



By Sarah

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UK – The busy lighting team at number one receiving theatre, The Mayflower, Southampton, has chosen to replace much of its existing lighting stock with Philips Selecon SPX luminaires. The purchase follows an exhaustive testing and comparison process, which saw the SPXs benefit from a grueling ‘destruction test’ and shoot out against a number of other manufacturer profiles.

Neil Daykin, senior lighting technician at the Mayflower discusses: “We were looking to replace our old Strand Lighting Harmony profiles and had originally planned to replace them with the same fixtures that we already have FOH. ‘When we received the demo SPX units to try out we very quickly changed our minds and ultimately we unanimously agreed that the SPX route was the best solution for us.”



Daykin explains

the reason for the change of heart: “We were surprised to discover that optically the SPXs are far superior to other fixtures. They are ideal for FOH, where designers want to avoid flare, as light leakage is imperceptible. Also when you’re at 90 degrees relative to the fixture, where you can see up the lens tube, there is very little glare. Physically they are a lot lighter than other profiles of similar output so when we do need to bring them FOH it’s so much easier to transport and rig them. They also have the same size colour runners and gobo holders as much of our existing stock and also stock being toured by incoming shows. This means that we don’t have to replace consumables such as colour frames, irises and gobo holders.”

Although the majority of shows touring into the Mayflower tour their own overhead lighting rigs, show such as the panto and other homegrown entertainment demand a full rig. This means that the SPXs will experience their fair share of wear and tear though the process of being rigged and de-rigged on a regular basis. For Daykin this meant the fixtures had to be extremely robust.

“We were quite reluctant to go down the SPX route at first, primarily because we were uncomfortable with the concept of a plastic yoke,” Daykin explains. “However we put the yoke at the receiving end of a pretty brutal destruction test. This included asking the crew to take a lump hammer to it! To be honest I now think the SPX yoke is probably tougher and more durable than the conventional metal yoke. You can’t bend or break it, even with a lump hammer.



“White Light did

us a great deal on the SPXs and the sales team has subsequently been very supportive, as has Grant Bales-Smith from Philips Entertainment. One of the challenges we face at the Mayflower is that our circle is a wide unsupported span and bounces noticeably with the audience movement. This can cause fixtures rigged to the circle rail to droop over time. When I alerted Grant he immediately arranged to have extra knobs sent over and we double break the fixtures now.”

Used for the first time by lighting designer Matt Clutterham of MattLX Group on Jack and the Beanstalk Matt reports that he's impressed and comments: “On productions such as this one, where time, space and budgets are all squeezed to the max, I need every lamp in the rig to work hard; I was a little apprehensive about using the SPX units over my time honoured favourites, but I wasn't disappointed. They gave strong crisp light output, smooth and accurate shuttering and amazing gobo projection; they even handled split colours really nicely, which is something that other units in the marketplace often struggle with. The ability to have a zoom profile this good in a package the same size of its fixed lens counterparts means I'll certainly be using SPX again.

The Mayflower has also invested in 36 Rama Fresnels, which Daykin says he's delighted with.

“Southampton Mayflower Theatre is an extremely busy number-one receiving house so the lighting team are no strangers to the full gamut of lighting equipment available on the market,” points out Grant Bales-Smith “This makes their choice to purchase Selecon Rama Fresnels and SPX profiles all the more satisfying for Philips Selecon. The SPX profile brings a fresh approach when it comes to the design of the ellipsoidal profile. Developed to meet the changing needs of entertainment lighting, the SPX brings many new and innovative features to the designer while retaining the intuitive controls, beam angles and appearance that they're familiar with.”



The SPX is

available in 15°-35° and 25°-50° Zoomspot and 14°, 19°, 26°, 36° and 50° Fixed Beam models the SPX is the first ERS to fully exploit the output and successfully deal with the high heat associated with the latest generation compact filament 800W lamps.