

## Robe Makes a Positive Impression at the Baltic Opera Gdansk



The award-winning Opera Bałtycka (Baltic Opera) in Gdansk, on Poland's stunning north coast, has invested in new Robe lighting fixtures with the purchase of 18 x TX1 PosiProfiles and four PAINTEs which have been installed into its current building.

The opera house has a colourful and varied history and was originally built and opened as an equestrian sports hall in 1915. It went through various other iterations, and the first opera was performed there in 1950, and since then the building has undergone several renovations. While the cozy 476 capacity makes it Poland's smallest opera hall, The Baltic Opera has a formidable reputation for excellence, high production values and world class performances.



Lighting specialist Marek Lebida has been working full time at the Opera since the Robe fixtures arrived last year, supplied by Robe's Polish distributor Prolight, and delivered via their local partner, Gdansk-based Grupa Profit.

Marek was inspired to make entertainment his career by his father who worked as a lighting master at this same Opera House, however he started on the other side of the stage as a ballet dancer! He used to dance in the Opera House when at school, so joining the team was like a homecoming. Immediately before then, he worked on shows and live events for a local rental company and as a freelance lighting designer and director.



Baltic Opera is a producing house with its own company (opera singers and ballet dancers) and orchestra, staging around 10 shows a month, primarily opera and ballet, of which four will usually be new works and the rest revivals. They also stage special performances for occasions like New Year.

Before the new Robe luminaires arrived, there were other moving lights in the house, explained Baltic Opera's head of technical, Krzysztof Materny, but these were getting old and unreliable. During Covid, they started thinking about ways to reduce power consumption – with a goal of using 20 – 30 % less – part of which would be achieved by steadily transitioning to more LED lighting fixtures in the house rig.

The decision to purchase the Robe luminaires followed a demonstration by Prolight and consultations with some of their regular lighting designers including Marek as he had specified Robe regularly for multiple projects as a freelance LD.

Several others working at the Opera had also used Robe when they rented in additional fixtures as needed for shows, so all were aware that their own lighting needed to be updated and the time was right for a change.





The TX1 Posi Profile's CRI was crucial in the choice, stated Marek, to get those nice natural flesh tones. "We set up real-life stage tests and compared the skin tones of the TX1s with some other products including the Opera's existing profile moving lights, and the TX1 just killed it!"

"There was really no comparison! So, after that everyone was convinced we were making the right decision," confirmed Marek. He noted that even the more traditional 'tungsten warrior' lighting professionals working at the opera ... saw that these LED fixtures looked fantastic!

Marek admits that on one show he was watching where he saw the light source but not the device and thought it must be a tungsten fixture, so authentic is the emulation!

The decision to purchase was made by a team of five including Krzysztof and Baltic Opera technical director, Magda Zablotny.

In addition to all the creative and technical reasons for choosing Robe, they were also reassured by Warsaw-based Prolight's great industry-wide reputation, so were confident that the all-important support would be there whenever needed.

Designed to operate as a full moving head or a static but repositionable profile, the TX1 PosiProfile can also function in extremely confined spaces where crew access is problematic or where movement options are limited or not required as it doesn't physically move during pre-use calibration.



left to right Baltic Opera head of technical, Krzysztof Materny, lighting specialist Marek Lebida and technical director, Magda Zablotny.

With the TX1s now installed on four house bars over the stage with two on the floor, it has made a massive difference to how shows can be lit, bringing a new vibrance and vitality to the stage and dramatically increasing the audience experience for all productions.

Lighting for most of the opera productions is designed by in-house LD Maciej Kaczerski, and Marek Lebida lights all the special shows, concerts and one offs.

The four PAINTES are fitted into two recesses either side of the auditorium and are used for front cross lighting, replacing the previous spot moving lights in the same positions. They are seriously quieter than the old fixtures, which is always a bonus for opera and ballet performances where audiences tend to be extremely conscious of ambient noise ... which they rarely tolerate!

***Photos by Louise Stickland***