

Robe Helps Spin Skulerevyen at Det Vestnorske Teateret

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Lighting designer Jon Eirik Sira thought outside the box when tackling an interesting visual conundrum for Det Vestnorske Teateret in Bergen's recent and acclaimed production of *Skulerevyen* (School Review). The show was a raw, visceral, no-nonsense take on the issue of

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violence in schools through the decades, peppered with wit, dark humour and stark truths, billed as “The revue for those who have survived school!”

Jon has been head of lighting at the theatre – located in the centre of Norway’s beautiful second largest city, wedged between shimmering sea and majestic rocky mountains – since 2019, and is also involved in other locally based theatre projects. He was instrumental in the venue investing in 24 x Robe LEDBeam 350s, which have been added to the house lighting rig over the last four years.

But for *Skulerevyen*, he looked inventively at a much more ‘classic’ Robe product – the MediaSpinner 50 AT – to provide an imaginative technical solution.

Launched in 2006, the epic Robe MediaSpinner 50 AT is a motorised display device designed for rotating advertising banners, scenic elements, signs etc.

This was EXACTLY the tool that Jon needed to rotate seven 450 cm tall by 110 cm wide backdrop panels that enabled the production to flip back and forth between three distinctive surfaces, helping to create four individual settings ... with the help of some projection!

Not only was this an ingenious budget-friendly fix for this show, once Jon hit on the idea, he relished the logistical challenge involved in sourcing eight (seven plus a spare) MediaSpinners and amassing them in Bergen.

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The fact that the product was discontinued didn't faze him in the slightest!

In a mission over a period of weeks in the spring, he energised his network of industry-wide technical contacts, trawled eBay, reached out on Facebook, surfed obscure websites and scrolled multiple subreddit channels to find the elusive products ... which were scattered all over Europe.

He eventually achieved the goal of acquiring 8 new or once / lightly used MediaSpinner 50 AT products from Norway, Estonia, Germany, and Austria!

Once these arrived at Det Vestnorske Teateret, Jon worked closely with the set workshop team led by Isabelle Wolny to get them working with the dynamic backdrop elements that were a

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cornerstone to set designer Lise Christensen's look and styling for the production.

"We found the perfect timing and speed that the MediaSpinners could handle with a loading of 35-40 kg," explained Jon, "and now I have the devices for future use, and they will be perfect for all sorts of scenarios."



The different Skulerevyen backdrops helped illustrate how thinking about and dealing with antisocial and disruptive behaviour at school has changed over the years. They offered three surfaces: a green 'blackboard' side; a back-lit / pixel mapped mirrored 'disco' look; and a series of slick windows created with projection canvas edge-lit with LED tape. The blackboard surface doubled as a fourth surface in combination with projected images.

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Jon likes Robe's "straightforward" approach to engineering design and building products that are "compact, light and price competitive."

The LEDBeam 350s are another great example reflecting all these criteria, he notes.

The first batch of LEDBeam 350s was delivered around 2021 - based on a tender compiled by Jon and his colleagues to replace their previous moving wash lights.

The LEDBeam 350 brought wash functionality plus added beam / spot and effects versatility, and the numbers have gradually increased each year, building up to the current total of 24.

Fourteen of the LEDBeam 350s were used in Skulerevyen for several different tasks, including overhead lighting, set washing, key lighting, and effects.

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“They do exactly what I need and have a nice tight beam without excessive spill even without any top hats” he stated, adding that he likes the small size which enables him to keep the hardware concealed from view in Det Vestnorske Teateret’s three cosy performance spaces.

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About Det Vestnorske Teateret

Det Vestnorske Teateret started in 1988 and has built up a rep for cutting-edge work, presenting new drama and literature, documentary theatre, and society-based art, together with works by leading contemporary writer / dramatist Jon Fosse in Nynorsk and other local dialects focusing on serving the Western Norwegian population.

The theatre's current home - the Logen building in central Bergen - has a long and vibrant cultural history as a venue for music and entertainment, dating to 1883. Det Vestnorske Teateret has been located there since the start of 2016.

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The theatre is primarily state-funded and owned by Vestland County. It regularly tours the Vestland region and also engages in productions catering to children and young people.



Show Photos: By Andreas Roksvaag