

# Robe for Aida at Masada

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*Courtesy Louise Stickland*

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Robe moving lights once again were the primary moving light fixtures used for the Israeli Opera's "Aida" at the 2011 Dead Sea & Jerusalem Opera Festival, a co-production with the Les Choragies d'Orange in France, staged in the amazing outdoor purpose built amphitheatre at the foot of Masada Mountain by the Dead Sea, Israel.

As with the first Masada event in 2010, for which the whole site was built in the rocky desert terrain, lighting for the production was created by Avi Yona Bueno (Bambi), with the majority of the performance lighting equipment supplied by UK based rental company HSL, including all the Robes.



Technical production for the whole site was co-ordinated by Tel Aviv based The Design Group, production managed by Eyal Lavee working closely with Elad Mainz and Eviatar Banayan.

Robe was again specified not only because they were the ideal fixtures to fulfil the design requirements - with 96 of Robe's most powerful 2500 series units chosen because of the long throw distances of up to 80 metres - but also because, as everyone discovered last year, they stood up so well to the harsh desert operating conditions, searing heat, dust and blustery wind.

“They are great fixtures and have been brilliant throughout,” stated HSL’s crew chief Ian Stevens.



The lights were rigged and in position for over 4 weeks by the time the last show finished, during which time the Robes were virtually trouble free. This is the kind of thing that all technicians want to hear!

Eighty of the 96 ColorSpot 2500E ATs were rigged on two massive side stage left and right trussing gantries, with 16 on the front of house gantry at the back of the bleacher seating.

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They worked hard and continuously right through the three and a half hour show, where they were used very effectively for all the stage washing and cast coverage.

Twenty Robe ROBIN 600 LEDWashes were used to light 4 regal looking sphinx set pieces stage left and right – some of the fixtures were recessed into parts of the set itself. It was the first time that Bambi had used LEDWash 600s and comments, “Fantastic – very bright and a good range of colours,” on Robe’s best selling ‘wonder light’.

Twelve Robe RedWash 3●192s were rigged beneath the stage and set. These were utilised as strong back light sources for the entrance/exit door below the 12 metre high Pharaoh’s head, which was the main set centrepiece, and also under a large hydraulic trap that opened during the tomb scene, complete with apocalyptic blast of super bright light.



The ColorSpot 2500E ATs were fitted with special custom reflectors which were developed by Robe specially for last year's "Nabucco" production at Masada, which boost the light output by a further 30%.

Bambi also used some tailor-made square and rectangular gobos in some of the fixtures, which framed the beams really tightly, facilitating his need to pinpoint very precise areas of the stage at times, particularly when he was filling and matching lighting in and around areas of video projection onto the stage.

He also had custom dot gobos made up and fitted into 24 of the ColorSpots for the final scene. This allowed the stage to be synchronised with a spectacular 'Galaxy effect' he created with 900 twinkling LED panels which had been rigged by special climbing teams off the 600 metre face of Masada Mountain itself, creating a unique and dramatic WOW factor to close the show in some considerable style.

Using the Robes and all these special customisations enabled Bambi to sculpt an intricate and intense lighting process that followed and helped the drama unfold onstage, gradually becoming starker and more raw as the story played out.



Seeing the lights working so well in this context proved that Robe's commitment to quality engineering is key to developing versatile and tough equipment that works almost everywhere. Robe has been selected for numerous projects around the globe because it can withstand rain and other challenging weather conditions.

Verdi's Aida at Masada was directed by Charles Roubaud and conducted by Daniel Oren. It ran for 10 nights as the principal show of a wider festival entertainment programme, and was enjoyed by 75,000 people, once again receiving massive critical acclaim.