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Catching the Mega OppiKoppi Vibes

Products Involved

MegaPointe® **Pointe®**

OppiKoppi is one of South Africa's best loved music festivals, known for its incredibly chilled vibes, cosmopolitan community, diverse culture and lively mix of genres embracing rock, electronic, jazz, world and acoustic sounds. It's also attractive for its location in the heart of the bushland and arid beauty of Limpopo province, near the dusty mining town of Northam.

Pretoria based rental company Stage Effects, run by Theo Papenfus, has been involved in OppoKoppi for several years. Theo first worked as a tech on the event, and since 1999 Stage Effects has been a supplier. This year they provided site-wide lighting and visuals for five production stages.

Production lighting for the Main Stage (the James Phillips Stage – after composer, musician, bandleader and voice / conscience of a generation of white South Africans) was designed by Erik de Bruin, who this year was delighted to be able to use Stage Effects' new Robe MegaPointes to WOW the crowds.

He also used 12 x standard Pointes, plus some other fixtures including LED washes, LED battens and 4-cell blinders.

OppiKoppi 2018 was only the second time Erik had used MegaPointes – supplied to Stage Effects earlier in the year by Robe's South African distributor DWR. The first was a daylight show for rockers Seether in Johannesburg, where he was impressed with the brightness which still registered in the sunshine, allowing beamwork and some serious depth to be added to the artists onstage, which made a real difference.

With OppiKoppi and the opportunity of running several dynamic shows after dark, he declared, "I am seriously impressed with what I'm seeing". He particularly likes the zoom and the prism effects as well as the incredibly compact size of the MegaPointe and its nifty 22 Kg weight!

The James Phillips Stage is a permanent thatched structure on the OppiKoppi site with an apex roof, limited height, no flying facilities and a cosy performance space. It's been used as the main stage before but not in the event's most recent years, so with it returning to its

roots and hosting the largest headliners this year, Theo decided to spec more lights than ever before.

It’s also a quirky space to light with lots of wooden structural pillars carrying the roof that must be negotiated. The lighting angles are very narrow, so depth is scarce, and the stage structure by default is the starting point for any production design.

Three trussing goalpost structures were installed to maximise the space. A larger one square-on upstage, flanked by two smaller and slightly angled ones left and right, to give side lighting positions.

The MegaPointes were all rigged on the cross members of these goalposts, six along the back and three on each side.

Eight Pointes were placed along the front lip of the stage and the other four were squeezed in upstage together with a small LED screen fully utilising what was a very tight space by the time any band’s backline was onstage! (for DJ’s they had a little more room to play with!)

With these 24 x Robe fixtures Erik created some fantastic structural framework looks utilising the beams, and when these shot past the ceiling rafters and pierced the pitch-black night sky, they could be spotted from across the site and far beyond.

Erik lit all the bands on the main stage that didn’t bring their own LD / operator, and comments that the challenge, as always in festival scenarios, was to give everyone their ‘own show’ and use some unique effects to make their performances visually distinctive.

With 12 x MegaPointes and 12 x Pointes on the rig, he certainly didn’t run out of options for creating new and different colours, styles and effects.

Lighting control was a grandMA2 console.

One visiting lighting designer who was very pleased to see Robe on the James Phillips rig was Jonathan Bandli, from Bad Weather Productions, who rocked up with Cape Town based indie rockers Grassy Spark.

Jonathan has used and specified Robe extensively in his design work since he started Bad Weather, five and a half years ago, including on several Rockin’ the Daisies events for which he is the festival’s technical production designer. However, this was also his first time using MegaPointes.

He had this to say, “The optics and zoom range of this fixture are great! A bright and punchy unit with CMY colour mixing, what more do you need? I can’t wait to try them on one of the many EDM events we design.”

Jonathan’s favourite Robe fixture right now is the Spiider LED wash beam, and BMFLs are his go-to fixtures as they “offer multiple options that work in any context”. He thinks the overall build and design quality of Robe products is “excellent” and they are “ideal for the South African market, where being well priced is essential” as the Rand tends to be an oscillating currency!

Both he and Erik comment on the “amazing’ tech support from DWR as another good reason to invest in Robe.

Stage Effects has been a DWR customer for some time, although they already had a large stock of competitor moving light products. More recently they have started looking at Robe as it is being repeatedly requested on riders and tech specs.

Erik … like everyone working on the event, loves OppiKoppi for the general ambience and the outstanding line-ups that tend to attract hardcore music fans and a nice infusion of craziness and eccentricity!

He became involved in lighting whilst studying theology in Pretoria and started working as a freelance, including for Theo. After six years at college and three as a practicing minister, he decided that there were other ways to bring ‘The Light’ into people’s lives and took up stage lighting full time. He’s now been with Stage Effects for five years and discovered that enthusiasm and passion for what you do, creativity and excellent communication skills were all perfectly transferable between two very different worlds!

OppiKoppi - sloppy Afrikaans for ‘on the hill’, referring to what is now the ‘Small Bar’ and the original venue for the friends and family get-together performances that started it all 24 years ago - is also famous for its dust!

It’s spawned the hashtag “In dust we trust”, and this is another area where using Robe fixtures proved resilient as they can stay functional even in the most exacting environmental conditions.

Erik and eight crew from Stage Effects started work on site on Sunday to be ready for the event which opened the following Thursday. Everything ran on generator power, and being in the middle of the bush, the prep had to be meticulous, as it wasn’t a case of ‘just nipping back to the warehouse’ to get any bits that might have been left off the truck!

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland

Van
LEGEH

Red Bull
James Phillips
BANK

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