Robe bowls everyone over at New Age Friendship Concert

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Robe moving lights took centre stage for the New Age Friendship Celebration Concert in Moses Mabhida Stadium, Durban, South Africa, a Bollywood spectacular following the Standard Bank International Pro20 international cricket tournament between India and South Africa.

This visual extravaganza of spectacular proportions was the first ever such post cricket match entertainment event, and also celebrated the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Indians in Africa. Over 40,000 excited cricket fans saw India narrowly beat the Proteas (South Africa), simultaneously making history as the biggest live crowd ever to watch a cricket match on the African continent. The concert was televised live worldwide on ESPN, opening up the potential audience to several million.

Lighting, stage set and visuals were designed by Tim Dunn and full technical production for the Concert was supplied by Gearhouse South Africa, working for producer Katija Ali of AA Media who conceived and proposed the show idea to match organisers, Cricket South Africa (CSA).

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The stage architecture was based around symbols and shapes from Africa and India, topped with a ‘calabash’ style structure made from 16 curved trussing ‘ribs’, flanked by 3 minaret style stretched fabric domes each side.

To maximise site lines, it was decided that the stage should have no roof! Knowing that the weather was highly likely to be inclement at this time of year, Dunn specified Robe moving lights because he knew they would be reliable and resilient in rain and damp conditions.

It proved a wise and perspicacious decision, as it rained torrentially during the get in and build up to the match and show, clearing only 2 days before play!

Dunn has also used Robe fixtures on numerous other high profile shows – recents include the 2010 South

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African Music Awards (SAMAs), the 2010 METRO FM Music Awards and the Closing Ceremony of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup – and knows their value as creative tools.

His brief was to produce a lightshow to match the razzmatazz, glitter and glamour of the occasion, with a star-studded live performance schedule headlined by Indian megastar, Shah Rukh Khan.

Crowning the top circle of the Calabash were 10 Robe ColorSpot 2500E ATs, ideal for aerial effects, and along the front edge of the supporting structure's top deck were 8 Robe ColorSpot 2500E ATs and 6 Robe REDWash 3●192s used for shooting prominent colour and beam effects down into the upstage area.

A ground support system was rigged on the stage to facilitate side, back and mid-stage lighting positions. It was 30 metres wide with 2 levels of trim at 9 and 10 metres, diagonally slung trusses upstage and a mid truss that was moved in during the match to accommodate 3 camera positions on the front of the calabash. On the ground support were another 20 REDWash 3●192s, 6 ColorSpot 2500E ATs and 24 x ColorWash 2500E ATs. These were all used for front and back stage washing, upstage key lighting and combined to produce multiple fabulous, rich and powerful looks.

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At floor level, under the side LED screen columns and PA wings were 24 Robe ROBIN 300 Spots, 12 a side, together with 4 ROBIN 300 Washes a side shooting up the scrims and illuminating the logo. Their small size was perfect for being tucked unobtrusively into these positions.

Sixteen Robe ROBIN 300 Washes were positioned along the sides of the stage in the ‘shin buster’ position, used for zappy slices of cross stage light and low level ‘modelling’ for the dancers.

Dunn explains how the basic visual challenge was to give the stage a real sense of scale and presence and a defining geometry amidst the stadium’s architecturally commanding environment.

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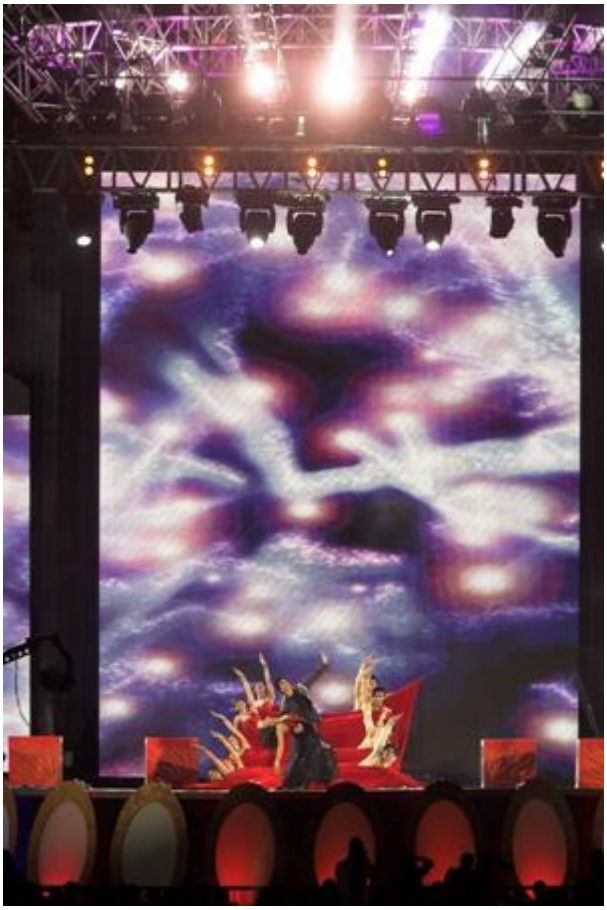

The lighting and screen visuals had to fuse seamlessly with the set, as well as working independently to cover the performance space and diffuse the onstage energy out into the audience. The design had to work for both TV and live audiences and contain enough big stadium lighting WOW factors throughout, whilst ensuring that all – from those sitting almost parallel to the stage to those at the far end of the stadium behind FOH to those in the VIP and Presidential areas right in front of the stage – enjoyed a great show experience.

He programmed and ran the show on a grandMA full size console, with Hugh Turner calling follow spots and Marcel Wijnberger operating video/screen visuals on another grandMA.

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