

Clay Paky illuminates Milan's Piccolo Teatro

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Photo credits: Davide Barbetta

Milan, Italy – the Piccolo Teatro in Milan was Italy's first permanent theatre and was declared a theatre of major European importance by Ministerial Decree in 1991. It was founded in the immediate post-war period by Paolo Grassi, Giorgio Strehler, Mario Apollonio, Virgilio Tosi and Nina Vinchi.

The "Piccolo" consists at present of three venues: the Sala Grassi, the 19th-century Teatro Fossati, which reopened in 1986 under the name Teatro Studio Melato, and the Teatro Strehler.

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The Teatro Studio Melato started life as an experimental theatre, a *training ground* for the young students from the Piccolo Theatre School, and home to the international master classes which are held there annually. Its circular design is greatly appreciated by directors from all over the world for the special relationship it allows actors to establish with their audience. The theatre was recently equipped with Clay Paky Alpha Profile 800s for the show “E io dico no: ogni notte ha un'alba” (And I say ‘no, every night has a dawn’).

The lighting designer and lighting department manager **Claudio De Pace** explained how he made his choice: *“I had recently used Clay Paky 700s in some shows staged outside our theatre, especially in conjunction with the Milan Furniture Fair for a production at the Teatro dell’Arte. I was very satisfied with their reliability and luminous efficiency. When it came to equipping the Teatro Piccolo with a new set of lights, I decided to do several tests on site with other brands, but in the end I opted for Alpha Profile 800s. First, Clay Paky is an Italian company known worldwide for the excellence of its products. Second, I chose them for their reliability and small size. What they can do in such a compact case is truly remarkable.”*

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De Pace stressed that loads on the battens and handling limitations have to be taken into serious consideration in the Teatro Studio: *“thanks to their lightweight, we were able to move the Profiles around and install them in the theatre with considerable ease. Each light could be carried by a single person. Our concern was that we would have to do without the performance of large lights, but we soon realized there was no risk of this: the Profile’s lamp is extremely bright, and the light is equipped with all the effects and features of a 1200-1500 watt light, if not more.”*

The final rig includes **14 Alpha Profile 800s**. For the show ‘E io dico no: ogni notte ha un’alba’, they have been arranged on the catwalks and are used as back-lighting and semi-front-lighting. One is placed in the middle of the third tier and four others are used as side lights.



This show stands out for being completely devoid of scenery; everything is done exclusively with lights. The Alpha Profile 800s are used both as stage effects lighting and as accent lighting. In two

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or three moments during the show, De Pace uses them *“on the faces of the leading players with the CTO filter. Lastly, I also use them as follow-spots, after saving the actors' movements in the memory”*.

The show was written by Nando Dalla Chiesa and Marco Rampoldi, and is the result of extensive research by a group of students and researchers from the Sociology of Crime course organized by the University of Milan under Dalla Chiesa's guidance. The project goes beyond the educational dimension and involves these young researchers in deep and continuous investigation into the phenomenon of organized crime.

Once the performances of the show are over, all the equipment will be dismantled, and the lights will be made available for future shows, including those in other Piccolo Teatro venues in Milan.