

Robe BMFL's Light Boston City Hall



Courtesy Louise Stickland

Twelve of Robe's new BMFL Spot luminaires – launched worldwide on September 2nd – were utilized by Lighting Designer Preston Hoffman of Pulse Lighting for a stunning installation that illuminated Boston City Hall, transforming it into a bold and vibrant backdrop for the 2014 Boston Calling Music Festival.

The Festival's two main stages were built in the City Hall Plaza in front of the City Hall building at 90 degrees to one another.



Hoffman, well known for his work as a rock 'n' roll lighting designer, was commissioned by festival organisers Crash Line Productions to make the building rock for the occasion!

Hoffman started using Robe a couple of years ago after encountering their fixtures on a festival in Germany, and now uses Robe products for many of his larger projects. This one had extra resonance because it was his first chance to illuminate a landmark in his home city of three years ... so he wanted to make it extra special!



He reached out to vendors including Boston-based East Coast Lighting & Production Services (ECLPS) whose Ted Goodspeed – knowing that Robe was planning to launch a new luminaire aimed at long throw applications – suggested that the time might be right to try the BMFL.

“I could see from several angles that moving lights were the way to go with this one,” said Hoffman. The large concrete constructed City Hall, with cantilevered upper stories, was built in 1968 as part of a major urban redevelopment plan, and is famous for its imposing – and controversial – architecture.

The light coloured appearance immediately suggested projection effects, as well as being lit with glowing solid colors.

“The BMFL Spot with its 1700 Watt lightsource and multi-functionality sounded extremely interesting,” he explained.



The 12 x BMFL Spots were double hung on a truss rigged between two ground-supported towers located centrally at the FOH position between the two stages in the City Hall Plaza, throwing at least 100 metres onto the face of the building.

His first impression was they are “BRIGHT! So bright that I couldn’t believe what I was seeing!”

Hoffman created a selection of different looks ranging from crisp multi-coloured gobo combinations and texturing, to simple single hues to subtle, rippling animations.

The power of the BMFL Spots even when in the darker saturates like red, green and blue or when using multiple effects, was highly effective.

“Patterns were vital to the project. The gobo selection was nice and ideal for both projected and aerial effects”. He commented that using the “Amazing” dual graphics wheel he could effectively edge-blend the projected images – almost as if they were a wide-screen video artwork – right across the full surface area.



Other features impressing him included the speed of the 5 – 55 degree zoom.

During two long nights of programming, he first mixed a base color palette and then started experimenting with gobo looks and overlays as well as utilizing the Macros to create stunning effects.

Overall, based on this experience he declares BMFL Spots “Beyond spectacular”, and having seen their massive potential first-hand he can’t wait to specify them on future work.

The BMFL Spots also caught the eye of several guest LDs who lit bands performing at the Festival, and asked constantly about the lightsources, with many thinking the effects were created by large-format projectors.

He was also really excited to be the first LD in the U.S. to use BMFL Spots on an architectural installation.

