

10 / 24 / 2017

Robe is a Prime Suspekt

Danish hip hop band Suspekt are known for their disturbingly intense lyrics and raw style. They once lurked uncompromising and almost exclusively on the dark side of Danish contemporary music, however more recently, - still gripping to the fringes of alt.culture - have gained a massive following and the fans just can't get enough of their live performances!

All of this melodrama was a great atmospheric starting point for lighting designer Johnny Thinggaard Lydixsen, who used 104 Robe fixtures for the initial show design which was kicked off in a stadium at the start of the year.

He was asked on-board for the first time with the band to create a new live visual experience. They wanted a fresh look, and so he started with the music, finding plenty of inspiration!

In addition to the Robes - 48 x Pointes, 48 x Spiiders and 8 BMFL Spots - Johnny decided on a slightly old-skool look, mean, dirty and powerful, adding over 400 PAR cans to the stadium show rig and 24 x strobes.

The design also had to be scale-able. Slightly smaller for a summer festival tour, and then further compressed for an autumn club tour - with 10 x Spiiders, 10 x Strobes and 16 x 8-lite audience blinders on wind-up stands!

The overriding idea was that all versions kept the same continuity and aesthetic.

"I wanted to keep it brutally stark. It was the vibe of the music that gave me the idea for the wall of PARs for an extreme contrast in lightsources and basically VERY moody and slightly scary lighting," explained Johnny talking honestly about his concept.

Apart from Suspekt's lyrics being hard and nasty, the music often doesn't follow a linear rhythm, which was simultaneously challenging and liberating for the design.

The multiple single lightsources were a perfect vehicle for the fragmentation that Johnny wanted to achieve. "It was more about creating an environment in which they can perform ... rather than lighting the band or even each song in a narrative manner," he elucidated.

The Spiiders were positioned on 7 floor standing wheel bases, arranged in banks of four fixtures - ACL style - deployed at different depths around the stage, with four mounted behind five truss pods in the roof.

The Pointes were outrigged on six double-stacked pre-rigged truss towers each filled with a double row of PAR cans facing frontwards.

The eight BMFLs were on downstage side trusses, serving as the main band key-lighting, creating a darker and more sinister look rather than 'traditionally' located front key light.

The Pointes were used extensively in conjunction with their frost filters to subvert a standard beam look, however over the course of the set, Johnny made full use of their almost endless combinations of features and effects.

He started using Robe products in 2014, specifying them for another popular Danish band – electro rockers Carpark North. Since then he’s regularly used Pointes, BMFLs and now Spiiders in his designs. Pointes are now a ‘go-to’ fixture – he loves the precision of the beam, the fast zoom, and the gobo projection capabilities – although gobos were only used twice in the Suspekt show – plus the fact that they are small and cost-efficient to tour, so you can have more units. “There is simply no other fixture that can go more than a pointe right now,” he declares.

“Robe makes very creative and highly robust fixtures,” he says, also mentioning that he receives excellent support from Robe’s Danish distributor, Light Partner, an important part of any successful sales operation.

The stage set comprised a replica classic black Mercedes, customised to contain the DJ decks and a number of flame effects and pyros. Upstage a flown aluminium set piece in the shape of the band’s star logo hung behind the drum kit.

The balance of the PAR cans – those not on the vertical onstage towers onstage – were in Swoboda-style pods in the roof made up from two sections of fully loaded pre-rigged truss sections strapped together.

For Suspekt’s summer festival tour which has just finished, the ‘specials’ rig was re-scaled to contain 108 PARs, 24 x Pointes and 22 x Spiiders, all brought in ‘under’ the production rigs provided locally at each event. As a practical lighting design concept, this idea of re-engineering all worked seamlessly. Lighting equipment for all legs of the tour was supplied by Copenhagen based rental specialist, Comtech.

Lighting for the summer tour was programmed by Johnny on a grandMA2 console and operated for Johnny by his brother Jimmy Sorensen, also a lighting designer and programmer in his own right. This kept things nicely in the family whilst Johnny was out with Carpark North, also with a floor package that featured some Robes – 28 x Pointes and eight Spiiders, again supplied by Comtech.

Photo Credit: Morten Rygaard





