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Robe offers Best Hospitality

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LEDWash 600™ MMX Spot™ Pointe®

Lighting designer Chris Thoms working for ZEROdB Live created a stunning lightshow for the latest live extravaganza by leading club brand Hospitality which was staged at London's O2 Academy Brixton ... a project on which he utilized Robe Pointes, LEDWash 600s and MMX Spots as the main moving lights.

Chris has operated and collaborated on the Hospitality Brixton production design since 2012. For this one, he and ZEROdB Live founder and production manager Rob Stanley sat around the discussed options for the look and feel of this latest show.

They wanted something new, fresh and different that was a departure from the hi-res 'big-telly-style' video look that has come to characterise so many events "There's nothing like a 24 strobe-chase to get people jumping a little" as Rob commented! After much brain-storming, they came up with the 'Fingers of Rock'.

Essentially the design evoked an old-skool rock 'n' roll spatiality with a ceiling of lights above the artist, ticking the design brief boxes by going a bit retro and putting the emphasis firmly back on the LD rather than the VJ!

There were positions for 42 moving lights, 24 strobes and 60 x LED strips over six parallel fingers - a 'classic Queen' aesthetic giving some large monolithic lighting looks but with the contemporary rave twist of being able to move.

They added the 24 x Pointes, 22 x LEDWash 600s and 12 x MMX Spots to the equation and then augmented their epic look with the lowest resolution screen available from rental company Colour Sound Experiment, which was 37.5 mm pitch - the whole surface measured 288 pixels wide by 72 tall ... and in reality looked a lot bigger than it actually was events.

The Pointes were the main workhorses of the show, arranged in a 6x4 grid on the main trussing fingers, with 18 of the LEDWash 600s filling up the gaps, together with strobes.

The MMX Spots were split, with six rigged on the front truss and six on the deck, running along the back of the stage on 2ft high risers, alternated with Moles.

The other four LEDWash 600s were on the front truss and used for key-lighting.

Everything was grouped into columns, rows, V-shapes, etc., so programming was symmetrical and impressive looks could be created relatively quickly and efficiently.

"Having the Pointes and LEDWash 600s in a grid like this made it possible to create some very nice chases and variations" commented Chris

It was a beamy show so the Pointe was perfect.

Chris is a "big fan" of the horizontal prism and the fast colour flick that can be applied to create movement and spread in these fixtures. "Also the speed, you can create dynamic looks and snap to positions fast" he explains.

The MMXs punctuated the Pointes throwing in big fat beams from upstage and above.

Chris really likes using just the outer LED ring on the LEDWash 600s, an effect they call "Mysterion" mode, and with a grid of 18, they could produce fabulous eye candy looks whilst still washing the stage and artist with backlight.

It was Colour Sound's MD H (Haydn Cruickshank) who initially turned Rob on to Robe, who now states that he's "massively impressed" with everything the manufacturer has done in recent years.

"As a brand, Robe's fixtures are leagues ahead of the competition" he says, adding that he feels the whole range of Robe products seem to work really well together.

It was so important to have Robe on this show that he made sure his Robe wish-list was submitted several weeks before the design was even confirmed!

Chris always specs Pointes on any large show - "as many as I can get my hands on!" He first used them 3 years ago ... and the more he used them, the more hidden depths he discovered, which led to purchasing 12 for his venue (he's currently production manager at London's renowned Ministry of Sound) at the start of this year.

He loves snapping between a tight focussed beam to a massive prism breakup, and then a huge strobing zoomed wash almost instantly.

Chris has used the LEDWash 600s a few times, but this Hospitality event was the most he'd had in once place before, which he found "really good fun".

"Robe is definitely the brand of the moment for touring and music-based work" concludes Rob, "The products are a generation ahead of the competition and enable the looks and styles of lighting that LDs strive for to differentiate their shows."

"As a production manager, using Robe makes me happy because we get great looking shows whilst not blowing the budget!"

ZEROdB Live is a technical production company launched by Rob Stanley in 2009 with a mission is to deliver phenomenal live shows by working with the most talented, passionate and brightest in the industry.

One of ZEROdB Live's clients is Ministry of Sound, which is how he met Chris. Before then he studied broadcast journalism at Leeds Uni, worked in publishing for a while and then returned to what drove him in his long distant youth - lighting, events and technical management. His touring and working for rental companies led to founding the company 7 year ago. Whenever they land a really special show, he asks Chris on-board for lighting. Rob's theatrical lighting background and "ridiculously OCD eye for detail, correctness and design" led him to recognise Chris's penchant for programming.

Chris Thoms' love for lighting started at school and college, and like many, through working in technical theatre, but as soon as he was old enough to get into clubs he started bothering the lighting guys at Gatecrasher in Sheffield where he grew up. He began working for them, and found clubs a more natural environment than theatre - more toys to play with, loud music, and no script! He has also worked in recording studios engineering dance music which fuelled a valuable understanding of how tracks are compiled and arranged that's come in super-handy for operating lights for electronic shows packed with music he's mostly never heard before! In 2011 he became production manager at Ministry of Sound and while his focus is primarily on the landmark venue known for staying at the cutting edge of dance culture ... he also lights a quantity of special external shows each year, like this Hospitality event.

Photo Credit: Greg Westwood



