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Robe Gets the LED vibe at GSA

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Robe co-hosted a ground breaking LED Theatrical event staged by staff and students on the Theatre Production course at Guildford School of Acting (GSA), part of the University of Surrey in the UK.

The Czech Republic based manufacturer supplied around 50 LED luminaires to the event and to GSA's 2017 gala musical production staged at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in central Guildford, Surrey, including its groundbreaking DL7 theatrical range - plus the new Spiider LED wash beam, CycFX 8s, Spikies and VIVAs - plus technical support.

The idea of an LED Theatre event was originated by GSA Lighting Tutor Mig Burgess and facilitated by Ashley Lewis from Robe UK. She wanted to devise some innovative and fresh ways to demonstrate lighting technologies in a working environment. Several productions are staged across the university's various venues over an academic year ... and Mig felt that as theatre producers, there were more imaginative options to show off lighting technologies than just pointing a light at a white wall!

The one day event ran in unison with GSA's 2017 gala musical which was 'Guys and Dolls' for which lighting was designed by James Smith.

The event day was structured to highlight Robe's DL7 range. The fixture's 7 LED colour mixing system takes the quality of LED light to new levels of excellence.

The day was scheduled so guests first saw the lights in action in-situ. Running a series of selected excerpts from Guys and Dolls chosen to show how lighting worked with the cast, costumes and set, onstage. This was interspersed with a talk from LD James Smith who discussed how he lit the show, the challenges, solutions and what he liked about the lights he was using.

Next were some interactive technical demos where people could ask in-depth questions - Mig was very keen to stimulate discussion between attendees which included students and many from the world of professional lighting.

This moved on to a testimonial from the Royal Albert Hall which has DL7F wash moving lights installed together with a number of other Robe products ... complete with more audience participation and questions.

A networking lunch proved a great forum for chat, opinion exchange and debate ... after which things took a distinctly practical approach.

GSA lighting students presented a short lighting demo they had programmed to show off the kit after which the audience could come onstage and get close up, look inside the lights ... and ask plenty of leading questions!

Then there was a panel discussion about the use and application of LED light sources in theatre shows.

This had a specific focus on this latest generation of LED fixtures which are beginning to change traditional perceptions about LED lighting and notions of what it can bring to performance scenarios. The advantages of LED and tungsten were touched on by the panel which comprised students and professionals and the dialogue was opened up to the audience.

The event was a huge success attracting several colleges and universities, LDs, technicians and some lighting rental companies.

Says Mig, "It was great to collaborate with Robe, and the teams from both the UK and Czech Republic were invaluable in their support and contributions. I was keen to link the event to students and education, and as a teacher it's one of my missions to bridge the gap between education and industry, so it was extremely satisfying to see students socializing and interacting with such a range of industry professionals".

Meg Mawhinney was the student production LX and Mel Kirwin the student programmer, and they worked closely with Robe staff to manage the lighting rig.

Robe CEO Josef Valchar commented, "Events like this are a practical and effective way for potential future industry professionals to enhance their experience, knowledge and contacts ... and we are extremely happy to be involved in this and other initiatives for young people to gain insight and look at the industry as a viable career."

Photo Credit: GSA







