

Robe hits the spot at Miss World

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Story and pics courtesy Louise Stickland



Lighting designer Tim Dunn used nearly 300 Robe fixtures in his colourful and vibrant design for Miss World 2009, which was staged at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was the largest number of Robe fixtures to date that Dunn has used on a single event - and the results were truly stunning!

It had to look fabulous on TV - the show was recorded by SABC and broadcast live to 80 of the 112 participating countries, and for the first time - to the US, to India for both Hindi and English channels and to China via CCTV4, reaching an estimated viewing audience of between 1 and 2 billion. It also had to look great for the 3,500 live audience who packed into the venue to watch

the show.

The creative challenges included making it look lively and visually interesting whilst covering the vast stage area and 45 metre wide spherical set designed by Dewet Meyer. Dunn also contended with the additional pressure of creating a dynamically different look to the 2008 event which was also hosted by South Africa and was still fresh in everyone's minds. He undertook the task with enormous energy.

The set was based on African jewels, and was circled by two dramatic decorative rings, painted white to optimise the lighting. Other areas of the set were also covered in white and light grey PVC for the same reason.



Dunn specified 72 of Robe's new ROBIN 300 series fixtures – a mix of Spots, Washes and Beams, and 24 of the new ColorSpot 700E AT Beams, along with 72 Robe ColorSpot 2500E ATs and both ColorSpot and ColorWash 700E ATs.

All the overhead lights were rigged on 6 circular and ellipsoidal trusses hung over the stage, plus a myriad of curved and straight trusses all around the venue.

He also utilised 12 DigitalSpot 7000 DTs, all rigged on the same mid-stage truss, with which he built on the amazing effects he achieved with them for the 2008 show. They were loaded with



special video content prepared by Gearhouse Media, and used for casting subtle and intricate animations onto the set and stage, adding to the whole vista of visual magic. The DigitalSpots produced a startling 3D effect when projected onto the back of the set and its support legs.

Dunn took full advantage of the 40% increased brightness in the latest version of Robe's REDWash 3●192, with 42 of them dotted around the rig. Eighteen were used to light the set rings in a series of electric colours, their homogenised lightsources yielding a beautiful, smooth, even finish, and the colour mixing producing some amazing secondary's like pink, orange and turquoise.

Dunn describes the brightness of the ColorBeam 700E ATs as "incredible". He used their tight well defined beams judiciously for cool chase effects, easily cutting through even when the performance area was fully washed with other lighting and projections. He was equally impressed with the same attributes of the ROBIN 300 Series, saying "Robe have really thought smart about producing a smaller and brighter lightsource that can add dynamics to any environment".



The ROBIN 300E Spots were carefully positioned around the floor, illuminating the set edges and legs and the white PVC cyc which circled the entire perimeter of the performance space. Dunn programmed them to produce some super-bright gobo patterns and mixes, tweaking the wide focus range extensively for variety and added effect.

Also on the floor were 24 of Robe's new CityScape48 LED units, used for washing the set edges and walls in rich saturated colours.

For the first time, Dunn was able to use his key lighting - consisting of 29 x 5K fresnels - at full, and still have rich colour at all times across the rest of the stage area. This worked particularly well when all 112 contestants and presenters were onstage together. Using the different Robe

fixtures working together was instrumental to achieving this goal, which is essential to offering a strong selection of interestingly lit camera shots and looks.

He says, “Robe has had the foresight to develop a range of different instruments, all highly flexible and usable for multiple tasks and effects. It’s a really well thought-through, intelligent R ‘n’ D philosophy, and they have clearly listened to what LDs want”.



The Robe fixtures were delivered to Gearhouse South Africa, who supplied the full technical production package to Miss World 2009 – including lighting, sound, set, AV, LED screens, staging and media, rigging – via Robe’s very proactive South African distributor DWR.

DWR also arranged for 50 Anolis Arc-Link 3s to be air freighted out at short notice, to internally light 50 x 300 mm balls, utilised to delineate the exterior of the set rings.

Dunn controlled all lighting on the rig via a fully networked grandMA full size console, which also ran an MA Media server storing the playback video content used in the DigitalSpots, and for the back LED screen onstage.

Miss World 2009 once again proved an exercise in superlative visual dynamics, where skill and imagination combined with the best fixtures to produce a memorable show. It has notched up

another technical benchmark for the pageant, taking it into new realms and leaving everyone in no doubt about the quality and production values on offer in South Africa.



Miss Gibraltar, Kaiane Aldorino was crowned Miss World 2009, with Miss Mexico, Perla Beltran Acosta, and Miss South Africa, Tatum Keshwar, the second and third runners up respectively