Artscape Theatre invests in the future with Robert Juliat LED followspots from DWR Distribution

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(Above: Personnel photo Left to right): Shayna Gleave (Production manager), Roy Hoffman (Artscape Lighting Technician), Sidney Savage (Artscape Lighting Technician), Johnny Scholtz (DWR), Patrick Manicom (DWR), Monique Bowes (Artscape Stage Manager), Faheem Bardien (Artscape Head of Lighting), Liam Cooksen (Artscape Head of Sound).

Cape Town, South Africa's long-established, premiere theatre venue, Artscape Theatre, has invested in four Robert Juliat Arthur 800W LED followspots and three Robert Juliat Oz 600W LED followspots, supplied by Robert Juliat's exclusive distributor for South Africa, DWR Distribution.

The decision to invest in Robert Juliat was made jointly by Johnny Scholtz of DWR's Cape Town branch, working in close conjunction with Artscape Theatre's Head of Lighting, Faheem Bardien.

"Artscape's in-house technical facilities are designed to cater to a diverse range of artistic genres, including opera, ballet, drama, contemporary dance, musical theatre, corporate seminars, and pop or rock shows," explains Bardien, "all of which must be carefully considered when procuring lighting fixtures and other technical support systems.

"It's paramount that Artscape's lighting staff has a comprehensive understanding to support the local and international lighting designers who visit our facility, and our in-house lighting equipment must adhere to international standards. We are therefore committed to remaining at the forefront of technological advancements to ensure that our clients have access to the latest equipment to meet their production requirements."

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The installation of RJ Arthur and Oz followspots was part of a wider transition of the venue’s lighting inventory from tungsten to LED lighting which saw Artscape’s existing HMI followspots updated to the new Robert Juliat LED fixtures.

“Throughout this replacement process, initiated in 2016, we observed that our RJ Victor 1800W and Lucy 1200W HMI followspots lacked sufficient power against the newer LED lighting fixtures. In response to this, we carried out in-depth research which considered the specific requirements of our production spaces, and identified the RJ Arthur 800W LED and RJ Oz 600W LED followspots as the most suitable LED lighting solutions to replace these units with.”

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The four Arthur followspots were strategically positioned on the Opera stage, considering factors such as the 40m distance to the stage, the angle of the followspots' booth, and the physical dimensions of the auditorium which has a 1,500-seat capacity. This meticulous approach was also applied when selecting the three Oz units for the Theatre stage with its 540-seat capacity and throw distances of 30m-40m.

"The RJ LED units consistently ranked at the top of our list, instilling us with an unwavering confidence in their ability to meet the expectations of all our clients," confirms Bardien. "The 6000K colour temperature perfectly complemented the rest of our lighting fixtures and the superb optics were a factor that we were unwilling to compromise on. Brightness was crucial, as 90% of our lighting units operate at 6000K on open white. And, although our follow spots are unlikely to be frequently relocated, the robust build provides us with the assurance that the followspots will endure the anticipated lifespan."

Artscape Theatre's busy production programme has already seen Arthur and Oz hard at work this season, on productions that include Pieter Toerien's "My Fair Lady," Emo Adam's "Father Love," Showtime's "Ndlovu Youth Choir," Showtime's "Dear Evan Hansen," and Cape Town City Ballet's "Giselle" garnering some very positive feedback from the lighting designers and followspot operators along the way.

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Lighting designer, Denis Hutchinson, was pleasantly surprised by their brightness and optics: “I had to instruct the spot operators to reduce the intensities to 20% lower than what we’d usually find acceptable for that range,” he says. The operators meanwhile observed that the Arthur and Oz were “well-balanced, the movement is smooth, and the fading mechanism is smooth and accurate.” It’s as important to have happy technicians as well as happy designers!

Bardien was full of praise for the service Artscape has received from the team at DWR. “Artscape Theatre Centre operates 365 days of the year, with DWR providing 24/7/365 after-sales service,” he comments. “DWR staff has consistently adhered to this commitment, recognising the value of prioritising client-centredness as the central focus. This level of dedication is invaluable, providing

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us with the assurance of having the ultimate after-sales support team available on standby.”

For more information on Robert Juliat LED followspots and its full range of lighting solutions, visit www.robertjuliat.com

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