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DL7Ss for Tristan & Isolde at ENO

Products Involved

DL7S Profile™

DL7S LED Profile luminaires from Robe made their UK debut at the Coliseum in London's Covent Garden, as part of the lighting rig for the highly acclaimed English National Opera (ENO) production of Wagner's 'Tristan & Isolde' directed by Daniel Kramer.

Lighting was designed by Paul Anderson, set and scenic elements were created by influential sculptor Anish Kapoor and the video was designed by Frieder Weiss.

The DL7Ss were chosen because an LED source was required to complement the video images that did not interfere with the infra-red light source illuminating the stage for a series of IR video cameras, also used onstage.

It was felt that the particular qualities of LED light would work best in this context.

The DL7Ss were supplied by technical production specialist White Light, who purchased them specifically for this production.

The six DL7S Profiles were rigged on a FOH advance bar and were the only FOH lights used as the intense narrative drama of passion, separation and chaos unfolded.

"They were really good workhorses – bright, quiet and reliable," commented Paul adding that the white light output in particular was excellent in throwing the 10 – 15 metres from their advanced position to the stage.

Getting the colouration, texture and elemental quality of the light exactly right was vital to enhance the mood and the more abstract thoughts evoked by Kapoor's decisive and provocative set pieces – and this applied to both lighting and projection materials.

Act One featured a lot of gold leaf and richer hues were needed, while Acts Two and Three were mid and paler grey respectively.

The set in Act One was a large pyramid divided into three sections for which Paul needed to create triangular slices of light to complement the architectural form, achieved using the piercing beams and accurate framing shutters of the DL7S Profiles.

In Act Two, lines of light and movement followed the singers around the large spherical geode set piece, complete with twinkling crystals brought to life with concealed LED festoons, and the DL7Ss mimicking more follow spot-like behaviour.

Intricately applied, the lighting treatment helped bring each set piece and scene to life. The overall challenge, explains Paul was to get the correct blend of lighting and video working seamlessly, so it was almost impossible to differentiate between the sources of the effects. Paul's background is mainly in theatre – all genres from alternative and immersive to West End and Broadway blockbusters – and also lighting events, films and television. Although there is some inter-disciplinary overlap, he finds the intensity of opera as a performance medium both galvanising and exciting.

'Tristan & Isolde' was his third opera for the ENO and the eighth of his career.

He really enjoyed the experience of working with the creative tour de force of Kramer, Kapoor and Weiss. Time was relatively tight for lighting, with eight technical rehearsals over a three week period from the first session to press night, especially given the space defining role of the set and how it needed to be illuminated.

Paul comments how great it was working with everyone at the Coliseum again, including Adrian Plaut and his lighting department team which included Martin Doone.

Photo Credit: Catherine Ashmore





