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Lighting Jedermann in Salzburg

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Hugo von Hofmannsthal's Medieval morality play Jedermann has become a legendary and classic centrepiece of the world-renowned Salzburg Festival. First performed in 1920 – directed by Max Reinhardt – when the festival was inaugurated, it has been staged most years since then in the city's magnificent Domplatz (Cathedral Square).

2024 saw the staging of a new, fresh, contemporary, and hugely acclaimed version created by Canadian director Robert Carsen, a master of stagecraft and innovative thinking, who was also the scenographer, and costume designer Luis Carvalho. Lighting was designed by Carsen and Giuseppe di Iorio, with the latter specifying Robe iFORTE LTXs to deal with all the essential key lighting needed to bring the work alive and disrupt preconceptions about how the play can be presented.

Jedermann was performed nightly throughout the five-week 2014 event, either in Cathedral Square, or in case of inclement weather – a decision made each day up to 3 hours before the start of the show – in the Grosses Festspielhaus.

Giuseppe, an Italian LD based in Lisbon and lighting many opera productions, has collaborated on several previous projects with Carsen. He was super excited to be asked to light this versatile and cutting-edge production, specifying the 16 x Robe iFORTE LTXs which were supplied by Bari, Italy-based rental company Lucidiscena.

Lucidiscena in turn invested in the fixtures especially for this work, purchasing from Robe's Italian distributor, RM Multimedia. The company's CEO Pino Loconsole was equally stoked to be involved as the lighting supplier for such a high-impact project.

Lucidiscena was working directly for producer Moritz Hauthaler. The show's technical director was Andreas Zechner and the head of lighting for the Festival was Hubert Schwaiger, and

thanks to “their excitement and commitment to our vision, Robert and I were able to deliver the show using these fantastic new Robe fixtures,” commented Giuseppe.

Giuseppe was acutely aware that he “needed exactly the right tools,” which meant bright keys with a high CRI to deliver to the expected quality and get those beautiful, sumptuous, natural flesh tones. Being outdoors during the European summer, IP rated fixtures were – naturally – a no-brainer!

Ahead of the production, he met with Pino – the two have also worked together for some time – and the team from RM Multimedia and looked at the newest moving lights available from Robe and decided that the iFORTE LTX was exactly what he needed.

A long throw was essential, the lights needed to focus in on a mirror ball at one stage, so Giuseppe was impressed with the zoom and the fact that the luminaire is hugely powerful whatever the zoom angle.

Robert’s scenic design provided one starting point for the lighting, together with the site itself, which due to the layout, had certain preordained lighting rigging points plus other challenges like PA arrays obstructing several of these in the higher up positions.

To circumvent this, Giuseppe created two new steeper angled lighting positions either side of the stage for iFORTES which maximised coverage of the entire stage area, and more iFORTES were concentrated on the upper tribune positions at FOH.

He notes that they mixed well combined with other lights rigged on the original flatter angled towers, all of which assisted in evoking the very specific cinematic ambience that Robert wanted to achieve for the work.

As the festival this year also coincided with the summer Olympics in Paris, sourcing certain pieces of kit was quite challenging, so while ideally Giuseppe would have liked to use more Robe fixtures than these 16 x iFORTES, he had to include others on the plot as he also had to light the cathedral façade and other elements around the audience area.

Most of the 50 or so fixtures were lifted to the roof positions with the assistance of a crane.

Giuseppe has previously used the standard FORTES and ESPRITES, and the ESPRITE is one of his go-to fixtures for indoor projects. He likes the CMY mixing as the power of the white source LED is optimised and the skin tones look rich and naturalistic while the costumes really pop.

He noted that there is always a mix of skin colours on the Salzburg chorus, and with up to almost 90 people onstage at times, it's essential to have a "nice clean full spectrum lightsource like the iFORTE LTX where the tones remain constant at different intensities."

He generally prefers lighting with more minimalist and through-through designs, where fixtures can be multifunctional and there is the opportunity to really drill down into the detail and finesse of the art.

He describes this style of lighting as 'hybrid', taking techniques from rock 'n' roll for the earlier parts of the play, gradually ramping up to be more theatrical and operatic in the final scenes. "Having that identical quality of light from the LTXs was invaluable in building this treatment," he stated, "the light can be soft and understated when it needs to be, but then always deliver that extreme power when needed."

All the lighting was programmed on site during 10 designated focus sessions and some inevitable interruptions due to rain! In case of rain, the show also had to be rigged and rehearsed for the 500 capacity indoor venue as well, adding to the logistics and the pressure during the rehearsal and tech periods.

After press night, the outdoor and outdoor show lighting was run by operators from the festival crew.

Giuseppe is highly selective about the fixtures he uses, and Robe is a regular brand on his specs. He thinks the BMFL is a great fixture and Spiiders are another workhorse. He was one of those influencing the purchase of Spiiders by the Copenhagen Royal Ballet for some of their FOH positions after a production of Raymonda at the Royal Danish Ballet, directed by Nikolaj Hubbe which was revived this summer.

Pino Loconsole is also passionate about lights and puts much thought and research into his investments. He was delighted to win the pitch to provide lights for Jedermann at the 2024 Salzburg festival, and it was a great pleasure to be working with Giuseppe again.

"We needed a profile luminaire that could punch in from the front about 60/70 meters from the stage, and when I saw the iFORTE LTX, I immediately knew it would be the perfect solution for this job, so I proposed Giuseppe also looked at them ... and he agreed."

Pino immediately ordered the first 16 pieces, and shortly after bought more, bringing Lucidiscena's current iFORTE LTX inventory to 40.

"I think it is a fantastic fixture," he states, "very powerful, with high quality colour and graphics. Currently it is the best high power profile luminaire on the market – that's why I decided to buy more! I'm sure they will not be the last either because the requests for them keep coming in and increasing every day!"

This is a great testament to the success iFORTE LTX is enjoying all around the world.

Photo Credit: Monika Rittershaus







