

MGG dazzle at SAPOA Annual Convention



MGG were called upon to supply the full technical for the SAPOA Annual Convention, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary at the Sandton Convention Centre's Pavilion Venue in Johannesburg. For this top-notch occasion, MGG asked lighting designer Francois van der Merwe from Wizardry Group to design both the conference and banquet styled show.



The South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) is the representative body and official voice of the commercial and industrial property industry in South Africa. As they wanted something extraordinary for their golden celebration, MGG incorporated the largest VuePix configuration they had ever built comprising of some 200 x Q3 3.91mm panels. The show also included 8 x Robe BML Blades, a range of Robins, Clay Paky Sharpys and Mythos and control on a grandMA2 full size.



Conference

The event kicked off in the conference room where a 28m x 4.5m VuePix L6 Series 6.67ml Blend screen was erected. “I designed this site but Rianda van Burick from MGG ran the actual show on a grandMA2 light,” said Francois. Francois used 17 Robin 600 LEDWash for an effective backlight, 12 Robe ColorSpot 700s, 11 Clay Paky Alpha Spots for front light, 16 Clay Paky Sharpys and 12 Philips SL Nitro 510C for the house lights. “The Sharpys were awesome, I think I got quite a bit out of them, they’re fast with a nice aerial beam effect and that’s what I used them for.”



Show

For the actual show, a themed event took the audience through a journey starting off in the 1960s with four singers presenting a medley for each decade. Francois adapted the lighting accordingly, from a touch of flair creating mood to a lively rock and roll look. “The big part of this show was that the client wanted us to focus on the dance floor, which is usually an afterthought for people,” he explained. “They wanted to highlight the after party dance floor so my idea was to come in with all my colours used for the production, with lighting coming straight from the top and then beams and gobos surrounding the dance floor, basically at 360 degrees.”

The lighting gear comprised of 5 Clay Paky Alpha Spots at FOH and 8 Robe BMFL Blades positioned above the stage for back gobo effects. “I love the BMFL,” said Francois. “I think it’s the product of the year. I don’t think there’s going to be any unit soon that will compete with it. It’s great in every single area.”



There were 12 Robin 1200 LEDWash for back light on stage and 30 Clay Paky Sharpies. On the dance floor were a further 12 Robin 1200 LEDWash and 12 Clay Paky Mythos for side angle beams. "I then used the Robin LEDBeam 100 for truss toning, which later during the night I was able to drill down into the audience. I again used 12 Philips SL Nitro 510C for audience lights. Robert Juliat Aramis were the designated followspots. "The Aramis is a great fixture, bright and the operators enjoy working with them."



MGG used this event to showcase the 200 x Q3 3.91mm panels from VuePix. "The greatest challenge was the weight and hanging the actual panels. The back truss with the screen on it came to 2.6 tons." For ensuring a uniformly distributed load MGG used the Libra load cell system from Kinesys, which gave the exact weight ensuring all safety requirements were met. Francois had also written formulae in Vectorworks in order to know what the weights would be in advance and for the first time, he was also able to do a live test on this. "We were only 1% out," said Francois. The screens created the spectacular effect the client was after.



Francois is one of the most complex lighting designers in South Africa. He wants to know every single feature about the products he works with and he wants to know it well. In the case of grandMA2, he spends time learning equipment, takes days creating macros and fast ways and should a problem arise, he knows exactly how to sort it out. "MA is not a console," he says. "The stuff we can do is incredible and nothing, nothing beats is. MA is not a console it's a system. I've never ever had a MA2 crash on me during a show."

The show was smooth sailing and looked world class. "I love working with MGG, they have a good crew and they know what they're doing," ended Francois. "They do things right. There is one way and that's the right way. They don't take shortcuts and that's the only way to do it."



