a series of complex and fabulous lightshows for all the artists. They were often dealing with up to 14 songs a week in a tight timeframe due to the show format and schedule and a short amount of onstage time for both artists and the production team.

And while after 17 years Josh isn't fazed by this as he has the routine down to a very effective process, it still gets the adrenaline rushing every time! He comments that while it's become quicker in some ways over time, the complexity of what's now expected in that same short time window … has grown massively!

In this context, it was great having Andre working alongside him as co-LD. "Two minds working in unison the way we have are so much better," he commented, adding that his extensive Idols experience combined with Andre's fresh eyes on the show made it an "exciting and invigorating" way to work … together with the "fantastic" range of multipurpose fixtures at their fingertips!

All technical AV equipment was supplied and managed by Dream Sets, co-ordinated for them by Eben Peltz for Idols SA producers SIC Entertainment. The show's producer was Anneke de Ridder and it was broadcast live each week on the Mzansi Magic network.

The 2021 Idols SA winner was Berenike 'Berry' Trytsman winning the title following weeks of intense competition with over 12 million votes cast!

Photo Credit: Duncan Riley

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