

Royal Albert Hall Invests in Robe BMFL Spots



Stereophonics photos by David Morrell

London's iconic Royal Albert Hall is the first live performance venue in the UK to invest in Robe's BMFL Spot moving light, with a purchase of 17 fixtures for its in-house lighting rig.



The decision was taken by the Hall's Senior Technical Manager, Ollie Jeffery, and the venue's award-winning Lighting Design and Systems Manager, Richard Rhys Thomas. The units were delivered by Robe UK in conjunction with TSL Lighting where the process was co-ordinated by Ashley Lewis, Robe UK's Key Account Manager for Touring, TV, Theatre & Film.

The Hall stages approximately 400 performances per year in the main auditorium, which has a capacity of over 5,000 (variable according to configuration) and is known for its splendid environment and famous organ, built in 1871 and comprising 9,999 pipes.

In addition, there are about 400 events in other spaces around the building, encompassing all types of performance – from comedy and cabaret to world music, education workshops and storytelling sessions for children.

It is one of the busiest – and most prestigious – performance spaces in Europe, and the hectic schedule keeps Ollie and his technical team of 16 fully energised all year round.



Left to right, RAH Senior Technical Manager, Ollie Jeffery, Ashley Lewis Robe UK's Key Account Manager for Touring, TV, Theatre & Film and RAH Lighting Design and Systems Manager, Richard Rhys Thomas.

Ollie said: "2015 is a significant year for us. We are investing in over Â£400,000-worth of technical developments throughout the building: including re-building our stage, and installing a new riser system and new orchestral chairs.

"The purchase of the new BMFL is the start of a five-year replacement programme for lighting, which will see us update some of the older units. It is important that we have the most up-to-date technology for the vibrant and diverse selection of incoming productions choosing to use the in-house facilities. Keeping abreast of the latest technologies, and the desire to offer flexible world-class solutions to clients, were both major factors in the BMFL purchase.

"More recently, Richard and the lighting crew have been sub-hiring Robe fixtures regularly for an assortment of shows, so by the time they bought their own, they had plenty of experience with the brand, first hand.



“Just to be sure, as it was a big decision, they also invited six independent lighting designers to assess the options and make recommendations for a high powered moving light purchase which culminated in a day of shoot-outs between all the short-listed contenders.

“As a direct result of that, they decided on BMFL Spots.”

Richard said he liked the brightness, the zoom range and the speed of the BMFL Spots, together with the smooth, streamlined colour-mixing and the elegant dimmer curves.

“We needed a truly versatile fixture to cover for all the shows that we are asked to light ourselves, in addition to a light source that would satisfy a wide range of visiting LDs from all over the world,” Richard said.

The goal is to offer the highest production values to anyone choosing to use the house systems “ which can be made available with or without our design services. The new BMFL Spots are helping to expand everyone’s options.



One of the first seasons to use the lights was the high profile, 15th-anniversary series of Teenage Cancer Trust shows, with a star-studded line up including Stereophonics, The Who, Paul Weller, Noel Gallagher’s High Flying Birds, and a comedy night hosted by Kevin Bridges.

Dave Farmer was brought in by Teenage Cancer Trust to co-ordinate lighting for the event.

The Mountbatten Festival of Music, programmed by Tom Young, was the first major event lit by Richard, utilising 16 x BMFLs plus 22 x Pointes and 20 x LEDBeam 100s.

Most of the venue's over-stage lighting now comprises moving lights, and they have also invested substantially in LED lighting to highlight the Hall's magnificent Victorian architecture. Their first Robe purchase in 2013, of 38 x ParFects, was to light the roof dome and the organ.

“We knew from this that we could trust the reliability and build-quality of Robe,” said Ollie. “We are extremely excited by this purchase and hope the strong relationship we have with Robe will continue over the coming years.”



Royal Albert Hall

The Royal Albert Hall is the world's most famous stage. Last year, its breathtaking auditorium hosted 397 shows by the world's greatest artists. The magical atmosphere combined with inspired artists creates legendary events.

Opened in 1871 as part of Prince Albert's vision for a centre for the Arts and Sciences, the Hall is a registered charity which operates without any public revenue funding, remaining true to his founding ambitions within a modern context. Extending the brand with almost 400 events outside the auditorium, the Hall has broadened its appeal to younger, diverse audiences whilst still engaging its existing customers. It also works with schools, young people, disadvantaged groups and partners such as Music for Youth through its Education & Outreach programme, reaching over 100,000 participants each year as part of its extensive public benefit remit.

www.royalalberthall.com

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