

Vari-Lite's VL2600 Profile is a trusty silent partner for BBC Proms



London, UK – When Bernie Davis, one of the UK's leading television lighting directors, trialed Vari-Lite's new VL2600 Profile LED luminaire on the prestigious 2019 *BBC Proms* season, he found they successfully met his many performance lighting requirements.

"I had seen the VL2600 Profile demonstrated and it looked to be a good move forward in the quest for a better programmable profile – an essential tool for so many reasons," says Davis. "Having tried some on a one-day Pentecost service, I thought they looked worth a second look on a more trying show, both in size and needs."

He decided to try them on the *BBC Proms*, a two-month festival of classical music with an intense schedule, staged annually at London's Royal Albert Hall. With concerts broadcast daily on BBC Radio and over a third of performances recorded or broadcast live on BBC Television, it's essential that lighting tools are reliable and versatile, but also that they are quiet in operation and great-looking on camera.



For the *Proms*, Davis positioned the fixtures on an advance truss, quite high over the front of stage. “They were very successful in keying items all around the hall,” he says, “particularly during the children’s ‘CBeebies’ Prom, which had action everywhere, even a rocket that ‘launched’ from the area lift!”

The *Proms*’ demanding schedule allows little time for maintenance or significant changes to the lighting rig, so fixtures need the flexibility to cope with a wide range of performances and stage layouts. “Many of the concerts you see on TV have just one three-hour rehearsal, with no lighting time between rehearsal and performance,” says Davis. “Over the years we have moved increasingly to moving lights, as they offer far more flexibility and reduce the need for more crew – as long as they are reliable.”

And of course, with classical music being recorded for broadcast, avoiding unwanted sound is a major imperative for the lighting team. “To satisfy BBC Radio, the lighting rig must be silent, as concerts are not necessarily covered with close microphones,” says Davis. “On the *Proms*, sound takes precedence over lighting.”



The VL2600 Profiles also delivered in a variety of other areas, says Davis. “They have a very flat field and good shutter performance, which makes them very usable. Also, the color performance on camera looks very good, and the wide zoom range is an essential for me, as they can then answer so many demands during the season.”

Summarizing, he says, “I was looking for a good, programmable profile spot that would be quiet enough for use on the *Proms* yet flexible enough to provide a high quality light source with good zoom range, good shuttering on a flat field, and good color performance on camera. The VL2600s seemed to meet all those needs comfortably.”

