

Gearhouse Splitbeam chose Tetra2 for We Will Rock You

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Robe Tetras supplied by Gearhouse Splitbeam have made their debut on Ben Elton's rock musical, *We Will Rock You* which opened at the Teatro at Montecasino, Johannesburg in March, moves to the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town in May 2023 and visits a few other countries as part of the world tour. Gearhouse Splitbeam has supplied all technical elements, lighting, rigging, AV (projection and LED) as well as the main PA system.



The show features 24 of Queen's greatest hits and tells the story of a group of bohemians attempting to Break Free from a globalized future.

Gearhouse Splitbeam has played an instrumental role in the entire production right from the start, with the show kicking off in Singapore and the Philippines, to its current full houses in South Africa and then ending in Israel. The company's Managing Director, Alistair Kilbee, is also the Tour Technical Director who is heavily involved with the crewing for the full tour as well as the local crew in South Africa.

"The greatest challenge for this show has been the 'new' style of touring where the production has a full physical set, props and costumes but pick up technical elements including lighting, audio, AV and rigging locally in each country," explains Alistair Kilbee. "This creates major equipment challenges in each and every set-up. So being back in South Africa where we can have one rig for both Johannesburg and Cape Town from Gearhouse Splitbeam makes the life of the touring crew a lot easier."



An exciting new addition to the rig in South Africa includes 16 Robe Tetra2 units, supplied by DWR Distribution. The Tetra2 is a linear bar built on the Spider and Tarrantula technology. Generating an ultra-tight 4° beam from each of the 18 pixels, they combine to produce a bright, defined “sheet” of light, desired by lighting designers. Seamless curtains of light can be constructed using several fixtures as the detailed design allows any combination of TETRA1™ and TETRA2™ to be placed end to end on stage or truss, whilst maintaining equal spacing between pixels. With the addition of two exclusive Robe patented MCFE™ – Multi-Coloured Flower Effects, the Tetra2 sets itself apart by projecting charismatic in-air animations.



Alistair's first introduction to the Tetra2s was at the Robe Theatre Workshop, held across South Africa in 2022. It was the single product that caught his eye. "We had been planning on buying the Tetra2s for a while now, and when *We Will Rock You* came along at just the right time, we made the purchase," he says.



The Tetra2 fixtures are rigged on three lighting bars in a straight line with seven units on LX2, five units on LX4 and three units on LX6, to give the designer an even wash across the stage.

"The broad blades of light generated by LED battens remind me of the old digital light curtains (DLC), which I loved and we used on the original *We Will Rock You* about fifteen years ago," Alistair reminisces. "Luckily the Tetra2 is way more advanced than the DLC which makes them a joy to work with. The tilt movement sets them apart from the other LED battens in our stock holding and gives you so much more fixability when designing your show. As always the services we received from DWR was nothing short of amazing and they managed to deliver the units in a very short lead time, which in this Post-Covid world is not easy. Duncan Riley and Kevin Stannett have always been there when Splitbeam needs anything and are fast to react, so just a great team to deal with."



DWR's Kevin Stannett was in the audience when *We Will Rock You* kicked off in Johannesburg. He adds, "I have been working with Alistair in some way or form since 1996, and it's always good. It is wonderful to see Gearhouse Splitbeam back on the map with big shows and buying new gear. There are numerous Tetras in the country and it's a nice little unit that can work as a wash light, give you the curtain effect, added flower effect and gives full pixel control. They worked really well on the production. The Tetra2 was actually a swap out for an unavailable fixture on the technical rider for this show, and apparently, the international programmer was very happy and impressed with the fixture."

Ends Duncan Riley, "I'm very happy for Gearhouse Splitbeam. "It's wonderful to see theatre on the road again! Thank you for your support."