

Robe FORTES for Puy de Fou “Mousquetaire de Richelieu” Show

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Photo @Victor Drapeau

Twenty of Robe’s new FORTE moving lights are a key feature of a new lighting design by Maxime Chotard for “Mousquetaire de Richelieu” (Richelieu’s Musketeer), one of the flagship shows at Puy du Fou, a historical theme park in Les Epesses in the Pays de la Loire region of Western France.

These have now been joined by 22 x Robe ESPRITES which were chosen as a perfect complement to Robe’s highest-powered LED moving light.

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Photo @William Jezequel

The show, staged in “Le Grand Carrousel” Hall, a 6000 square metre equestrian theatre with seating for 3000, combines sword fights, poetic tirades, equestrian prowess, costumes, moving sets and spectacular special effects that immerse visitors in a crazy swashbuckling mid-17th century tale that unfolds on a massive purpose-built stage. The 74-metre wide by 45 metres deep performance space is equipped with – among other things – the world’s largest stage curtain!

Maxime, who is site-wide head of lighting responsible for the whole park, recently oversaw a substantial lighting upgrade designed to bring a new “visual coherence” to the performance *and* to enable transition to more energy efficient light sources over the next three years, simultaneously reducing the show’s long-term operating costs and maintenance.

On the creative side, two major issues had become apparent since the last show season ran from June to November 2021 (delayed from the usual April to November season due to Covid) and these needed fixing.

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The first was that some of the lighting cues lacked impact, and secondly, the huge black stage floor sometimes became an over-dominant big black mass that swallowed up the cast and sets without helping to define the different stage areas and assist in the narrative.

Maxime’s first criteria for adding any new lighting fixtures was that they must be high powered as well as an LED luminaire.



Photo @Olivier Barthon

Robe’s FORTE was launched in 2021 and came onstream at just the right time to become a major part of the new lighting scheme, together with the ESPRITES which had been launched in 2019.

Since the first performance of “Mousquetaire de Richelieu ” in 2006, the show has undergone numerous technical changes and lighting alterations, without ever being completely redesigned. “With this in mind, and with much more versatile and efficient LED luminaires coming to market, the task of updating the rig became all the more urgent,” explains Maxime.

He and his team looked at several options, before choosing FORTE and ESPRITE which were demonstrated on site by Vincent Bouquet from Robe France.

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The FORTE was chosen for its brightness and intensity, and for its excellent and refined colour mixing system which offers a fantastic full spectrum of hues from the richest saturates to the most finessed pastels plus an authentic range of CT whites, ideal for accentuating natural flesh tones.

The zoom and the accurate shuttering were other factors making the fixture ideal to illuminate the expansive stage.

The fully sealed dust-proof optical chamber and effects modules also impressed everyone as this significantly reduces the general maintenance needed on the lights, a fact very much appreciated by Puy du Fou where the daily show schedule is relentless!

Products like FORTE and ESPRITE also utilise Robe’s unique and patented TRANSFERABLE ENGINE™ (TE) LED technology, a hugely flexible concept offering the option of different and interchangeable LED engines - high powered, high CRI, ‘tungsten’, etc., - in the same fixture hardware, which can be quickly changed / ‘transferred’ in 5 to 7 minutes.



Photo @Victor Drapeau

All the new fixtures are deployed high up in the sides of the set and along the back to allow the floor to be textured and fully covered with “checkerboard” effects and other impressive gobo treatments.

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As well as the new FORTES and ESPRITES, some Robe BMFL Blades installed in a lighting refit in 2017 are still working hard on the show - which continues to be one of the most popular in the park.

Once the 2022 season starts in April, “Mousquetaire de Richelieu” will play five times a day, seven days a week.

PHOTOS: By Victor Drapeau / Romain Goulette / William Jezequel / Olivier Barthon