



Saint Mary's School Encourages Young Lighting Designers

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On the 18th of May St Mary's School for Girls, a prominent private school for girls in South Africa, hosted their annual Battle of the Bands competition. The competition takes place in the schools 530-seater theatre and celebrates the musical talent and lighting design talent of many schools in the greater Johannesburg area.

DWR Distribution, a prominent lighting and audio distributor in South Africa, is a proud sponsor of the event and each year they send an arsenal of lighting fixtures including two Robin DL4S Profile four Robin CycFX 8, two Robin Megapointe, two Longman Phoenix Bars, eight Robin Spikie, three LED - IRGB 8, six Robin 100 LEDBeam and a dot2 core to Saint Mary's to give the school children an opportunity to "play on some of the best gear for the event" as Olebogeng Boinamo, who specialises in training and technical support at DWR, puts it.

The school hosts an impressive theatre, The Edge, headed up by Sasha Ehlers who says, "I think these sorts of competitions are very important access points for all the youth involved, for many of them this has opened completely new and different career prospects".



This year's budding lighting design roster included teams from Jeppe High School for Boys, Alexandra Secondary School, Kwa-Bhekilanga Secondary School, St Mary's, St John's College, and Parktown High School for Girls. Alexandra Secondary School and Kwa-Bhekilanga High school are part of the Ikusasa Lethu Programme, an educational programme created by St Mary's geared to help the disadvantaged pupils in the surrounding area of Alexandra better their education. St Mary's have introduced a number of pupils in this programme to the lighting industry and an event like Battle of the Bands has real world consequences for these students, who would not ordinarily have access to the equipment or the learning environment.



Olebogeng Boinamo acted as a judge for the lighting aspect of the competition this year and says, "The criteria were simple: Did the lighting teams use their equipment well and did the lighting accompany the song well?" The winner this year was Jack Healy from St John's College. "Jack had a good grasp of the fundamentals and made it work well," said Olebogeng. "You could tell that he had listened to the song a lot as the lighting was guided by the music and lyrics."

DWR presented Jack with a DMXking USB DMX and two theatre tickets for an upcoming theatre production of his choice. The winner and two runners-up teams, comprising of Erin Kersten, Chante Louw and Caitlin Bloom from Saint Marys and Lailah Naidoo, Mahirah Hoosen and Leia Singh from Parktown Girls received swag and were treated to a live performance and backstage tour of The Voice South Africa, at Mosaïek Church. Jannie de Jager of DWR Distributions was their chaperone and said, "The kids were super cool and clearly stoked. They got to see what this industry has to offer and met some cool people along the way like Nico Andre Siebrits, the assistant lighting designer for The Voice SA".

A special word of thanks to Chris de Lancey of Multi-Media, the full technical suppliers of The Voice South Africa, who allowed access for the backstage tour.

