

Robe ESPRITES Rock Melbourne Fashion Festival

Posted on May 24, 2024



The 2024 PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival celebrated some of the best of Australian fashion design, imagination, style and flair, with a main showspace at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne - recognised by the UNESCO *World Heritage* Committee as a prime example of 19th century international exhibition architecture.

All Lighting and AV equipment for the week-long festival was supplied by full production services provider, Harry the Hirer Productions led by technical producer Marcus Pugh.

He worked closely with lighting designer Hugh Taranto who used 28 x Robe ESPRITES to craft a flexible lighting aesthetic for the space that would deliver great looking shows for all the diverse and different collections.

The event also featured numerous associated off-site shows, business-related seminars, workshops, entertainment, and music performances across the city, but all eyes were on Royal Exhibition Buildings to really present the most interesting creations.

Marcus booked Harry's entire stock of ESPRITES, and he and Hugh positioned them in the prime top / back light position spread evenly on the truss above the 50-metre runway.

ESPRITES were chosen for this key position due to the quality of the light, the high CRI, and the excellent colour rendering. While there were other lights on the rig, the ESPRITES were key to getting the crisp illumination and precise flat, flesh tones so critical to the amassed fashion show media and press, known for being very demanding!

Constructed in 1879 for the Melbourne International Exhibition, the building designed by the architect Joseph Reed, presented plenty of challenges to Marcus' team who ensured that the technical design dovetailed with the building, maintaining, and even accentuating its integrity as

a 19th century gem.

Another was choosing kit that was not too heavy as the roof weight loading is limited – hence the need for lighter fixtures.

A third task was having fixtures that matched in and combined with the daylight flooding in through the many glass windows which especially affected the earlier runway shows each day.



“We needed a properly bright fixture for this,” commented Marcus, and this underlined the decision to pick ESPRITES!

The fixtures were also used for back lighting effects around the catwalk entrance, and the models were bathed in beautiful down-light from the moment they stepped out.

Each show required its own look and edge to keep all the fashion designers happy, which is another main objective for lighting this event that was produced by Geraldine Frater-Wyeth from Event Gallery.

Harry The Hirer was the first rental company in Australia to invest in ESPRITES back in 2019 when they were first launched for all the reasons stated above and others like the zoom range and excellent colour mixing, and they are now one of Marcus and Hugh’s ‘go-tos’.

Marcus thinks the output is “absolutely the best in its class,” with a great balance between output and beam quality. He notes that the gobo set is usable in almost any application and the animation wheel design with the ‘wave edge’ is a “stroke of genius and offers a unique look when half inserted”. All of these very cool effects plus the fantastic skin and flesh tones make them a winner for fashion events.



Marcus also visited the Robe Factory in the Czech Republic last year and was further impressed by the setup and the brand’s commitment to innovation. Added to that, he definitely “feels more

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connected” to the products having seen first-hand how they are made, and the diligence, detail and crafting that goes into the process.

Melbourne Fashion Festival 2024 was opened in great style by Australian favourite Elle McPherson, strutting the runway for the first time in over a decade, and it featured vibrant and interesting collections by fashionista favourites like Martin Grant, Ngali, Anna Quan, Oroton and more.

Photos: courtesy Harry The Hirer