

Massive Vari-Lite purchase for Gearhouse

Posted on July 1, 2010

01 July 2010

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DWR's Duncan Riley with Alistair Kilbee & Nassim Bismilla from Gearhouse Splitbeam *Courtesy Louise Stickland*

Philips Vari-Lite's South African distributor, DWR Distribution has recently delivered 120 brand-new Vari-Lite fixtures to Gearhouse Splitbeam, the specialist theatre lighting division of the Gearhouse South Africa Group of Companies.

The deal was co-ordinated by Gearhouse Splitbeam's Alistair Kilbee and DWR's Duncan Riley and is the largest sale of Vari-Lites yet to date in South Africa, and also the first purchase of the premium brand by Gearhouse.

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The units were delivered to Gearhouse Splitbeam's Johannesburg office. Some will be immediately deployed on the Closing Ceremony of the 2010 Soccer World Cup taking place at Soccer City stadium, Soweto, on 11th July (LD Hugh Turner), and a substantial quantity will go straight onto the upcoming Asian tour of High School Musical (LD Declan Randall) for which Splitbeam is supplying the full lighting production.

The fixtures supplied by Johannesburg-based DWR are 24 VL3500 Spots, 24 x VL3500 Washes, 24 x VL2500 Spots, 24 x 2500 Washes and 24 VLXs.

Says Kilbee, "We are driven by our clients' requests. For major theatre productions Vari-Lite has always been the fixture of choice so with the growing volume of this type of show now visiting South Africa, it was essential to have a good stock to offer visiting productions."

In addition to being used on assorted Gearhouse Splitbeam projects, the Vari-Lites will also be available as a rental item. The legendary status of the Vari-Lite brand is expected to bring a healthy flurry of cross-rental business from other hire companies for theatre, corporate and rock 'n' roll shows.

Kilbee adds, "Vari-Lite was the first moving light and is still considered by many to be the best. Ever since I started in the industry it's been THE most prestigious moving light to own!"

Duncan Riley says, "I have known Alistair for a long time, and he has always said that his company would one day own Vari-Lites. The industry is very relationship driven in South Africa, and so when this opportunity arose to complete the deal and supply the lights it meant a huge amount to be able to help his vision now become a reality".