

30 Years of Rock 'n' Robe Celebrated at Prolight+Sound 2024

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Photo by Marek Holub.

Czech moving and LED lighting manufacturer Robe celebrated its 30th anniversary in fantastic style in Hall 12.1 at the 2024 Prolight+Sound expo in Frankfurt and looked forward to another 30 years at the forefront of lighting innovation.



Photo by Marko Polasek

The leading entertainment technology brand presented the finale of the 'Power of Imagination' show, a dazzling, hi-energy live performance that WOWed packed audiences 5 times a day and also staged a showstopping Rock 'n' Robe stand party on the evening of the second day, featuring "Queenie", arguably Europe's top Queen tribute band. Additionally, an array of outstanding new lighting products was launched, many utilised in the production spectacle ... AND ... on the eve of the expo, Robe announced the acquisition of popular Australian power distro and control brand LSC Control Systems!



Photo by Louise Stickland

LSC joined the other Robe businesses – sister architectural brand Anolis, console manufacturer Avolites and control solutions provider Artistic Licence – who altogether occupied a vast space, double that of previous years, which was already huge! It was a scenario that Robe only ever dreamed about when attending their first ever

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Prolight+Sound in 1994!



Photo by Marko Polasek

The booth was busy from the minute expo opened with people flowing in to see the first live show kick off and the VOG product presentations that preceded and succeeded the performances, as Robe kept the buzz and excitement pumped throughout the day.

Happy Hours at 4 p.m. on the first 3 days of the 4-day event proved popular as visitors enjoyed Czech hospitality and *joie de vivre*!



Photo by Marko Polasek

The two public 'dark demonstration' rooms on the booth were constantly busy throughout the four days with great enthusiasm all round for all the launched and new products, especially the iBOLT™, iFORTE® LTX and the T32 Cyc™ - now available in both standard and Slim versions.

Robe CEO and co-founder Josef Valchar commented, "We enjoyed a truly amazing Prolight, the stand was busy, we saw a diverse mix of people from many sectors and from all around the world including so many of our own distributors who rocked up for the party, all of which made it very special."



Photo by Louise Stickland

Josef underlined the enormous team effort involved in making the booth environment work smoothly and seamlessly on all levels - as a show space and a showcase.

"Everyone from our talented creative team who produced the show to our equally brilliant

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logistics, planning and administration teams that paid attention to every detail of the organising – from the products to the merch to the graphical elements, the refreshments and data gathering – both in advance and on site. A LOT of people worked many hours, and all their hard work ensured we had an exceptional booth for business and fun, and a highly memorable party that ran like clockwork.”

The Power of Imagination Finale

The third ‘Power of Imagination’ show incorporated many of Robe’s just launched and newest tech plus some established products in an adrenalized, tightly choreographed, highly entertaining show that illustrated their creative potential in a real-world context.

Challenges abounded for Robe’s creative and production team led by Nathan Wan and Andy Webb. Not only did this show have to be a variant of the previous two (PLASA 2023 in London and LDI 2023 in Las Vegas respectively), but it also needed to be individual and have that extra spectacle to mark the 30th anniversary landmark!

The overall booth design included an expanded stage area 14 metres wide by 5 deep with 8 metres of trim height to the trusses. The performance space was double decked allowing the four dancers, choreographed by Jaye Marshall, to use the full area, and there was also a 3-metre thrust at the front so they could get close to the audience.

The same four characters present for previous ‘Power of Imagination’ performances were joined by the finale’s *pièce de résistance*, Chinese Pole acrobat, Oskar Skrypko, whose edgy and extreme stunts switched up the WOW factor with crowds on seat edges every time!



Photo by Louise Stickland

His act was made possible by the additional height available, which allowed the Robe team to create multiple dramatic angles and even more theatrical moments.

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Booth-wide, a total of 575 lighting fixtures were used, adding up to 72 x DMX universes of control and 26 tonnes of kit flown in the roof on 60 points.

Nathan explained that the narrative was to present an epic show with lots of bold and potent statements that also featured intricacies and nuances, all communicated through detailed lighting and visuals.



Photo by Louise Stickland

Robe's just-launched iBOLTs were used as specials for the biggest moments, so super-bright that they cut across everything else, and the power factor was further boosted with a bunch of Robe's iFORTE LTXs, currently the brightest LED moving head on the market.

Eighteen iFORTE LTXs were rigged on the overhead trusses, utilised for potent back lighting, beams and effects, with another 8 on the stage upper deck, and a single one just above the centre screen as a top and back light for the big aerial moments as Oskar hand-standed, jumped and gyrated around the top of the pole with anti-gravitational attitude ... and the audience held their breath!



Photo by Louise Stickland

Printed side cloths were stretched across the four bays running down either side of the auditorium, each lit with 15 of the new T32 Cyc units that were down-lighting the artwork, illustrating their smooth and hotspot-free coverage even when in close proximity to the material.

Eight of the new iT12 Fresnel™ fixtures in the overhead rig were used for colouring the stage and dappling patterns and texturing the stand, while 16 high powered new T15 Fresnel™s flanked the central roof artwork above the stand – in a true Venetian parody. Four fixtures a side down the room added general washes across the space, and another two T15 Fresnels were on hand as downstage side kickers.

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Eighteen SpiderX®s were arranged across the bottom and higher levels of the stage, evenly spaced so all could run as a low-res pixel surface as well as being used for more conventional wash beam effects.



Photo by Louise Stickland

Neat and colourful rows of iTetra™ and Tetra2™ moving LED batten luminaires outlined both long sides of the sky cloth ceiling piece, with 360 rotational TetraX™s positioned prominently onstage, highlighting the action as it unfolded, providing set dressing for the side arches as well as intensive low level pixel effects and beam action.

The Tetras were especially noticeable during the 1990s segment of the soundtrack, which was compiled and produced by Andy and features some disco anthems of the decade in which Robe was launched.

PAINTE®s and iPAINTE®s were the compact and efficient workhorses of the rig, with 50 scattered all over the rig. The LTXs could kick in over these ... with the iBOLTs providing a third layer of intensity.

Two 3x8 matrixes of LEDBeam 150™s were rigged stage left and right in the lowest sections either side of the central staircase, very noticeable during some old skool back ACL looks, and they also acted as another low-res video canvas.

Onstage were several FOOTSIE1™ and FOOTSIE2™ footlight units, a mix of the standard and Slim versions, all in tuneable white, which are ideal for lighting faces, eliminating shadows and preserving sightlines.

Upstage at the back of the staircase, an elegant touch of retro – with HolyPATT™ and MolyPATT™ units – provided another level of set dressing, their distinctive shapes and tungsten glows all accentuating the steampunk aesthetic of the environment and acting as a scenic backdrop for that centre stage section which saw most of the live action.

Three RoboSpot™ systems were used for the show, each connected to an iFORTE LTX and these were operated by students from the German NRG (Next Robe Generation) educational support

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initiative.

There was one day less day than before to rig and finalise the programming on site in Hall 12.1, with a substantially larger rig than either of the two previous installations, and a show not seen fully in situ until about 8 hours before going live.



Photo by Marko Polasek

However, the creative team did extensive pre-viz in Capture, a system that integrates beautifully with the Avolites D9 215 console that was running the show in conjunction with four TNPs (Titan Net Processors) all running on the newly launched Titan v17.0 software.

With over 1000 lighting cues in the 9-minute extravaganza, including some highly effective and sparingly used G-Flames and other SFX, plus MDG atmosphere machines, the pace was full on!

It also helped that the entire production process was self-sufficient and created in house.

Nathan also created completely new and fresh video content from scratch for this version of "The Power of Imagination", which was programmed and run via an Avolites Q3 Pro server.

Rock 'n' Robe - Show Goes ON with Queenie Concert

Robe staged several celebratory events throughout the Prolight week to mark the 30-year achievement, in which time the brand founded by Josef Valchar & Ladislav Petrek has rapidly progressed from being a quality OEM manufacturer to a global innovator and market leader for entertainment and architectural lighting.



Photo by Louise Stickland

At Prolight, the activity peaked with a live concert on the evening of the second day stand headlined by Queenie, an amazing Queen tribute band from the Czech Republic. They thrilled the

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crowds with their incredibly lifelike replication of the legendary rock band's greatest hits complete with lead singer Michael Kluch looking and sounding every part a contemporary Freddie Mercury!

Queenie have been perfecting this art since 2006 and have sold out Prague's O2 arena several times, such is their popularity! At Prolight, they had an amazing lightshow thanks to all the Robe technology rigged around the stage, and the whole booth area was packed with people enjoying the party spirit and helping Robe celebrate 30 with style and flare and lots of great vibes.

Triple A

The unique synergies between all Robe brands - Avolites, Anolis and Artistic Licence - also ensured each Robe Business enjoyed a busy show and lots of interest in their new and existing product ranges.

Avolites soft-launched its much-anticipated D7 lighting console with a full launch planned for late summer. Two variants of this ground-breaking new console were on the stand, the D7-330 and the D7-215, both attracting plenty of interest, comments, and feedback to the Avo team.

Key product features include a cool new clam shell screen panel and locking mechanism. The console control surface follows the Diamond 9 design language, and the D7-215 fits into an off-the-shelf Peli-Air case weighing below the standard aircraft hold weight limit of 23kg, making it ultimately portable.



Photo by Louise Stickland

Avolites' Titan version 17 - the latest of its popular lighting control software - was released on the first day of the show and ran on all the consoles on the Avolites stand.

It brings a greatly enhanced user experience to further optimise performance, especially on larger shows and during longer programming sessions. A new version of the remote app - for both Android and IOS - is imminent, reports Paul Wong, MD of Avolites, who thought the show was "brilliant" for the brand generally, particularly in the context of now being part of the Robe Family.

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The growing crossover between architectural and entertainment disciplines plus the hybrid world of 'architainment' also made Prolight appropriate for Robe's sister brand **Anolis**, as well as showing how Robe's brands and technologies embrace the multidisciplinary lighting worlds of the built environment.

Anolis has recently launched two cool new lighting ranges, the Lyrae™ and Agame™ (both Latin names for different types of lizards - in case you are wondering - keeping fluent with the Anolis - chameleon - theme).

The Anolis Lyrae range makes exacting inground installations easier, starting with the Lyrae XS Fix MC, while the new Agame luminaire is an IP rated multifunctional solution crafted to accentuate windows, arches, and other specific shapes.

Anolis' product specialists from the Czech Republic, Germany, France, and the UK were on the stand for consultation, with the UK's Ashley Popple noting that they had a constant stream of visitors including several integrators.

People liked the tilt function on the Lyrae range and the fact that this can be assigned to a DMX channel or integrated into RDM to within half a degree. This functionality will also be accessible via an Anolis control App that is coming soon.

The new iProMotion product also received some attention in the Anolis section. This is an IP65-rated moving head effects and video projector that combines dynamic content and movement, making it unique, highly practical, and usable.

Artistic Licence revealed new branding, logo and a range of ingenious new control solution products including the railSplit RDM a low-cost high specification DMX512/RDM splitter and fixer designed for permanent installations. They also benefitted from the constant footfall of being part of the Robe 'village' which was busy throughout the show.

Unity with LSC - New Kidz on The Block

On the eve of Prolight 2024, Robe announced the acquisition of Australian power distribution (PD) and control specialist manufacturer, LSC Control Systems, a move that dovetails perfectly with other current Robe businesses following the purchase of Avolites in September last year.

Josef stated that they were "delighted this exciting opportunity arose and we look forward to a

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long and positive collaboration”.

It will allow Robe to offer the best and most competitive lighting and control turnkey solutions to customers and their clients and projects across all sectors, and as well as a logical diversification, it also gives Robe a manufacturing base in Australia in addition to its facilities in central Europe and the UK.

LSC showed some of its most popular PD products on their section of the Robe stand – the UNITY prewired cabinet enclosures (96 circuit or 48 circuit) offering high-performance dimming and power switching for video, audio, and lighting control, and their UNITOUR premium portable power solution for video, audio and lighting for the events, touring, film, and TV sectors.

There was huge interest in the products and the news which was generally well received by the industry. Additionally, LSC also had their own separate stand space at the expo.

Several meeting areas were designed into the Robe booth to accommodate the constant hubbub of business activity present throughout the four days ... and outside Hall 12, the Robe Showtruck was parked up, also operational as a meeting space and a demo area for specific products ... ahead of its hectic summer European festival schedule.

Pavel Nemeč, Robe’s international marketing manager echoed the role of the extended team and many individuals who “combined forces, talents, creativity, and inspiration to make Prolight 2024 such a success and something really unforgettable for the company and all members of the Robe Family!”

Photos by Marek Holub, Marko Polasek & Louise Stickland - please see filenames.