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Banking on Robe MiniMes

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Cape Town nightlife recently received a boost with new club The Bank opening just before Christmas, operating three days a week out of the beautiful art deco QV54 (54 Queen Victoria Street) building in downtown Cape Town. The lounge style environment – with comfortable, sociable seating areas and strategically placed dancing surfaces rather than a central dancefloor is attracting an enthusiastic hip, young crowd playing a mix of hip hop Caribbean, Miami and deep house.

Lighting and effects are provided by a combination of Robe MiniMes and miniPointe fixtures. These were specified by Günter Boisits, operations and financial manager for owners The Nava Group headed by Giorgio Nava, a local celebrity chef and nightlife entrepreneur who also owns five restaurants in the area.

The Nava Group's previously successful club venture, Rhodes House, was legendary on the club scene until 2007 closing at the height of its success.

Giorgio thinks the time is spot-on to launch The Bank as something fresh, new and invigorating in the 'Mother City'. In keeping with that vibe, he also wanted innovative technology onboard, and that's when Günter started the dialogue with Bradley Bruchhausen from the Cape Town branch of DWR, Robe's South African distributor.

QV54 – acquired by the Nava Group 2011 – has also been used for film shoots, corporate functions and weddings. It's a listed building, so the walls can't be touched, and to facilitate technical elements, a large four-legged ground support is installed into the main area, its legs tucked into the corners and juxtaposed against the deco columns.

The four MiniMes and two miniPointes are rigged around the trussing, together with some LED PARs, and run off a Dell OptiPlex touch screen system and Avolites Titan Mobile.

They had several options, explains Günter, but he and his colleagues reckoned that Bradley's Robe proposal was the best solution for the space.

"We were really impressed by the gobos and the video mapping capabilities of the MiniMes" he says, adding that they also fitted into the budget which was expedient at this stage as the costs of a club start-up are considerable.

The MiniMes are also perfect for projection mapping onto the ornate roof – a great effect which maximizes the unique environment and architectural features of the venue originally constructed in

1936 to house the Land Bank which specialized in financing commercial agriculture.

They also make it extremely easy to introduce logos and other branding around the space and as an effects lighting luminaire with full video output, are an order of magnitude more than just another spangley disco beam light! The miniPointes, they are finding to be a "small and very versatile" unit that can produce a wide array of effects including great laser simulations which Giorgio loves, so again it was completely the right fixture of the moment.

DWR helped with the initial programming and set up to get the venue get open - and so far it's been a resounding success, with plans emerging to add more miniPointes to the rig along with a laser.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland



