

StageQubes highlight SAMA Awards

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Story courtesy Louise Stickland



Robe's StageQube 324 LED panels were a prominent visual feature onstage at the 2008 South African Music Awards (SAMA's), staged at the Sun City Superbowl and broadcast live on SABC1.

The event celebrates the best of South Africa's hugely diverse music culture, and this year, the 14th SAMA's featured 64 categories and was watched by over three million TV viewers.

The 24 StageQubes were supplied by Mark Gaylard of MGG, the first rental company in South Africa to invest in the medium resolution Robe LED panels. The lighting design – which also included Robe moving lights – was created by Robert Hoey, and the stage design featured additional low and high resolution LED surfaces and plasma screen columns. David Hossey of Strike Productions was production manager.



The StageQubes were placed centre stage beneath the main onstage hang of LED screen, mounted on two customised movable stage trucks which split the panels down the middle so they could be moved on and off

stage for changeovers. Once in the closed position, they provided a stage entrance and a dynamic backdrop for all the live performers.

The TV director Eugene Naidoo specifically wanted the StageQubes run without their diffusion panels on the fronts to produce a dotted LED effect on camera – a first for South Africa.

Graphics and content for all the screen surfaces were custom created for the event and stored on hard drive in the OB truck. The signals were fed directly into the StageQube controller for outputting to the panels, which were run at 60% brightness to ensure the bigger picture, complete with the lighting, was balanced appropriately.



Hoey operated the lighting using a WholeHog3 console, with the Robe ColorSpot 700E ATs and ColorSpot 250E ATs – also supplied by Strike Productions – all focussed on the stage and set.

MGG's StageQubes were also utilised by LD Mauritz Jacobs on the most recent Idols series. This was another show produced by Strike Productions for South Africa's popular MNET independent TV channel.

This time, the StageQubes were used to make up 4 stepped pyramid shapes positioned around the stage and flanking a large projection screen – with their orientation swapped about each week.

Content was supplied via an Arkaos media server, consisting of a wide selection of highly effective abstracts and wallpaper effects.

Mark Gaylard says, "LED is definitely a technology of the future for television visuals," adding that people continue to be impressed with the StageQubes as he continues to use them for a selection of shows and actively demo them to potential new clients.

