

Miss World goes digital with Robe

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Article and photos courtesy Louise Stickland

Lighting designer Tim Dunn used 12 Robe DigitalSpot 7000DT digital moving lights and 32 REDWash 3Y192s in his stunning design for the 2008 Miss World Pageant, which was held at the Sandton International Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

To date, this is the most of either type of Robe's new generation of digital moving lights to be used on a single show.

Dunn is well known for his experimental approach to new technology and is always keen to push the boundaries. He first saw both units in action at LDI 2008 in Las Vegas, and immediately realised their creative potential.



Visual Spectacle

When Gearhouse South Africa won the contract to supply full technical production for Miss World and Dunn was asked to design lighting and visuals for the show, the opportunity also presented itself for him to incorporate some of the new Robe fixtures in his design.

He worked closely with set designer Dewet Meyer to develop a big visual picture that stamped a contemporary African flavour on the performance space. The resulting elegant 40 metre wide, multi layered spherical set was based on an African jewel and skinned in grey tones specifically so energy, drama, colour, spectacle and texturing could be added with lighting and projected effects. To compliment this, Dunn made all his over-stage trusses curved at different angles.

The 12 DigitalSpot 7000 DTs were all hung on one mid stage truss, in positions enabling them to hit multiple focus points all over the set which featured wide steps at the back, a flourishing perimeter ramp shot through with a set of 8 tall fins upstage. The DS7000s could also focus onto the underside of three large over-stage curved lighting pods clad in custom printed grey PVC.



Custom Content

They were run on an ArtNet network, and loaded with approximately 30 clips of custom video content created by Gearhouse Media's Marcel Wijnberger and Chris Grandin to Dunn's brief.

Some clips were black and white and sepia tones, while others were multi-coloured, and all were carefully crafted to produce fabulous liquidy and fluid effects which Dunn beamed around the stage and set - one moment appearing as ethereal undulations, and the next as spectacular statements, stabs and accents to punctuate the onstage action. He had the additional option of adding colour to the video content via the LED Wash module in the DS7000, expanding the imaginative horizon yet further.

"I'm totally impressed with both the DS7000s and the REDWashes" he says, "I wanted to do something different, and they gave me huge scope for dressing all areas of the stage with interesting effects - essential for any live TV environment, and they were rock solid throughout". The 32 REDWash 3Y192 fixtures were rigged on trusses forming the two ends of each of the 3 over-stage pods, and on a truss immediately upstage of these.

These gave an incredibly rich wash right across the set, and Dunn also generated some interesting, slightly idiosyncratic hues, particularly in the pastel range.

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He also thought the square shape of the lightsource made a diverse visual contrast to all the circular beams on the rig.



Green is the Colour

In addition to their aesthetic contributions to the look of the show, the DigitalSpots and the REDWashes also helped make a substantial contribution to power saving on the gig, making it one of the greenest Miss Worlds to date for lighting. The REDWashes and DS7000s, despite their brightness, are expedient in power consumption, and the full rig for the 2008 event, although about double the size, drew approximately 30% less electricity than the rig Dunn used to light the 1995 show in Sun City – the first of 4 Miss Worlds he’s now designed.

He also used 56 Robe moving lights in the rig – ColorSpot and ColorWash 2500E ATs and ColorWash and ColorSpot 700E ATs. The 700s were dotted all around the rig, while the 2500s were lined up on one of the upstage trusses providing powerful backlight for the stage. More ColorWash 2500E ATs were positioned on two front side trusses, used for big, bold and very bright audience sweeps.

Dunn ran the show on a grandMA full size console.

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He uses Robe moving lights on most of his major shows, and Gearhouse South Africa has made a substantial investment in Robe over the last 3 years, supplied by South African distributor DWR. DWR also supplied technical support on the digital fixtures throughout the Miss World build up week at SCC, with engineers Bruce Riley and Nick Britz working closely with the Gearhouse lighting crew, cheifed by Lucky Nkosi.

Miss World 2008 was a massive success, culminating in the crowning of Miss Russia, Kseniya Sukhinova, as Miss World 2008.

It's also been hailed as the most visually exciting event to date, a great credit to Dunn and his creative team and Meyer, who all put so much energy, imagination, vision and hard work into making this world class show happen.