

Theater Basel Grosse Bühne upgrades with Robert Juliat LED followspots

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Theater Basel, Switzerland's largest three-genre theatre with its own opera, ballet and theatre ensembles, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the new Stadttheater building in 2025, and invested in four new LED followspots from French lighting manufacturer, Robert Juliat, for its Grosse Bühne (Big Stage). Two Arthur LT long throw LED followspots and two RJ Tristan compact LED followspots were supplied by RJ's exclusive distributor for Switzerland, Electric Claudio Merlo (ECM).

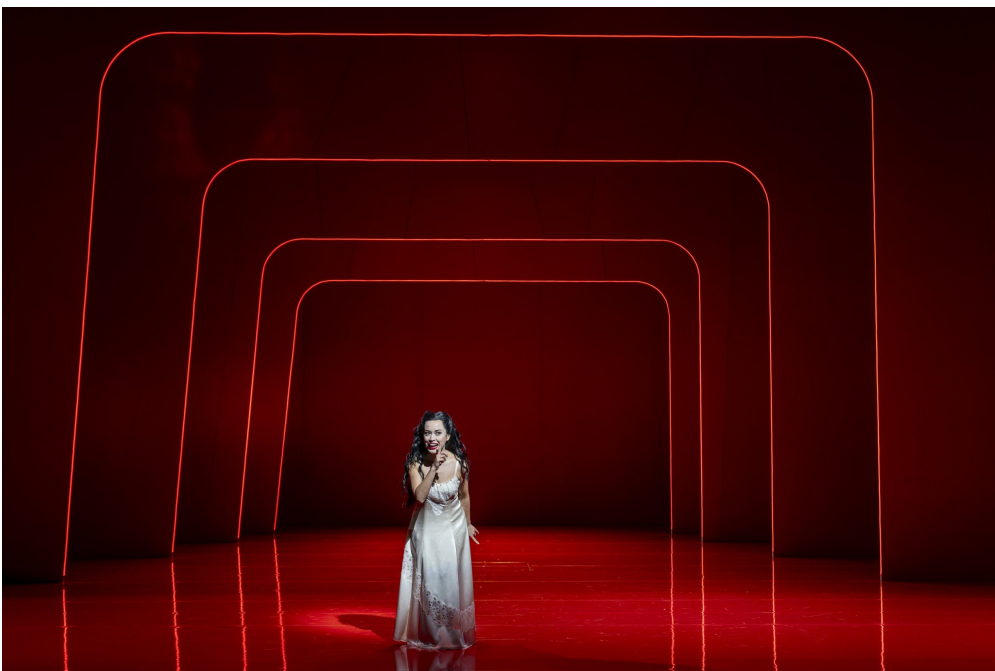


Photo: © Ingo Hoehn – Theater Basel – Opera Macbeth by Giuseppe Verdi

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The 860-seat Grosse Bühne is primarily used for Theater Basel's own opera and ballet productions, but also hosts theatre and musical performances and the occasional touring production, with 10 original productions each year, and more than 40 productions across all stages.

Set in the centre of Basel, the Theatre, which also houses the 300-seat Small Stage, known as the Kleine Bühne, and the modern 450-seat Schauspielhaus (Playhouse), made its new followspot investment as part a continuous renewal of its lighting system, a plan which ensures it can always bring the best and latest technology to its productions.



Photo: © Ingo Hoehn – Theater Basel – Opera Macbeth by Giuseppe Verdi

“The new RJ followspots arrived just at the right time as our existing spots were beginning to

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show their age,” says Theater Basel’s head of lighting and resident lighting designer, Cornelius Hunziker, who has been at the venue since 2012. “We were simultaneously able to upgrade our followspot stock to LED.

“We were looking for devices that could reliably replace HMI 2.5kW and 1.2kW followspots in terms of optical system, light quality, and brightness,” he explains. “Robert Juliat is well known for its followspots, and we have other HMI and LED models from them already in use in-house. We have had good experiences with these, so it was a sensible choice for us to stay with the brand.

“We specified our requirements in-house as a team, had the devices demonstrated by ECM, and tested them thoroughly. ECM have been a very good partner to us for a long time. They provide excellent service, and are very quick and dedicated when it comes to enquiries and technical support.

“Our trials showed us that Arthur LT and Tristan were the best quality in terms of the optical system, brightness, and above all, light colour and quality, with a great CRI.”

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Photo: © Ingo Hoehn – Theater Basel – Opera Die Zauberfloete by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Two Arthur LT 4°-10° 800W LED followspots, which replace their 2.5kW HMI predecessors, are mounted on tripods to the rear of the Grosse Bühne auditorium. “With throw distances of 28m-40m, we needed something really powerful with a good optical system, and Arthur LT had all the capability,” confirms Hunziker.

“Ease of use was also very important and the first response we had from our operators was that they were really great to handle,” he states. “Arthur is quite large but we optimised our available space by dispensing with the removable front colour changer and adding a simple colour frame which, along with the integral CTO and frost, covers most of our needs.”

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Located in open positions directly behind the audience seating, quietness of operation was also of paramount importance, and Hunziker confirms that Arthur LT's Silent Mode is very efficient at meeting these requirements too.

The Theater's two Robert Juliat Tristan 7°-14.5° 825W LED followspots, with their unique new motorised iris, replace an existing pair of 1.2kW HMI fixtures. Unusually the Tristans are suspended from heavy duty Z-Decke truss on either side of the proscenium, from where they cover throw distances between 12m-23m. "We have a very steep angle and very restricted hanging space, so this was the only way to mount Tristan," says Hunziker. "Even so, despite its compact size, we also removed the front colour changer, but it's the perfect beam angle for this position. The handling is great, as are the brightness and dimmer.



Photo: © Ingo Hoehn – Theater Basel – Opera Die Zauberfloete by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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“Most significantly however, as the newest generation of Robert Juliat followspots, Tristan introduces a whole new concept with its electronic iris. This makes iris control so much smoother, plus you can scale it, set maximum limits and even control it direct from the console. It’s a game changer!”

The new Arthur LT followspots were used for the first time in Theater Basel’s new musical production *Grand Finale* before all four new units were brought into play for the classic revival of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*.

“We are very happy with our new Arthur LT and Tristan followspots,” concludes Hunziker. “They are much brighter and the LED gives us a constant light source with no need to colour shift as the lamp gets older.”

Arthur LT and Tristan join Theater Basel’s inventory of Robert Juliat LED fixtures which includes a variety of followspots, Dalis 860 cyclorama lights, Dalis 864 4-colour Footlights and Dalis 862 Variable White Footlights which have been in constant use since their arrival at the theatre in 2018. “The colours give you everything you could need,” says Hunziker.

Robert Juliat is distributed exclusively in Switzerland by Electric Claudio Merlo www.ecm-sa.ch

For more information on Robert Juliat Arthur LT, Tristan, Dalis and RJ’s full range of lighting solutions, visit www.robertjuliaticom

More information on Theater Basel can be found at www.theater-basel.ch