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Robe Lighting Reyers Tower

Leading Belgian creative lighting designer Thomas Boets loves challenges, so when production company Fast Forward Events asked him to light the iconic Reyers Tower in Brussels – a 73 metre high concrete broadcasting pillar, complete with 34 diameter upper section, in total standing 89 metres tall and dominating the local skyline - he jumped at the chance!

He also chose Robe fixtures to accomplish the task which required a careful balance of spectacle and practicality to produce an outstanding lighting scheme for the heritage listed landmark frequently dubbed the 'flying saucer'.

The idea of transforming the Tower into a beacon of light for De Warmste Week (Music for Life) originated from advertising agency DDB working for VRT radio station Studio Brussels who organise the high profile charity fundraising event.

Thomas – known for his designs for other cool events like the Ghent Floralien, premium brands like Volvo as well as large EDM extravaganzas – chose 24 x Robe BMFL WashBeams, 4 x BMFL Spots, a single BMFL Blade and 16 x Robe CityFlex LED units as the primary sources together with 16 CityColor LED floods.

These were used in conjunction with 130 x 25mm pitch LED panels rigged on a 10 metre high hexagonal trussing structure at the top of the tower – effectively raising the height to 99 metres – which was secured to the building using 18 steel wire cables. Combined with six foggers in the centre, a very realistic flame effect was created as the Tower became a burning torch for the duration.

"I needed really powerful fixtures for this installation" says Thomas, "I checked all the photometric data rigorously and the BMFL WashBeam came up as the best choice in all respects Plus it has some excellent additional features which I utilized".

The lights were supplied by rental company L&L Stage Services who had just taken delivery of the BMFL WashBeams. ... and this was their first job!

12 x BMFL WashBeams were utilised on top of the tower to give an extra glow supporting the content running on the LED screens, and 12 were positioned on the ground below illuminating the Tower mast and the base of the flying saucer.

The four BMFL Spots were also positioned at ground level, used specifically to highlight the outline of the Tower and accentuate its interesting shape, Using a contrasting outline colour really brought the concrete structure alive like a colourful piece of trippy 3D art.

The BMFL Blade was positioned on the roof of an adjacent building and focussed on the front of a large scenic De Warmste Week logo rigged approximately two thirds of the way up.

It sat on a 'collar' of wheeled trussing sections built to out-rig it from the mast, which was literally rolled up the mast - pulled by four motors rigged underneath the flying saucer - and fastened in place via wooden beams fixed to the tower.

This BMFL Blade was complimented with a BMFL WashBeam stationed right next to it, which lit the space above the logo to eliminate shadows.

It was the attention to small details like these that really added to the overall presence and definition of the pop-up lighting sculpture.

The CityFlex 48s - which can be customised to fit the space and application - were attached to the back of the logo support structure lighting the tower section behind and generally adding depth to the design and enhancing the prominence to the logo.

Says Thomas, "It was a fantastic project and very inspirational to be asked to light such a landmark. The Robe fixtures helped provide a powerful, adaptable and interesting visual solution all of which helped draw attention to the event, which was highly successful in raising awareness and money for the charity".

In fact, the 2016 Music for Life Week activation raised nearly 8 million Euros which was a new record. Thomas worked alongside lighting programmer Frederik Heerinckx, and closely with Pascal Cauwelier from Fast Forward Events and Bart Weyts from L&L Stage Services, which also supplied video equipment.

Joining them on the project team was Studio Brussels' network manager Jan Van Biesen plus Gunther Leenders, Witse Van Rillaer and Michaël Bresseel all from Studio Brussels / VRT, plus presenter and host Stijn van de Voorde.

Reyers Tower

In 1977 Belgian television and radio organisation RTB-BRT was split into RTBF and VRT - respectively public broadcasters of the French and Flemish communities in Belgium, and then occupied left and right wings of the broadcasting centre in Reyers Boulevard sharing a common entrance. The Reyers Communication Tower was erected in 1979 and used by both channels. Its construction was considered a state-of-the-art engineering feat at the time - the 4000 tonne behemoth was hoisted into place one centimetre at a time over 4 days at a speed of 1.39 metres per hour. This was a world first - never before had such a mass been raised to such a height!

Photo Credit: Thomas Boets





