

TAQA Theater De Vest Invests in Robe

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Lighting technician Rafi Oliemans on the left with Mattijs van Muiden, head of technical at TAQA Theater De Vest

TAQA Theater De Vest in Alkmaar, the Netherlands, is a vibrant performance environment that has upgraded its main hall lighting to include a substantial number of Robe moving lights ... with 47 x T1 Profiles and 12 x LEDBeam 350s added to the house lighting rig.

Most of these are now in daily use in this 700-capacity theatre venue, while another 28 x T1 Profiles and 8 x T1 Fresnels have been installed in the 270-seat small hall for front lighting.



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In addition to these lighting fixtures in each room, there is also a set of mobile lights that can be utilised as and when needed across various locations, and this comprises 12 x iBeam 350s, 8 x LEDWash 300s, 16 x LEDBeam 350s, 20 x T.5 Profiles, 6 x TetraXs and 8 x LEDPointes.

Theater De Vest offers a diverse programme of comedy, drama, musicals, dance shows, concerts and festivals and also has a conference centre. The same management team also operates the adjacent Grote Sint Laurenskerk (Great St. Lawrence Church), a glorious 15th-century Gothic architectural jewel ... as a thriving contemporary event space.



A frenetic and varied schedule sees the theatre stage around 300 shows and concerts and about

50 commercial events each year, plus several hundred more in the church.

Mattijs van Muiden is head of technical and explained that the main hall upgrade process started two years ago, when they were looking for the best and most viable LED options.

The multispectral light source of the T1 appealed, offering excellent quality optics with great colour rendition and outstanding colour mixing that was smooth, subtle and refined.



“We liked the precise shuttering,” confirms Mattijs, referring to Robe’s patented Plano4™ 4-blade framing shutter module, which offers unparalleled beam control with individual movement and

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rotation parameters for each blade.

They also appreciated the excellent gobos and the overall quality of the luminaire.

Additionally seeking a small wash light, initially for the portal bridge, extensive testing led them to Robe's LEDBeam 350, which proved to be the best option. They chose the RGBA version to create stronger ambers and brighter enhanced oranges.



The iBeam 350s – an IP rated version of the LEDBeam – were needed specifically to work outdoors as a multipurpose light for their popular 6-week summer festival, which takes place just outside

the theatre and the church on the town square.

Mattijs and the crew liked the iBeam 350's versatility and have used them for front lighting, washing architectural features or for eye candy effects at the back of a stage or space.

Previously, the theatre had some Robe LEDWash 300 fixtures, which had proved very reliable over the years, but most of the house lights had been conventionals together with a few domestically branded moving lights.

With the Robe products now in place, it is a different world!

Especially when it comes to lighting the musicals, as the rig can offer so much more richness and complexity for LDs to craft and layer their shows with a greater range of different treatments. Visiting productions will typically use their front and over-stage lighting rig and bring in their own floor specials.

The new fixtures have also helped streamline the workflow and made it easier and quicker to light their own in-house productions.



Mattijs runs a technical crew of 10, plus freelancers and one or two interns a year. He thinks Robe is a solid professional brand with a good reputation and is well known in the Dutch market thanks to the hard work, foresight, and great support from the team at Controllux, Robe's very proactive Benelux distributor.

He has visited the Robe factory in the Czech Republic, which he thinks is "impressive - very well organised and great to see sustainability being properly regarded in the manufacturing operation."

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Photos: By Louise Stickland