

Blond shine at Clash of the Choirs



Blond Productions was honoured, for the third consecutive year, to supply the full technical for the televised competition Clash of the Choirs held at Global Access Studios in Fox Street, Johannesburg. Mauritz Neethling from Blond was responsible for the lighting design, having control on a Grand MA 2 light and an impressive Robe lighting rig at his disposal. **Photos: Duncan Riley**

Filmed for Mzansi Channel on DSTV, the competition saw seven celebrity choirmasters assemble amateur singers who went head to head at the Clash of the Choirs SA.



Heinrich Ströh and Mauritz Neethling from Blond



The competition kicked off at the end of 2015, with the finales held in April 2016. This meant the entire rig – the set designed and created by Dream Sets – had to come down and be put up again. The set was larger than before and with the studio on the 6th floor, it was a huge relief to have a lift in the building and a team of enthusiastic crew on site!



“Dream Sets cleverly created an arena type set which really enhanced the visibility of the choir,” said Mauritz Neethling. “The competition had used the same set for Two years, and the only elements reused was the Horse Shoe shape, a steel construction with silk covering which was previously hung over the main stage area, and this year was positioned over the judges table, creating great reversal shots and depth.”

While the show incorporated generics such as 2Ks, 1ks and Source-Fours, the Robe kit comprised of: 24 x Robin CycFX4, 36 x Robin 100 LEDBeam, 24 x Robin 300 LEDWash, 12 x Mini Pointes, 12 x Robe 700E ATSpot, 12 x Robin 600 Beams, 12 x Robin MMX Spots. The show also included 48 Bright Cue LED Wash. Programming was on a GrandMA 2 light.



While Mauritz was responsible for the Lighting Design, he worked closely with colleague Heinrich Ströh who was operator and system technician and who took over as lighting director once the show was on route. MA was used to add AV and graphic content onto the LED Walls via MA VPU Media Server. “The MA allowed us to do a lot of programming in a short period of time,” said Mauritz.

With each choir comprising of 20 individuals on stage at a single time, the greatest challenge was to create mood or ambience. The set was designed to have colour in the background and from the sides, and a key focus was to ensure visibility of choir.





Mauritz enjoyed the Mini Pointes that punched through the open white, while the MMX and Robe 700 EATs were used to create patterns and texture over the stairs on stage.

“Our main difficulty was the height of the grid,” he explains. “It’s an 8m high gantry and the set was about 5m high, some areas as high 7m.” As a result, not all fixtures could be hung off the grid and he relied on beams on the stage to light up from bottom to top to create a feeling of elongation.



“I also like playing the beams into the JIB position, it makes for nice revealing shots on camera,” said Mauritz.

The show looked fantastic on television. The season ended with Team JR from Mpumalanga, initially seen as the underdogs of the competition, winning the coveted title.

