

Robe for Rolling Stones No Filter



Thirty-Six Robe BMFL Spots were workhorse moving lights on the recent Rolling Stones 'No Filter' European tour, part of a spectacular and epic lighting design created by Patrick Woodroffe.

Patrick and associate designer Terry Cook of Woodroffe Bassett design (WBD) worked closely with stage architects Stufish on developing the show's overall aesthetic.

With many moving lights on the rig, they sought a high-powered fixture to occupy four 'slots' just below the tops of four imposing 23 meter high by 11 meter wide monolithic video towers which define the performance space.

"Patrick and I needed a multi-functional fixture and knew the positions would be hard to access and given the complexity of CDM rules and regulations and the requirement that crew be able to access the fixtures safely ... a lot of thought went into the process," explained Terry. "We decided on BMFLs because they are high powered, intense multi-functional moving lights with nice sized front lenses (giving rise to the much-loved quality fat beam) that are also reliable."



The lights were used to shoot into and illuminate the audience, to create classic huge aerial looks and to beam down onto the stage and band as they worked that area and the thrust!

As Terry said at the top of the article ... "they really are the workhorse fixtures of the rig."

Patrick has worked with the Rolling Stones for an impressive 35 years and ...developed “an incredibly rewarding and fulfilling relationship with this extraordinary band” in the process, so he enjoys a great rapport with them and a fluid understanding of the exact scale and style required for their touring shows to be a complete visual experience.

While video was always going to be a major part of No Filter, it was decided at the outset not to have one large surface, instead they went with four towers – giving a more interesting look and additional depth to the performance space, as well as being ideal as classy portrait IMAG scenes for featuring the four Rolling Stone band members.

Some of Patrick's inspiration for the monolithic style of the video towers came from original artwork from Stanley Kubric's seminal '2001: A Space Odyssey' movie, and once the core creatives including the Stufish team led by Ray Winkler and video content producer Sam Pattinson of Treatment were locked in to the concept of the clean stand-alone look, it was vital that there were no compromises.

All the usually visible stage machinery, steelwork, motors, winches, rigging and mechanics associated with a large-scale stadium rock 'n' roll show ... disappeared, a process requiring massive effort, thought, attention to detail and ingenuity!



Patrick wanted that very crisp, distinctive 'hard edged' look for the lighting ... and that was THE major consideration that Terry took away from the first design meetings. With audience lighting also being vital to the show, they knew early-on that they wanted a line of lights in high positions.

“We decided to cut the primary audience lighting positions into the rectangular form of the screens so they become an integral part of the architectural composition,” stated Patrick.

Terry and Jeremy Lloyd of Wonder Works, who project managed the tour's pre-production technical elements worked intensively on how to achieve the desired overall look of the stage and the slots in the video screens.

Belgian entertainment engineering specialist Wlcreations was also involved in calculating, producing and fabricating some special elements and imaginative rigging to make this aspect of the design work as elegantly as Patrick had envisioned.

As the video crew build the screens out of LED frames filled with 12 mm Saco S12 LED – supplied by Solotech – on site, they created the slots about 2 meters below the top, and once the space was complete, lighting contractor Neg Earth's crew slid a lighting frame into the gaps which locked to the existing screen supports. Then the BMFL Spots were installed.

The fixtures were located via a locking bracket and sat at 90 degrees to the stage. Front panels with 1-cell DWE Moles were then fitted to cover the base of the BMFLs, followed by the rain shields, then the rear rain hat. The process of rigging each row of 9 x BMFL Spots neatly and securely took only around 15 / 20 minutes thanks to

some nifty and well-engineered solutions.



The positioning of these BMFLs was crucial because Patrick wanted to use them extensively throughout the show, and to be able to hit multiple positions onstage as well as out in the audience and produce an array of spectacular aerial looks. While getting the air look was relatively straightforward in any position, with the units hung in the standard position, it would not have been possible to hit the stage. They would have ended up hitting the screens instead!

It also would have left a large gap beneath the lights, which was not congruous with the clean look. The only option was to rig them at 90 degrees and slide the units forward to be able to hit the drum riser at 22 ft. from the front of the stage.

This off-beat positioning also resulted in more dynamic air looks!

WBD also looked after the video integration on the tour. A d3 media server system (now called 'disguise') was spec'd for the playback content and to format IMAG feeds coming from camera director Nick Keiser to give them a bit of extra love with effects and tints! Roland Greil from WBD, in the role of screens director and d3 programmer, looked after keeping the balance between all visual elements, which was key on a show like this.

Terry Cook ran the overall project for WBD, Ethan Weber was lighting director / operator, with Roland Greil and Nick Keiser looking after the video elements.

The jaw-droppingly visual, dramatic and entertaining 'No Filter' tour was managed and coordinated on the road in Europe by production manager Dale "Opie" Skjerseth.