

Horizon 2020 Friday Night Party Rocked with Robe

Posted on April 3, 2020



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February was only 4 weeks ago but it now seems like ‘another age’ as the Coronavirus pandemic has sent most of the world into lockdown, self-isolation and social distancing as we all strive to flatten the curve. Robe’s news team was in Australia during that month, reporting on many cool and interesting projects including this one ...

Canberra, Australia-based technical production and event specialist and rental company Elite Event Technology ensured that Horizon 2020 – the Friday Night Party event that was part of the *Australian National University Students’ Association (ANUSA)’s annual Orientation (freshers) Week* activities – had spectacular lighting and sound for their main stage, including an all-Robe moving light rig!

Staged at the Fellows Oval sports ground on the University of Canberra campus in ACT, around 3000 students enjoyed great weather and a superlative line-up of young emerging talent from some of Australia’s best ‘ones-to-watch’ music stars including Cub Sport, HOLY HOLY, Wafia, Graace, Remi, Adrian Eagle and Hayley Mary.

Elite also provided a fabulous sounding d&b PA system for the event. The company supplies lighting, sound and AV production for numerous other functions at the University and were delighted to help ensure that this year’s Friday Night Party rocked!

The lighting rig was based around a festival lighting spec created by headliner Club Sport’s LD Jake Ploss.

Elite’s owner and house FOH sound engineer for the night Darren Russell took this as a starting

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point and – in consultation with Jake – modified elements to make it practical for the event and to fit the 14-metre-wide truck stage.

The stage offered 6.5 metres of headroom to its structural gantry, below which Elite flew their four production trusses.

Elite's Blake Watkin operated lighting for all the other bands apart from Club Sport and the challenge was in lighting each artist differently to match their performance and musical style. With the Robes on the rig, there was plenty of versatility and dynamics!

Over 60 per cent played in daylight which was another consideration and a factor in the choice of BMFLs ... for their intensity and multiple features. "They are the only light that can cut through and register in any colours during daylight," states Blake, "you simply can't beat BMFLs for this!"

Robe's BMFL WashBeam has been his all-time favourite moving light fixture for some time.



As well as servicing the university's and other music events, Elite lights numerous corporate events in and around ACT and further afield in Australia – from car shows to product launches, gala dinners to awards show.

Blake has found that a combination of the demand for 'big' spot and wash looks plus the framing system and effects features make BMFL WashBeam ideal for virtually all their work – and the fixtures are out working constantly.

For the Friday Night Party, the six BMFL WashBeams were on the most downstage truss and used

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for some excellent subtle key lighting and specials. They worked perfectly, the framing allowing precise and neat highlighting with minimal spill.

Sixteen BMFL Spots were distributed around the other trusses together with 16 of the 24 x Pointes, with the balance of Pointes on the floor. These other eight Pointes were part of Club Sport's floor package and were wheeled onto stage on mobile tank trap bases together with some strobes.

All the lights were controlled through the grandMA2 light house console.

The stage was positioned and set up the day before the event – on the tarmacked end of the playing fields – so there was enough time to rig lighting and sound and for Blake to do some pre-programming the night before, getting some basic building blocks into the desk.

He was not familiar with most of the bands and artists so a certain amount of improvisation was needed, a goal he achieved with the art of nimble and impressive 'busking' ... and you would never know that he didn't work regularly with all of them!

With no video elements ... all the visuality of the performances was down to the lighting.

The biggest challenge for Friday Night Party's lighting was keeping enough smoke and haze in the stage area (which was open on both sides) to enhance beams and effects. Even with multiple hazers, smazers and fans deployed ... and had a little help from the wind ... this mission still had its erratic moments!

Elite Event Technology also provided all the stage risers and blackline for the concert, plus crowd barriers. Darren and the team commissioned and ordered the generators and designed and supplied site-wide power distro infrastructure covering the stage and production plus the entire Fellows Oval field for the concessions.

Photos: Louise Stickland