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CEG Boosts Robe Stock

Products Involved

ESPRITE® Spiider® LEDBeam 150™ RoboSpot™

Cambridge, UK-based company CEG specialises in the trade rental of lighting, power, rigging, and effects equipment used for a wide range of entertainment shows and live events embracing multiple sectors.

Founded by Ben Bowles and Gavin Thorrold in 2008, the company has weathered the challenges of the pandemic with some smart thinking and fiscal agility and, like most of the industry in 2022, went from 0 to 250 m.p.h. in a couple of months at the start of the year which has continued to be constantly busy.

CEG has been investing steadily in Robe moving lights and LED products since 2012 – when LEDBeam 100s first joined the inventory which has seen a steady flow of purchases since 2015, with the addition of Pointes, Cyc FX8s, LEDWash 600s, and BMFLs to stock.

The most recent Robe purchases have been Spiiders, ESPRITES, LEDBeam 150s and RoboSpot systems. The 13 x RoboSpot systems mean CEG holds one of the largest rental-only stocks in the UK, and these make up over 500 Robe luminaires currently available.

“CEG’s business is driven by specifications and demand,” explained Ben, adding that Robe products have proved solid assets in recent years as popular choices from a market leading manufacturer.

The first pair of RoboSpot systems was acquired shortly after the product was launched in 2016, but it was in the last 12 months that most of the others were acquired, ahead of what Ben and Gavin correctly predicted would be a crazy summer 2022!

“RoboSpots have become massively in demand post-Covid,” observes Ben, conjecturing that this is partly fuelled by industry-wide crew shortages. RoboSpot systems save dramatically on time, trucking and crew needed for the set up, and while they still need operators, the system is less idiosyncratic and more user friendly and easily learnable than conventional follow spots.

He notices two other trends, one for having fewer people working at height where possible on an event, with the second offering more flexible and creative follow spotting elements to shows. "A system like RoboSpot is great for touring shows playing different sized venues each day."

Typically, CEG's RoboSpot systems will go out paired with BMFL WashBeam fixtures, but Ben notes that ESPRITES and T1 Profiles are also a popular option to use with the remote BaseStations.

Being able to use the system with multiple different light sources makes it even more adaptable for different scenarios.

CEG has separate motion cameras for their RoboSpot systems allowing the fixtures to be utilised for other duties as well as remote follow spotting.

Service and support have been critical to decisions to keep investing in Robe over the years says Ben, adding that the products have a good warranty and that the backup from Robe UK is "second to none."

He's also impressed with how the RoboSpot systems have developed since their launch in 2016. "The R 'n' D team at the factory have clearly listened to feedback from those using the products and implemented many refinements which ultimately make the systems even more usable."

He further mentions that parts are still cost effective and readily available, despite the global supply chain challenges!

Talking about Robe generally, Ben thinks the brand has a great reputation and is "highly innovative". Building a longer-term relationship "really enables you to see a proper product evolution based on creative solutions and thinking out-of-the-box," he started, noting that Robe's ability to look at and assess the end results of their products is "one of their great strengths."

He also appreciates that as a European-based manufacturer, there is a high degree of quality control over the entire production process from start to finish.

For CEG, over the years so far, the most hired out Robe products have been the LEDWash 600s / Spiiders, closely followed by Pointes. "We can simply never have enough of any of them," he quips!

These products have all given exceptional value with all CEGs Pointes still going strong after 8 years of hard service!

The ESPRITES and T1 Profiles have been another concrete investment as the world of shows and events moves towards being more sustainable.

CEG currently has a nimble team of full-time employees, and this year has been hectic amidst a welcome return to full speed and beyond! "It's fantastic to see the industry bounce back the way it has," enthused Ben. They had always believed it would, but it's reassuring to see for real just how much the world values and covets live entertainment and the spirit of human connection and in-person experiences, together with all the new modes of expression that emerged during the pandemic ... that still all require production technology!

