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Venues Ōtautahi Invests in Robe

Products Involved

ESPRITE®

Venues Ōtautahi manages five busy venues in Christchurch, New Zealand including the city's premier sporting, convention, and entertainment hubs, among them Christchurch Town Hall of the Performing Arts which has recently invested in Robe ESPRITE moving lights.

James Tull, a senior technician working across all five venues explained that the Town Hall was originally built in the 1970s and then rebuilt after the 2011 earthquake in which it sustained extensive damage. The building reopened in 2019 with a 2,222 capacity Main auditorium and an 800-seat theatre space and was registered as a category 1 heritage building in 2020.

With all the reconstruction came the need to update and upgrade the lighting and sound, so James and his team started looking at options for modern lights that ticked all their boxes, were more sustainable, and that would make changeovers between productions and events quicker and more efficient.

"Quiet running was at the top of the list as the Main Hall is a primary orchestral space and concert hall as well as used for corporate presentations and gala dinners," he stated, adding that brightness was another factor drawing them to ESPRITE plus the replaceable LED engine.

Robe's unique and patented TRANSFERABLE ENGINE™ (TE) LED technology is a hugely flexible concept offering the option of having different and interchangeable LED engines – high powered, high CRI, 'tungsten', etc., – in the same fixture hardware, which can be quickly changed / 'transferred' in 5 to 7 minutes.

"Looking to the future, we like the idea of being able to change or replace the LED lightsource," he confirmed, adding that they also wanted new lights that would work equally well in the Main auditorium and the theatre space and that would satisfy the requirements of

their own and the riders of incoming or visiting productions. They also wanted fixtures that were available in rental stock if additional units were needed.

All these considerations plus an excellent presentation by Phil Sargent from Robe's New Zealand distributor Jands at the shootout – which involved three competitor products – and resulted in ESPRITES being chosen.

James, also a programmer and a moving light tech, is also impressed with the zoom and the luminaire's ability to cover the whole auditorium as well as with the range of colours and the quality of the colour mixing. It's "fantastic" to not have to worry about re-gelling anymore when these are in the overhead rig, and the focus time is also vastly reduced.

"To have so many extra tools that are so easy to deploy is GREAT and will make an enormous difference to the shows we produce and facilitate going forward," he concluded.

He has been aware of Robe as a brand for some time, and several rental companies including Oceania in Auckland have Robe BMFLs which he has always liked. As a brand, he thinks Robe "continues to push the boundaries of innovation" in terms of product development, and in his capacity as a moving light technician, he knows first-hand that they are "extremely reliable".

The ESPRITES were delivered in the winter and are the first moving lights to take up residence at Christchurch Town Hall.

Their first two events were corporates, and the first performance show was a school production of Beauty & The Beast which featured a large cast and was filmed. With two takes per scene and no prior rehearsals or blocking before the first take, most of the show was programmed between shots! The camera crew appreciated the great skin tones produced by the ESPRITES, and James and the lighting team found they had a huge range of options available to create complex scenes very quickly as they came up.

Photo Credit: James Tull



