

The Barbican Invests in Robe



London's iconic and respected arts centre, the Barbican, has invested in Robe DL4S LED profile and Pointe multi-functional moving lights which are integral to a new moving light rig installed in the 1,943 capacity Barbican Hall concert venue. *Photos – of King Creosote – by Louise Stickland*

The new rig has been designed by Jason Kew, Technical Supervisor in charge of lighting in the Barbican's Music Department, and the fixtures were specified by Jason and Mark Bloxsidge, Technical Manager (Music Events), following an evaluation which involved the whole technical team at the Barbican Hall.

The order was delivered via leading UK sales and rental company White Light and Robe UK, co-ordinated by Jonathan Haynes for White Light following a tender process led by the Barbican's Luke Freeborough, Technical Manager (Projects).

The Barbican Hall was originally built as an orchestral venue when the Centre opened in 1982. In addition to being the home of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), it has gained a formidable reputation for production excellence, and is now a truly multi-purpose space utilised daily for numerous performances encompassing all genres of music, plus conferences, special events, graduation ceremonies and more – a full array of one-off one-day shows.



As a result of this intense schedule, a permanent orchestral lighting rig is installed overhead in open white, pointing straight down. A separate overhead rig is available – spread over 5 LX bars and two more in the auditorium – to cater for all the other show requirements, and optimised to avoid the de-rigging or re-rigging of any fixtures. This over-stage rig is now entirely comprised of moving lights including the 13 x Robe DL4S and 15 x Pointes.

This means they can swap between shows a lot quicker, more easily and efficiently, eliminating the need for any

overhead and ladder access work to re-colour and refocus the rig which previously would have also taken up stage time.

The new over-stage fixtures also facilitate the creation of more comprehensive and dynamic shows than those possible with the old moving light / generic combination system.



Energy efficiency and low maintenance also played a part in the choice of an LED fixture, and the 13 x DL4Ss in particular have very effectively replaced 30 older moving lights and profiles.

There are still plenty of generics in the assorted FOH positions which are more easily accessed from the bridges and catwalks.

Another reason for the moving light upgrade was to keep the rig competitive and in tune with the current technologies and expectations from a high profile producing and receiving house.

The requirement is increasing constantly for moving light shows to compliment contemporary dance pieces, modern music concerts and the proliferation of theatre and semi-staged format orchestral concerts that are popular right now.

"We chose DL4Ss as their tungsten emulation is excellent and the shutters are fast and accurate," elucidated Mark.

"They give us the scope and flexibility to do simple lighting tasks like focusing neatly on a lectern for a corporate presentation or a talk, right through to jazz and rock 'n' roll shows when we can really utilise the fabulous colours and excellent gobos".



Jason has had previous experience with Robe's DL4S and adds that the tungsten colour matching (of the lamps they have replaced) is spot-on, the framing is great and "The general overall versatility of the light is amazing".

After an exhaustive testing and selection process – including two shoot outs set up by White Light during the evaluation period – Pointes were selected as the best lights for effects and aerial work.

"Their power and speed is outstanding," said Jason, "They are great for giving our amplified shows a contemporary look and feel through the beams and haze".

He was also impressed with the framing system which enables the beam to remain sharp and tight at the 'bottom' end of the light ... and also the fact that The Pointe is effectively four different fixture types in one housing – properly multi-functional!

Jason runs the lighting department in the Concert Hall and undertakes much of the lighting design work for incoming shows as well as freelancing, so he brought his wide experience of touring and lighting in many different venues and scenarios to bear when finalising the Barbican Hall spec.

"My primary job as LD is to engage the audience and enhance the performance ... we are a leading venue with exceptionally high production standards, and I also wanted to have new technology that has a future and will be relevant for a few years to come. I think with this new rig we have really achieved all of this – it's completely changed the way we can light a show".