

London's National Theatre invests in Robert Juliat



RJ Dalis are used in architectural fashion by LD Bradley King on Anaïs Mitchell's musical Hadestown which plays in the Olivier Theatre until the end of January. © Helen Maybanks

The National Theatre, situated on London's South Bank, has been a revered national institution for over fifty years. Its three theatres, the 1110-seat Olivier, the 890-seat Lyttelton and the 400-seat Dorfman, play host to a wide range of theatre performances from bold new work to re-imagined modern classics.

The NT technical department have the responsibility to provide the best quality equipment in order to maintain the highest standards for all productions.

Robert Juliat is therefore very proud that the lighting department has invested in yet more Robert Juliat lighting equipment over the last 12 months to add to its already large inventory of RJ fixtures.



© Helen Maybanks

"We have over 300 Robert Juliat 600 Series 1kW and 700 Series 2.5kW profile fixtures, mostly used as generic lighting in the Olivier and Lyttelton theatres where they are rigged on the front of house bridges," says lighting resources manager, Paul Hornsby. "The latter are especially suitable for the long throws in the Olivier and Lyttelton where they give that punchy 2.5k look that everyone wants

and which has yet to be achieved by any LED equivalent.”

2018 saw Hornsby’s department make a sizeable investment in 54 award-winning Dalis 860 300W LED cyclorama battens. “Our aim was to be able to light a full wrap-around cyclorama in the Olivier, which we are able to do beautifully using 48 Dalis units (24 each on top and bottom). The cyclorama for *Common*, for example, measures 8m high by 21.5m wide – so you can see the size of the space they have to cover!

“We chose Dalis because we were looking for an LED solution to replace our old tungsten cyclorama lights. We compared various products and felt that in terms of size, coverage and output, Dalis was the best on the market.

“Dalis also has the advantage that it feels and looks like a traditional cyc batten. They are compact and bright so give us the throw we need for the venue, but can also be put much closer to the cyclorama cloth than other units, because they require much less space. It is a very versatile unit.”

This was not the first time Dalis 860 has appeared on stage at the National Theatre. Summer 2017 saw award-winning lighting designer, Paule Constable, employ a whole top run of Dalis 860 to great effect on the production of DC Moore’s *Common*.

“It’s great to have a very nice, flexible colour-change solution with very minimal power consumption,” confirms Hornsby. “On full output, using four coloured cells, we use only 10% of the energy that our old 500W and 1kW tungsten cyclight fixtures used, not to mention a considerable saving in gel – some shades of blue would only last for one performance! We’ve never had any complaints about the colour choices or absence of a tungsten source either – designers can find all the colours they need and the coverage is extremely nice and even.”

The Dalis fixtures are currently in use on productions in both the Lyttelton and the Olivier theatres. The Lyttelton sees lighting designer Jon Clark employing 20 units, in two rows of ten, for David Hare’s production, *I’m Not Running*, not as cyclorama lighting but for flood coverage on the 10m back wall of the set.

“Jon wanted an even cover at a low light level, and to be able to mix the colour to suit the set designer’s wishes,” says Lyttelton Lighting Supervisor, Laurie Clayton. “He was able to achieve this perfectly with the Dalis units, which he had previously used on the production of *Absolute Hell* to light up the structure of the Lyttelton stage.”

Prior to its Broadway run, Anaïs Mitchell’s musical *Hadestown*, is now playing in repertoire at the Olivier where LD Bradley King is using 12 Dalis 860 fixtures in an architectural fashion to uplight the back wall of the set in different colours. “The Dalis proved to be very bright and work very well, even though they are very close to the wall of the set,” confirms Hornsby.



RJ Dalis illuminate the backwall for David Hare's production of *I'm Not Running* in the Lyttelton Theatre © Neill Pollard, Lyttelton Lighting

It is not just the visiting lighting designers who have been happy with the RJ Dalis fixtures. "All of our technicians here love Dalis," says Hornsby, "which are very robust with a good build- quality and have so far been problem free."

Joining Dalis in the Olivier are three new RJ Cyrano 2.5kW HMI followspots which are now permanent fixtures in the followspot box at the back of the auditorium. "We needed to replace our old followspots with something good, reliable and bright that could cover big musical productions, like *Follies*, in the Olivier," says Hornsby. "We chose Robert Juliat because they make excellent followspots. They are well known, which means the operators know how to use them, and they are easily available to hire should we need any more."



The National Theatre lighting team with their new Robert Juliat Dalis and Cin'k fixtures. Left to right: Paul Hornsby, Lighting Resources Manager, Matt Drury, Head of Lighting and Laurie Clayton, Lyttelton Lighting Supervisor. © Julie Harper

Last but not least, the National Theatre also purchased sixteen new RJ Cin'k 350LF 5kW tungsten Fresnels for the Lyttelton Theatre's basic rig where they will operate in overhead positions. "There is still no LED equivalent to a tungsten 5kW fixture and the 5kW tungsten Cin'k is in great demand by lighting designers because our venues are so big," says Hornsby, "so we are reliant on their bright sources."

The Cin'k 350LF Fresnels supplement 16 RJ Cin'k 325LF already owned by the National Theatre in the resources hire stock, alongside 30 RJ Lutin 306 1kW units. "The little Lutins are used a lot in our new Dorfman Theatre, hired from the resources stock to supplement the basic rig," concludes Hornsby. "They are ideal for fitting into the smaller space of the Dorfman."

I'm Not Running and *Hadestown* run at the Lyttelton and Olivier theatres respectively until the end of January 2019.

More information on Robert Juliat's full portfolio of LED, tungsten and discharge lighting fixtures can be found at www.robertjuliat.com

About Robert Juliat:

Robert Juliat was founded in 1919 and is still a 100% family-owned company today. The company is the renowned manufacturer of top quality lighting fixtures based around superb optics and ergonomic design. All Robert Juliat luminaires are designed and built in France.

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre's mission is to make world class theatre that's entertaining, challenging and inspiring – and to make it for everyone. It aims to reach the widest possible audience and to be as inclusive, diverse and national as possible with a broad range of productions that play in London, on tour around the UK, on Broadway and across the globe. The National Theatre's extensive UK-wide learning and participation programme supports young people's creative education through performance and writing programmes like Connections, New Views and Let's Play. Its major new initiative Public Acts creates extraordinary acts of theatre and community; the first Public Acts production was 2018's *Pericles*. The National Theatre extends its reach through digital programmes including NT Live, which broadcasts some of the best of British theatre to over 2,500 venues in 65 countries, and the free streaming service On Demand In Schools, used by nearly 60% of UK state secondary schools. The National Theatre invests in the future of theatre by developing talent, creating bold new work and building audiences, partnering with a range of UK theatres and theatre companies.