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Robe Brings Colour to Snow White

Products Involved

DL4F Wash™ DL4S Profile™ LEDBeam 100™ LEDWash 600™ ParFect 100™

Robe gets into the great tradition of English Panto this festive season with over 50 fixtures - including the latest in the DL series luminaires which are built for theatre - specified by Lighting Designer Andy Webb for a lively and colourful production of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', produced by UK Productions at Blackpool Grand Theatre.

Andy immediately thought of Robe again after pioneering the large scale use of LED moving and static lighting luminaires in commercial panto for 'Dick Whittington' last year at High Wycombe, when he was approached to light another popular fairy-tale story laced with slapstick humour, hi-jinks and audience interaction.

One of the classic references to this Brothers Grimm story is the 1937 Disney animated musical fantasy film, and Andy "Wanted to bring that truly 'Disneysque' surface optimism and style to lighting this production" which entailed the application of "Lots of colour, definition and attention to detail as well as ensuring that the characters are beautifully lit, balanced and immediately recognizable".

Due to the tight stage and wing space at the Grand Theatre - an original Matcham designed venue opened in 1894 and now Grade II Listed - the set primarily relies on flown cloths rather than large elaborate scenic pieces, which also puts more emphasis on the lighting generally.

With LX bars 1, 2 and 3 having substantial gaps between them, at times throughout the show, at least one of them is obscured behind one or more cloth that is dropped in ... so all the lights had to be properly 'multi-functional' ... and that was the biggest challenge in lighting the piece.

The FOH circle was the starting point for fixture placement and here are two Robe DL4Ss which take care of texturing all the back-cloths with gobos and throwing general light and colour onto the stage. Andy is making the most of the framing shutters to keep the lighting tightly focused on the stage, trimming off any spillage onto the pros arch.

"They are well bright enough to be seen above the static traditional profiles I am using onstage for key light," he comments.

On the pros booms either side of the stage are two Robe LEDWash 600s, two LEDBeam 100s and three PARFect 100s. The higher positioned PARfects colour all the cloths and combine with more PARFect 100s in the side-stage shin-buster position which cut across the Dwarves when they are onstage. The fixtures' excellent CTO correction is spot-on for providing warm low-level kickers.

The LEDBeam 100s create effects like lightning into the audience and the 'monster moments when the Evil Queen (Snow White's wicked step-mother) is onstage plotting nastiness and subversion! The advanced bar features two Robe 600E Spots, used for specials, pick-ups and to assist the front gobo coverage.

Centre stage at the front on the floor is a MiniMe LED effects projector which has been loaded with custom video content for this show, projected onto the mirror gauze when the Evil Queen is asking the Mirror about her chances of winning the attentions of Prince Charming. A task for which the MiniMe is perfect!

Moving back upstage, LX1 had a 600E Spot rigged right in the centre flanked by a pair of LEDWash 600s and then a pair of ColorSpot 575E ATs offstage.

LX2 contains another four ColorSpot 575E ATs, with a DL4F Wash LED fresnel dead centre ... and six PARfect 100s.

The DL4F was chosen for its zoom capabilities which, combined with the frost, allows Andy to spread beautifully luminescent colouration right across the set and stage, and also, tightened up, turn round and deal with all the upstage pick-ups that the follow spots can't reach due to their positioning and the steep angle of the auditorium. "The DL4Fs are really bright and invaluable for both these functions," elucidates Andy.

The PARfect 100s are fitted with a 20 degree diffusion and utilised as top back light upstage of the front of the pros apron, while the 575s are great for gobo coverage across the entire downstage section of stage.

On LX3 are five Pointes ... one in the centre and four spread out equally along the bar, and these create all the big air effects and WOW moments - of which there are plenty - but the key is that the Pointes are not over-used.

Also on this bar are another 12 x PARFect 100s, six fitted with 20 degree diffusion for back lighting the upstage action, and the other six with 40 degree diffusion, which bounce nicely off the rear cyc and set pieces.

"PARFect 100 is a great general purpose light for theatre" comments Andy, "especially with the 40 degree diffusion added, which is ideal for blending into set and scenic pieces and also for producing excellent skin tones" ... this is a characteristic common to all of Robe's theatrical ranges.

Down at deck level, two booms each side of stage are both populated with another three PARFect100s (12 in total) with the 7 degree fixed beam angle ... selected because they have to push through the tiniest gaps in the set.

All lighting was programmed by Andy on an Avolites Tiger Touch 2 which is being looked after by the Grand Theatre's house LX crew for the run which finishes in January. The Robe fixtures were supplied by Enlightened Lighting from Bristol with support from Robe UK.

The lighting adds substance and its own distinctive dimension to a powerful and vibrant production replete with slick staging and choreography, drama, comedy and fun.





