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Emperor Latin America Tour with Robe

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German lighting designer Dennis Feichtner was delighted that the Robe moving lights specified on his production lighting plot were available at each show on a recent Latin American tour with black metal gurus, Emperor.

The band, legendary in black metal circles, spearheaded the Norwegian inspired second wave of the genre in the 1990s, and now reform occasionally for special performances and festivals playing hits from their three seminal albums of that era. These are always sold out. A loyal cult following of dedicated fans worldwide are renowned for their enthusiasm and nowhere was that more evident than in Latin America.

Dennis enjoys the theatrical and dramatic potential of black metal was very excited to land in the LD 'hot seat' for Emperor earlier in 2021.

The Latam shows were the first gigs of the year for the band, the first time Emperor had played the territory outside of Mexico City and also a first for Dennis's touring experience.

The band gave him an impression of how they wanted to the lighting to look, basically maintaining a classic 1990s signature, a task much harder than it sounds, especially with music characterised by being extremely fast-and-furious with screeching vocals and loud distorted guitar riffs.

Apart from that, he was left to his own devices and imagination and wanted to build to build an atmosphere and a mysterious aura with copious haze and minimal front light.

He took the colours of the three albums' artwork – red, blue, and green – and while some might find that limiting, he found it liberating in terms of stimulating imagination and developing enough visual variety and a lightshow with a "lasting beauty" for the performances rather than simply taking a flash-and-trash route!

Robe Pointes were chosen as the main beam lights ... for all the obvious reasons – speed, brightness, versatility, and reliability. Also, because he was looking for a 21st century light that could authentically replicate those famous ACL (aircraft landing light) and narrow PAR beam looks of 1990s rock gigs.

“Pointes are great beam and spot fixtures with interesting gobos and constant output across the whole beam even when zoomed in,” and he also likes the consistent colours.

He worked hard to make the show look elegant, “There were several defining moments in the music where I could slow down with the lights, and it was vital to have these contrasts to the totally manic parts of the set!”

The beams were also used to accentuate and widen the stage space amplifying and making it appear larger.

He took inspiration from the classiness of the band’s logos and their distinctive backdrops. “I wanted a more classic gentleman look, something different from the grungy, dirty and satanic side of black metal, but a quality equally eerie and very mysterious to make them stand out,” he noted.

An Emperor gig is also a rarity and a special occasion, so it was important to reflect this in the aesthetics.

Not constantly strobing the lights made a refreshing change and helped build the drama and expectation of the band’s set. For metal-centric moments like head banging he ensured the gobos were spinning in the right direction - usually clockwise - to make the action more comfortable and less disorientating for the artists!

The Latin America tour featured shows at the Auditoria Blackberry in Condesa; Mexico City, at the Royal Center Bogota, Colombia; at the Teatro Caupolicán, Santiago, Chile and in Sao Paulo, Brazil at the Audio Club.

A realist, Dennis had managed his expectations for the kit sensibly, and was pleasantly surprised when Robe Pointes and Spiiders were present at every gig and in “excellent condition,” which meant he could deliver the precision show he had had carefully crafted for the band.

He praises the Robe and other distribution networks in all these countries for being able to source leading brands on the 3-4000 seater circuit and was in fact the first time that Dennis

had used Spiiders on one of his own designs.

He appreciates the deep saturated colours of the Spiiders which were a key to this show, and remarks on the “outstanding” colour consistency between the different types of Robe lights. “I don’t often use LED wash lights for pixel effects, for me it should be a good decent wash light with great coverage that brings plenty of colour and a certain quality of light to the stage,” and that is exactly what the Spiiders delivered.

He loves the wide-open fat beams, the colour bumps, fades, and transitions that were crucial to the Emperor show, especially between white and red, and the tungsten emulation effects worked brilliantly for those retro lighting moments that everyone craved.

“Spiiders will definitely be my go-to LED wash light on specs going forward,” Dennis concluded.

Emperor will continue headlining more metal festivals and shows over the summer including Psycho in Las Vegas.

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