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HSL Supplies Robe Digital Spots for Human League Tour

Products Involved

DigitalSpot 5000 DT™

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HSL's Mike Oates says, *"We'd been itching to buy the DigitalSpots as soon as we knew they were coming to the market at PLASA. I can see enormous potential in all sorts of applications for a highly efficient moving projector."*

Human League's live work has explored alternative visual avenues for some time. However the enduring popularity of their vintage 1980's electro pop made returning to a strong projection show this year particularly relevant. Sinclair explains that some of the band's most memorable gigs of 20 years ago had featured a 'slide show', and Human League's Philip Oakey wanted to inject this sort of vibe back into the current show.

This also gave Sinclair the change to introduce a whole new narrative level, plus a myriad of colour, movement and ideas incorporated in the visuals ... as well as a vital element of humour and real production value! *"The Digi Spots have enabled me to hugely expand the creative range of the show"* he says.

The visual design was based around three upstage screens, each measuring 10 ft x 7.5 ft. The stage set and floor including monitors and equipment racks were also white, so Sinclair utilised these - and the band members themselves - as additional projection surfaces.

The DigitalSpot 5000's were rigged onto a truss in front of the screens and operated by Sinclair via his Jands Vista console, running ArtNet. This gave an Ethernet signal path between the fixtures, the console and Sinclair's laptop. He used the latter for updating the content while the fixtures were actually rigged, which proved very useful.

Projection kicked in after the 6th song of the set and continued throughout the rest of the lively, up tempo show that stormed through the band's repertoire of blockbusting hits from the 1980s and 90s. Each song had its own specific piece of footage. All of it was specially created for the show, either shot from scratch by Sinclair or composited by him from various sources, including archival and historical Human League footage and clips from the DigitalSpot's extensive onboard library.

It varied greatly - smoking guns and exploding glass for "Lebanon" to a selection of pseudo-psychedelic dreamy fish for "Human" and a collection of classic retro computer technology images for the stomping finale of "Electric Dreams".

Sinclair likes combining both lighting and visuals in his work, *"It makes complete sense for one person to be in control of everything that's seen onstage - specially on a small to medium sized tour,"* he confirms.

All content was stored in the heads of the DigitalSpots, *"It's a neat and convenient way of doing it"* says Sinclair.

They proved to be extremely bright in the various gigs - primarily theatres and concert Halls of up to 2000 capacity. Apart from that, he says, *"They're really reliable fixtures. You get them out the cases, rig them each day and they work - without fail - it's great - just what you want"*. He adds that the pan and tilt is extremely predictable, which is important as in some songs they are overlaid to boost the impact of the image.

He's also found the keystone control very good, *"It's my first foray into using moving projectors and they are doing everything I want and more. You can get a massive amount of show into a very expedient amount of truck-space!"* he concludes, adding that there's also plenty of internal effects that he has not even touched.

Sinclair worked alongside technicians Mike Sheppard and Dave Jolly on the tour. For the UK leg, Lite Alternative supplied the rest of the lighting rig, but when they hit Europe, they just took the DigitalSpots plus some assorted specials, utilising assorted house rigs for generics and moving lights. The backup and support from both HSL and Robe UK has been "Fantastic" says Sinclair. Robe also added QuickTime file compatibility into the DigitalSpots just before Sinclair started the tour, allowing him to keep his existing editing workflow.

Mike Oates adds, *"I've been really impressed with what Rob has done with the DigitalSpots on this tour. He's really put a great deal of thought into the whole visual show and has also really put the kit through its paces."*

For more press information contact marketing department ROBE Show Lighting on e-mail: marketing@robe.cz





