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Robe Has Time for Slovenian Eurovision

All lighting designers love challenges and none more so than Crt Birska from design studio Blackout, who fitted nearly 400 lighting fixtures into a 20 x 20 metre space in Studio 1 at the Slovenian National television station – Radiotelevizija Slovenija (RTVSLO) – complex in Ljubljana.

A large proportion of these were Robe moving lights – with 54 x MegaPointes, 54 x Spiiders, 24 Pointes, 12 x FORTES and 14 x Tetra2s on the rig – all delivered by Slovenian rental company, Event Lighting.

Crt added these to all the fixtures that were available from RTV's studio in-house rig which also included two Robe BMFL Blades used as rear spotlights for the main artists.

Crt's lighting design was developed in close collaboration with set designer Greta Godnic, an elegant diagonally orientated square LED stage – allowing it to change shape and texture – located in the middle of the space.

Behind this were two 'upstage' walls created from LED strips and set in a V-shape aligning with the angle of the sides of the diagonal stage ... with the audience seated all around.

Above the stage were two box trusses, one inside the other, the outer one was populated with the 24 x Robe Pointes to give a cage effect. The inside square truss was also rigged with beam lights for a tighter cage, and Crt was able to create some excellent effects flipping back and forth between the different cage looks.

"I wanted this very precise, clean and well-defined overall look," he explained, "and I needed super flexible fixtures to achieve the goal of producing some truly unique looks and settings for the 12 competitors and five guest artists.

Crt works with Robe products a lot. They are readily available in Slovenia thanks to the hard work of Robe's distributor there MK Light Sound, and Event Lighting has one of the largest Robe inventories in the country.

Eleven of the FORTES, partially concealed, were positioned on the floor around the stage – beside the Tetra2s they were only ground based units – and looked spectacular utilised for eye-popping low angle gobo shots and other effects.

The remaining FORTE was rigged centrally in the front of the stage and controlled via a RoboSpot system, and this was the main key light.

The 54 x MegaPointes and 54 x Spiiders were all rigged on ladders in between the gaps in the LED columns across 6 levels, giving an 18 x 6 matrix of effects lights behind the stage, which looked spectacular. The combination of these two fixture types enabled Crt to produce an unlimited array of looks, scenes and effects.

It included some moody back-lighting and silhouetting of artists and back-highlighting of the lighting kit on the square trusses above the stage.

Underlining the lowest level of the wall of Robe moving lights was a line of strobes.

This is the 10th Eurovision pre-selection that Crt has lit for Slovenia, and every year he keeps imagining fresh and different ideas.

The wall of lights was something he had wanted to do for some time. “This was my lucky year in that respect, getting the chance to build this into the design and freely use prisms, gobos, flower effects, pixels, etc. I could have lit 100 different songs using this set up and still had headroom for more,” he noted.

The Tetra2s were initially intended to be integrated into the wall of Robe lights in the back, but once the site build started, Crt found a more optimal position for them behind the stage with the FORTE army.

Matching CTOs across all the fixtures was one of the crucial tasks for the lighting department – although quite straightforward on all the Robe fixtures – in addition to making it look spectacular. Another challenge was ensuring that everything was not too overwhelmingly bright but still filled the space nicely and looked balanced.

Crt commented, with a grin, that he could easily have added more lights into the space if the budget had allowed, but also noted that having some limits is good for creativity!

The challenge, as often the case with big high-pressure-high-profile TV shows ... was in the programming. Crt worked with his Blackout colleague Anze Trstenjak who took care of the key lighting

while he worked on the effects lighting. They spent 10 days pre-vizzing in WYSIWYG, followed by 10 days of rehearsals in the studio before the final event, which was broadcast live.

Thanks to Crt and others on the creative team - including Greta, director Tina Novak, LED content creator and playback video operator Andrej Inithar (VJ Rasta) - TV viewers and the live audience were treated to a stunning production.

Slovenia will be represented at the Eurovision Song Contest 2025 in Basel, Switzerland, by Klemen Slakonja with the song "How Much Time Do We Have Left", written by Klemen, Maja Slatinšek and Ryan Small.

Photo Credit: Crt Birska







