

Red Pepper's LED upgrade



Anolis forms the backbone for the set

In 2013, when Red Pepper Studios acquired a new client, Connect, with the directive to produce three game shows to be broadcast on a new Mzansi Magic Channel, they knew the greatest task would be to create gripping television viewing during prime time from Mondays to Thursdays with recaps on Fridays. The time had arrived for Red Pepper to upgrade their studios in Linden, Melville and Braamfontein with LED technology and also an Orad system – the first in South Africa – for a studio transformed into a virtual studio.

The project was the brain child of Cecil Barry, CEO of Red Pepper, and a group of creative individuals who worked alongside him. Michael Gill of the multi-award winning set design studio, Michael Gill Designs, created the fine-looking sets. The lighting equipment was supplied by DWR Distribution, with Schalk Botha assisting with the sale. Two talented lighting designers, Francois van der Merwe of Wizardy Group and Joshua Cutts of Visual Frontier, were appointed to work on the different game shows including Bounce, Katching and Kula Sibani.

The new gear, where Anolis technology forms the foundation of the inset lighting, included Robin 100 LEDBeams, Robin 600 LEDWashes, Robin 300 LEDWashes, Robin DLX LED Spots, Philips Selcon Studio Panels and Cyc1s, Philips Selecon SPX Zoom, Clay Paky Sharpys and A.Ledas, Philips Strand Dimmers and MDG Atmosphere Hazers. There is also an Avolites Tiger Touch, Titan One with PC, and a Philips Strand 200 Plus Desk 24/48. At the Melville studios, a LumenRadio DMX system has cleaned up the grid and helped with fault-finding.



Transformation at Red Pepper

“While he would never admit to it, Cecil was the one who had a picture in his head of what he wanted, and the end result was exactly as he imagined it,” commented Marius Maritz from Red Pepper who assisted with overseeing the project. “Cecil was very involved with the lighting, set and graphic design and has since been

fine-tuning it all.”

With the aim to eliminate constant rigging and derigging, a generic lighting rig that worked with LED was set in place to colour more than one show. This has been a wonderful time saver for Maritz who no longer has to be concerned with constant lamp changes and rolls of colour gels!

“I was also very surprised with the Philips Selecon PL1 Studio Panels,” said Maritz. “They perfectly lit the entire virtual rig which is 112sqm² and are amazing. I don’t think we need any other lights for chroma key (green screen), and as a plus, the fixtures have variable colour temperature correction.”

Maritz has been pleased with the purchase. “They have really added so much value, and moving forward, LED is the way to go. Where it would sometimes take two guys to put up a light, it now only takes one.” Ultimately time is money.



Schalk Botha from DWR with Marius Maritz from Red Pepper

Braamfontein Studios

Red Pepper’s Braamfontein studio, which was formerly a revolving restaurant on the 20th floor of the Wits Art Museum, is the unconventional studio where a weekly news channel, Al Jazeera, is recorded. The aircon and power was always an issue, yet now the rig runs off five 15 Amp plugs. The studio is equipped with an entire LED lighting rig comprising 8 x Philips Selecon PL1 Studio Panels, 15 x Robe LED Force 18s, and 10 x LED Force 7. “While the venue has very big windows, colour correction is easy and the system just works,” said Maritz. This is also where our newly purchased Avolites TitanOne is used.”

Bounce at Red Pepper Linden Virtual Studios

Respected Lighting Designer, Francois van der Merwe from Wizardry Group, was commissioned to light Bounce, a dancing competition for teenagers recorded in front of a live audience at the Linden studio.

It took two episodes to tweak the look. “The whole idea was to get a nice club-like feel on camera,” said Van der Merwe. “The set was very bright and colour filled, and the end result was pulsating and cheery.”

Four Robin 100 LEDBeams with 25 degree diffusers were used as backlight for the audience. Six Robin 600 LEDWashes were the key lights for Bounce. “These also swing round and become the key lights for another show, Club 808,” Van der Merwe expounded.

It was the first time that the Van der Merwe had worked with Robin DLXs. “The fixtures were awesome and so crisp,” said Van der Merwe. “I really liked them.”

The Bounce Lighting Rig consists of 10x Robin 100 LEDBeam, 6 x Robin 300 LEDWash, 6 x Robin 600 LEDWash, 6 x Robin DLX LED Spot and 7 x 2ks.

Katching

A few kilometres down the road, at the Red Pepper Studios in Melville, Lighting Designer Joshua Cutts from Visual Frontier was thrilled to be working with new kit for the television game show, Katching.

“As always with a Michael Guild set design I was challenged to make the set pop up with vibrant colour,” said Cutts. “Thankfully DWR had specified a wide range of LED fixtures to help achieve this.”

Having 48 moving lights for the studio recording, Cutts was blown away. He explains, “I used all the LED Washed to colour the set and audience. I used the awesome Clay Paky Sharpys to create beam work from the floor. The great thing was that half the set pieces were self-illuminating with all the LEDs installed by DWR. The end result was an exciting and dynamic coloured space. This was another awesome success from DWR, and they were always on hand to assist with back-up and support.”

In closing, Maritz says that while Connect is a short term contract, Red Pepper is working towards forming a long term relationship with them.



The project was the brain child of Cecil Barry

“We have put everything into this project, not only resources but by always looking at how we can do things better. For us it’s not about recording a series just to get it out the way and to put on the shelf. It’s the quality that’s important.”

And Red Pepper like working with like-minded suppliers.

“Relationship is very important and it’s the one thing I have learnt goes way beyond anything else,” said Maritz. “With DWR it’s not about the purchase of 60 lights. When I need two lights and a cable, they are there, and that is what makes it all worthwhile.”

Red Pepper’s Total Lighting Purchase

28	x	Robe Robin 100 LEDBeam
10	x	Robe Robin 600 LEDWash

12	x	Robe Robin 300 LEDWash
12	x	Robe Robin DLX LEDSpots
15	x	Robe LEDForce 18s
14	x	Philips Selecon Studio Panels
6	x	Philips Selecon PL Cyc1
8	x	Philips Selecon SPX Zoom
12	x	Clay Paky Sharpy
6	x	Clay Paky A.leda Wash K10 LED
2	x	MDG Atmosphere hazer
1	x	Avolites Tiger Touch
1	x	Avolites Titan One with PC
1	x	Philips Strand 200 Plus desk 24/48
2	x	Philips Strand dimmer
4	x	Philips Strand Dim One
10	x	Doughty Pantographs

Set has been lit using a range of Anolis including Arc-Link 4 RGBW as well as LED strips