Robe and the Robber’s Daughter

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Ronja Rövardotter (Ronia the Robber’s Daughter) is a classic Swedish children’s tale by Astrid Lindgren. A recent touring musical version in Denmark by Heltemus Productions featured a new and fresh lighting design by Sune Verdier of b-ql.dk who specified 14 of Robe’s DL7S Profiles, 24 x LEDWash 600+ fixtures and 12 x CycFX 8.

Sune’s work encompasses music, festivals, concert touring and theatre. One of the reasons his creativity was sought for this show was his experience in crossing over and blending techniques from lighting these different genres and performance disciplines.

Given plenty of scope, his starting point for this one was the wishes of director Martin Svinkløv and set designer Jan de Neergaard to have an overall naturalistic lighting treatment for the stage.

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The story follows a well-known narrative of warring clans and boy-meets-girl from the opposite sides of the tracks, however the production team wanted a rawer edge to this version, one that got into the heads of the main protagonists, ramped up the tension and the complications of judgement and expectations … and that generally looked beyond the basic storyline.

It started with a three month run at Lyngby Kulturhus Theatre in Copenhagen, then took a 7 month break before embarking on the next leg playing two weeks at the Docken venue, also in Copenhagen, followed by the three week national tour.

Sune, who had been using Robe products more frequently in his work last summer, then decided to replace the previous profile and LED wash moving lights – from a competitor brand – to Robe! He saw the re-start of the production as an ideal opportunity!

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Being so well-known as a story and the subject of countless previous performances, one of his key goals was to make this one stand out!
The touring segment had to fit into two trucks, so he needed a flexible, practical and sensibly sized solution to cover all the fundamental lighting needs and be able to add some depth and detail.

The lighting was essential to taking the audience on its journey which soft-touched on several social issues as well as containing some seriously scary scenes, like the nightscapes when the woods came alive with a myriad of creatures patrolling and protecting their domain for errant humans!

Ten of the LEDWash 600+ fixtures were positioned on five side booms each side of stage – one fixture per tower, with the other 14 rigged on the overhead bars.

“They were an incredibly useful tool,” stated Sune. To retain the more sinister mood of the work he minimised the front light, so there was more reliance on what was coming in from the sides. The variety of colours and looks he could produce from the LEDWashes was vital for setting the mood of each scene, washing the set and key lighting the actors.

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The DL7Ss were all on the overhead bars and were used for top and back key’ing and highlighting, and extensively for texturing the set. The stage was raked towards the audience, revealing a floor based projection surface that was perfect for intricate gobo work, and the DL7Ss worked constantly throughout the performance.

“The DL7Ss really enabled me to lift the show, to add vibrancy and detail and both they and the LEDWashes made a noticeable difference from the first iteration of the show in Copenhagen” says Sune, delighted that his decision to swap had produced such a positive impact.
Upstage, the CycFX 8 LED battens washed up the back-cloth.

Sune programmed and ran the show himself and worked closely with his chief LX Emil Finsen.
Having all these Robes to hand enabled a lot of extra finessing. “The added richness and intensity of the colours was really noticeable,” he says after the fine-tuning process was complete.

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It was the first time that he’s used any of these particular fixtures, but since specifying 40 x BMFL Spots for the Arena stage at the 2016 Roskilde Festival, Sune has been using Robe increasingly.

These were also the first DL7S fixtures in Denmark, an investment made for the tour by Copenhagen based rental company European Tour Productions (ETP) which has also included Robe’s new Spiider LED wash beams … all delivered via Danish distributor, Light Partner.
ETP has recently upgraded its moving light stock generally to include all the fixtures on this tour plus DL4S Profiles, a major commitment for them and a new customer in a buoyant Danish market.

Sune wants to use all of these fixtures again and he already has two upcoming shows for the same producers for which he will use ETP’s DL4S and the DL7S Profiles again. He is a freelance lighting designer, programmer, consultant and crew chief based in Copenhagen and is the lighting specialist among four individuals working out of creative practice b-ql.dk which is owned by Mikael Windfeldt.

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