

## Dramatic Role for Robe at Habima National Theatre Israel



Since 1938, the Habima Theatre has officially been considered the national theatre of Israel. Among the first Hebrew language theatres, it is located in Habima Square, central Tel Aviv in an impressive building reopened in 2012 after four years of renovations, with architect Ram Karmi harmoniously integrating historic and modern in a complete redesign of the old building. The enormous project included the total rebuilding of Habima's four auditoriums – each of which is a different size and colour. **Photos courtesy Louise Stickland.**

This was accompanied by a complete technical upgrade, at which point Habima Head Lighting Designer, Meir Alon, and Technical Manager for Lighting, Eitan Meima, decided the time was right for a new moving light system.

They chose Robe.

The first purchase was Robe's ROBIN MMX Spots. "These were gaining a great reputation at the time and we had several good references," explains Meir. They visited PLASA, saw the fixtures in action and decided that "They fitted the theatre's needs exactly".

At the same time they also purchased four ColorSpot 1200E AT profiles, which were delivered by Robe's Israeli distributor, Danor Theatre and Studio Systems.

Once they started using the Robe's in their largest space – the 930 capacity Rovina auditorium – more fixtures were purchased, and the count is currently at 14 x MMX Spots and 18 x Robe ROBIN LEDWash 600s as well as the ColorSpot 1200E ATs. They also have a Robe DigitalSpot 3000DT.

Habima is a busy and buzzing environment. Across all its spaces, up to six shows a day can be staged, and they work 365 days a year ... so any lights, which are used extensively, need to be robust and have some serious longevity!

They were attracted to the brightness, small size and light weight of the Robe fixtures. "It was a careful and very much considered choice" says Meir, "These fixtures are powerful and offer all the parameters we need for our shows".



L-R Technician Gidi Baliti; Eitan Memia, Technical Manager for Lighting; Meir Alon Head Lighting Designer; Erez Hadar from Robe's Israeli distributor Danor and technician Loz Zagin

Meir will typically design lighting for 90% of Habima's shows. Having the MMX Spots and LEDWash 600s among his creative toolbox gives, "Fabulous gobos for texturing sets, surfaces and actors and fixtures that allow me to use a full range of authentic colour temperature 'halogen whites' ... plus the huge colour range, all combined with an excellent quality of light".

The light weight is important as many of their house bars have 300 Kg weight limits – so less actual fixtures are needed but they can do a good deal more work, and highly effectively.

As well as producing their own works running in repertoire in Tel Aviv, numerous Habima productions – noted for being some of the finest in Israel – subsequently tour.

Many shows will also tour internationally and in the summer, Habima offers a full programme of outdoor performances in addition to those staged in the building.

They will also host concerts and musical projects featuring visiting artists and productions who will bring in their own design and technical teams, and with the Robe's now available, most needs can be met without hiring-in additional lighting kit.

When the provincial theatres hosting Habima shows don't have the Robe units that are now often on the lighting spec, an arrangement is in place with Danor Rental to supply additional Robes. Once a show is designed with Robe, then it's difficult to swap out or substitute for something else explains Meir.

The low power consumption of the MMX Spots and the LEDWashes is a great asset for their outdoor productions. "They are also very easy to operate," states Meir. The theatre has a series of Compulite consoles – and he concludes saying that the service and support from Danor on both after-sales and rental projects is "Excellent".

Robe's BMFL Spot has already been a major success in Israel within three months of its launch and having seen these lights in action, the Habima lighting department – currently 11 full time – are also very impressed ... so watch this space!