

Stuttgart. Ein Traum is Mad for iSpiiders

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Robe's waterproof iSpiiders wash beam LED moving lights provided a perfect solution for the recent production of "Stuttgart. Ein Traum" (Stuttgart. A Dream) a lively, funny and innovative new work that is a collage of street, puppet, physical and ensemble theatre performance referencing the city's history and culture, created in a collaboration between Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, the Schauspielbühnen Theatre.

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The show was presented in the open air over 10 days in the Stuttgart Staatsgalerie's impressive Rotunda, an outdoor amphitheatre and one of the most striking architectural features of this postmodern masterpiece building designed by James Stirling in the 1970s.

Lighting and audio rental company Mad Music supplied the lighting and sound for the production with company owner Mathias Bremgärtner and project manager Peter Wormstädt working in close conjunction with the Schauspiel's technical director, Stefan Hauschke.

The iSpiiders were part of a purchase by Mad Music initially for this show, and now for general rental stock.



With the live performance and event industry cautiously returning to work after a lengthy pandemic-enforced shutdown, Mathias and Peter felt confident about making this investment in iSpiiders due to the general increase in outdoor events ... prompted by the Covid situation.

Initially this is through the rest of summer and the early autumn months, but it's a trend they think could easily extend further during these Covid times, to feed the general surge in demand for performance events in safer external environments.

Funded by a special programme "Art in Spite of the Distance" set up by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Art & Science, once the venue was chosen and the piece - directed by Klaus Hemmerle - involving six ensemble actors / singers and a multi-instrumentalist started to evolve, Peter and Stefan assessed the best lighting treatments.

They decided that for the main performance lighting, the entire amphitheatre should be washed

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with good quality lumens that could also be adjusted subtly as the natural light faded into darkness. Some of the architectural details, sculptures and art pieces around the Rotunda could then be detailed with smaller wireless LED fixtures.



Already using Robe's LEDWash 600 extensively, the newly launched IP65 rated iSpiider immediately came to mind. They wanted an LED solution, both to be greener and because power was limited, and the idea was to leave the lights rigged in place throughout the period.

For aesthetics, covering lights with domes was out, so water-resilience became an essential tick-box.

Added to that, on show days the lighting and sound rig needed to be tech'd by one person, so considerations like the light weight and reasonable size - handleable by one person - became further factors in the choice in lights.

Finally, to minimise cabling, they took advantage of the iSpiider's inbuilt Lumen Radio wireless DMX transmitter to run on a wireless data network. Together with the battery powered wireless LED lights and an MA Dot2 for control, it was a very viable and practical lighting rig.

Eight iSpiiders in total were used on "Stuttgart. Ein Traum", out of the 16 units purchased by Mad Music from Robe Germany.

Four fixtures were positioned on two towers either side of the entrance / exit between the amphitheatre and the main Staatsgalerie building, and another four, also on two towers, were on the first-floor balcony level pointing through two of the open 'windows' integrated into the

Rotunda's curved wall design.

“Eight iSpiiders provided a really nice ambient wash across the area. Lighting a show like this it is not about how much kit you have but how thoughtfully and resourcefully you use it!” commented Peter, with nods of agreement from Stefan.

Three days of rehearsals on site followed a month by the cast in conventional rehearsal facilities, while the lighting and sound cues were all programmed into the consoles during one evening session.

Mad Music has other Robe fixtures in rental stock including BMFLs and Spikies plus the LEDWash 600s, the first ones purchased 10 years ago and still working well! As these have worked so constantly, they were again reassured that the robust and water-resistant iSpiider would be a solid investment.



Mathias thinks IP-rated fixtures like iSpiiders are an “ultimately useful” type of luminaire. These can also be used to illuminate building facades and other areas, so they will potentially lead to further work as “outside events and activities are definitely here to stay for the immediate future!”

He remembers back to the first Robe purchases and is delighted to have seen the brand grow and become established as an industry leader in that relatively short time, building a reputation for “quality engineered” products.



Mathias started Mad Music 33 years ago when still at school. Not yet old enough to have a driver's licence, Peter came onboard to take care of the transport ... and the two have worked together ever since. Stefan Hauschke also worked for Mad Music before joining the Schauspiel, so it's a tight-knit community!

The company's regular work as a sound and lighting supplier spans TV, theatre, music sectors plus some film lighting and - pre Covid - many events, and they also supply and service several fixed installations.

Photos: Louise Stickland