

FNB Starlight Pop Opera

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Enchanting audiences year after year, the FNB Starlight Pop Opera was hosted at the Chris Saunders Park, Umhlanga in KwaZulu Natal on 6 and 7 August. Headliner Patrizio Buanne, the Neapolitan-Austrian baritone singer, songwriter and producer, along with local South African artists such as Arno Carstens, were accompanied by the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra.

The event is a gift from First National Bank to their top 1 500 clients where all service providers rise to the occasion to provide an extraordinary evening. For the fifth consecutive year, EPH Production were proud to supply the full technical while lighting designer Johan Ferreira from BF Production Services created tender moments on a grandMA2 light. The lighting rig consisted of 10 x Robe Pointe, 18 x Robin 600 LEDWash, 12 x Robin 1000 LEDBeam, 10 x Robin 100 LEDBeam, 24 Clay Paky Sharpy and 6 MAC 401 Dual LED wash.



“As a lighting designer this show is one of my annual highlights. It’s dynamic ranging from opera to full on rock and is a world class event enjoyed by everyone involved,” said Johan. “The design starts long in advance with the final signed off as early as March. Leon Pheiffer from EPH has a close relationship with the client and after many discussions provides me with a brief. We are always trying to move the event to the next level and my goal is to achieve a clean design, pleasing to both the client and audience.”

While the client contributes with ideas, Johan is given creative freedom. “What I really enjoy is doing the full design from set to AV screen layout and lighting. This gives me the opportunity to ensure that every aspect of the design works in perfect unison.”

Johan valued every fixture on the rig. “I used the 12 x Robin 1000 LEDBeams as FOH and for backlight. Because of the massive zoom and incredible output of these fixtures I know that I am well covered. For backlight I used them as a full back wash and also as beams on some of the items. Versatility in any fixture is very important and the Robin 1000 LEDBeam delivers.”



The Robin 600 LEDWash fixtures were dotted on the stage trusses for on-stage wash. "I always appreciate the colour and output on the Robin 600 LEDWash, again making it one of the most versatile washes on the market. Having the ability to go from a full stage wash to a tight special or saturated colour to soft pastels will make any LD very happy."

The Pointes and Sharpy fixtures were used as beam and effects lighting on the stage with some of the Sharpy units positioned on speaker towers. "Both units are multipurpose, fast and bright ensuring the perfect emotion in any song. The Robin 100 LEDBeam were used from the sides. I always love this little fixture, it is small enough to fit anywhere in the rig and powerful enough to create eye pleasing vivid beams."



Johan is a passionate MA user. “For me MA Lighting is the best lighting control out there. I love every aspect of the console as it is customizable to any LD and to any environment. MA really helps designers to achieve their vision and make it reality. If you can dream it, you can achieve it with grandMA.”

The classical dome structure which forms the stage is beautiful and has become synonymous with the FNB Starlight Pop Opera. The only hurdle is that rigging is not always easy and rigging points are limited. “Fortunately we have worked with this structure for a number of years and know how to overcome the challenges,” said Johan.

Johan adds that working with Leon Pheiffer and the entire EPH team was fantastic. “Every member took care to ensure that my design was executed in time and with perfection,” he explains. “We did not have a lot of time to get the entire rig up and running but thanks to the motivated crew we were show ready well before the first full rehearsal with the orchestra and international artists.”



For Leon Pheiffer this is one of his favourite events too, and he never stops enjoying the privilege of working with talented artists and enhancing their natural talent with technical.

The show's programme featured the enormously talented KZN Philharmonic Orchestra, Amira Willighagen (the Dutch child classical crossover singer who won the sixth season of Holland's Got Talent in 2013 at the age of nine), Clermont Community Choir, Sterling EQ (an all-woman classical group from South Africa), Corlea, Arno Carstens, Thandiswa Mazwai (multi-award winning musician and lead vocalist and songwriter), the Playhouse Dance Company, Dance Duo, Bongani Tembe and Linda Bukhosini.