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Stavanger Concert Hall Keeps it Quiet with Robe ESPRITES

Products Involved

ESPRITE® ESPRITE® PC ParFect 150™ RGBW

Stavanger Concert Hall is a gleaming, beautifully designed glass and steel architectural masterpiece occupying a stunning waterfront location in Norway's charismatic 'oil capital', where the hustle of marine-based industries fuse with a passion for culture and live performance.

The venue – busy reopening for an action-packed autumn – has not been quiet during the pandemic period, which has seen the delivery of 66 x Robe ESPRITE moving lights and 24 x ParFect 150s, all part of an ongoing technical upgrade overseen by head of lighting, Nils Foss.

The new fixtures are rigged in the 1200 seat "Fartein Valen" concert hall, named after the Norwegian composer Fartein Valen and featuring a magnificent organ made of 65,000 parts and unique in Norway, a work of art in its own right! Fartein Valen is home to the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra.

They are also in the fully flexible multi-purpose Zetlitz hall which has capacities of 850 seated and 1900 standing and is used for a wide range of performance – from raucous rock concerts to contemporary opera. It is named after poet, Lutheran pastor and Stavanger native, Jens Zetlitz.

The Concert Hall has some large highly attractive foyer areas which become flooded with natural light and are also used for various events, and there is a large outdoor amphitheater for summer shows.

The 48 x Robe ESPRITE Profiles and 18 x ESPRITE PCs are distributed between the two main rooms and have replaced a quantity of older moving lights purchased when the building opened in 2012.

The ParFect 150s have superseded older conventional LED side lights as part of Zetlitz's permanent house rig.

"It was time for a change," stated Nils. "We needed fixtures that were more powerful, quieter, lighter in weight and generally more versatile and sustainable."

The city of Stavanger made the budget available to facilitate arrival of the new lights over the summer - when the Robe fixtures were delivered by Norwegian distributor, Norsk Sceneteknikk AS.

Nils had initially started the quest for new fixtures in early 2020, just before the first waves of Covid-19 shut down the industry and delayed plans for a few months. However, he used the time to contact all the major professional lighting distributors in the country inquiring which fixtures they could bring to the table in nine different categories of luminaire, one of which was 'moving lights'.

These submissions were narrowed down to a 'long list' of around 300 fixtures - as they were also sourcing several static LED luminaires, a spot and wash for each hall, plus specials, effects, key lighting, etc.

Nils organized a 3-day event, kicked off by presentations by all the brands, culminating in with active shoot outs on day three. From this, he and a team - comprising top freelance technicians, programmers, operators, and LDs frequently working on Concert Hall projects, all paid for their time - evaluated each product individually.

They wrote comprehensive sets of notes and comparisons, and after some serious consultation, compiled a shortlist of fixtures to be examined in greater depth over the following two weeks.

From that, ESPRITES were chosen as the winning moving lights!

"It was an exhaustive process," stated Nils, "which gave us a proper chance to test everything to the max".

ESPRITE got a head start with an excellent demo by Lars Kristian Bakke from Norsk Sceneteknikk which impressed Nils and team who "liked ALL of its features".

Fan adjustment - to reduce the noise - especially for fixtures utilized in the Concert Hall was vital, as the requirement is for the conductor to be able to hear the proverbial pin drop on the stage! In addition to classical events, silence is also desirable for spoken word shows or conferences and presentations during corporate events. There are so many times when silence speaks volumes!

The ESPRITE's output and colour ranges also received top marks, along with the extensive features and the future-proofing brought by Robe's unique TE - LED TRANSFERABLE ENGINE - technology, an intelligent, powerful, and eco-friendly lighting solution enabling different engines - high powered, high CRI, 'tungsten' etc - to be used in the same fixtures.

"You can see for yourself how well built and engineered the units are," said Nils, adding that topping it all off was the "excellent" service they knew they could expect from the distributor.

To be absolutely certain about the decision, Nils also called round some other long term Robe users, finding that everyone he spoke to was "super happy" ... so he went ahead and placed the order.

The Concert Hall currently has 15 x ESPRITE Profiles and 18 x ESPRITE PCs in the rig, with the balance of the ESPRITE Profiles in the Zetlitz overhead system, joined by the 24 x ParFect 150s.

"ParFect is THE perfect name," quips Nils, also delighted with these fixtures that are used with their barn door attachments.

He is looking forward to the massive difference these new Robe lights - the first in the venue apart from some PATT2013s which have been hugely popular as scenic lights - will make to all the shows going forward.

Nils first started really noticing Robe products after the BMFL launch in 2014, and still rates these as one of the best moving lights of the decade. When the MegaPointe hit the market in 2018 he was even more impressed and started specifying Robe frequently for his other freelance lighting design projects.

The control platform is grandMA3, with new consoles delivered just before the pandemic shutdown also as part of the same upgrade package.

The venue was in use as a socially distanced rehearsal space for the Orchestra throughout the pandemic period and opened in the late summer of this year with a limited capacity of 200 which was then increased to 500. Both halls have also been busy for different livestream and digital broadcast activities, and the multi-purpose hall has even served as the meeting space for Stavanger Town Council whilst their own premises are refurbished.

The autumn sees a vibrant full capacity schedule which is "busy as hell" confirms Nils as he and his colleagues relish lighting a host of different new shows with their new Robe fixtures as the world of performance and live entertainment enthusiastically re-energises.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland







