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Robe Lands Huge Order to Transition Estonian Theatres to LED

Products Involved

T2 Profile™ T2 Profile FS™ T2 Fresnel™ T1 Profile™ T1 Profile FS™
T1 Fresnel™ LedPOINTE® LEDBeam 350™ TetraX™ Tetra2™ Spiider®
T32 Cyc™ Slim T11 Profile™ iParFect 150™ FW RGBW iParFect 150™ FW RGBA
FOOTSIE2™ Slim RoboSpot™

Robe's Estonian distributor, Tallin-based E&T, is in the final stages of delivering an enormous order for moving and LED lights for 10 major theatres across the country, where all forms of live performance are strongly engrained in Estonian culture, and being entertained by theatre is a hugely popular activity.

In most cases, the new LED lighting fixtures are replacing ageing tungsten or halogen-based lighting. E&T's Olev Luhaäär stated that the company was "delighted" to win the bid to be the supplier for the initiative, chosen from stiff competition, adding that it "underlines the quality and range of Robe's products that are designed and spec'd for this demanding lighting discipline".

A total of 15 different Robe products have been specified across the 10 venues including T1 and T2 Profiles, Fresnels and Follow Spots, LEDBeam 350s, Spiiders, iParFect FWQ RGBWs and RGBWs, T11 Profiles, T32 Cyc Slims, LedPOINTES, Tetra2s, TetraXs, FOOTSIE2 Slims and RoboSpot Base Stations.

The talk about transitioning to LED essentially started as a conversation at Endla Theatre around 2020.

As there were no longer enough lamps to replenish the existing lights, Endla's lighting designer and head of lighting, Margus Vaigur, put forward a proposal to upgrade the theatre's lighting to LED sources, and made an application to the Ministry of Culture.

Endla then consulted with EETEAL – Eesti Etendusasutuste Liit, the Estonian Association of Performing Arts Institutions – a prominent employers' association representing the interests of the country's professional performing arts institutions, which approached the Ministry of Culture in 2021 on behalf of multiple venues.

So, while the basis to get the ball rolling was indeed EU Commission Directive 2009/125/EC, the trigger and impetus to initiate the process in Estonia came from Endla and from within the Estonian theatre community itself.

Under the leadership of Endla's head of technical Roland Leesment, all the EETEAL member theatres joined forces and negotiated with the Ministry of Culture who supported the idea and formulated the ways to finance the project. The news was officially announced at the end of 2022.

Throughout 2023, details were prepared, and the content and conditions of the application rounds were created, all involving a gargantuan amount of paperwork and correspondence, and during this time tenders were issued, and manufacturers did the rounds with demos – with E & T being very proactive during this phase.

2024 has been the main year of implementation.

The venues in Estonia's capital Tallinn are the Von Krahli Teater, Noorsooteater, Sakala Teatrimaja and the Eesti Draamateater in Tallin, together with Tallinn City Theatre, which has been closed for two years and undergone a complete – separate – premium rebuild project including the refurbishment of all their existing performance spaces and creation of a brand new one.

Around the country, there is the Endla Theatre in Pärnu, where it all started; the Kuressaare Theatre on the magical island of Kuressaare; Rakvere Theatre in Rakvere, which is the largest in terms of fixtures supplied; Theatre Ugala in Viljandi and the famous Vanemuine in Tartu which is Estonia's oldest theatre space and also the largest in terms of audience accommodation across their four major auditoriums.

The overall project was co-ordinated for EETEAL and the Ministry of Culture by Roland Leesment, who is also general manager at Endla.

Each theatre's lighting department chose its own individual wish list of the most appropriate luminaires specific to their individual needs and venues, assessed according to the sizes,

shapes, headroom and other physical parameters, as well as the demands of their programming in terms of style and genre of productions.

Olev reckons that Robe's cutting-edge technology – and the manufacturer's recent focus on what the theatre market really needs – helped make it such a universally popular product choice, although there are some other lighting brands involved in the overall project.

“Most important to everyone was brightness, homogeneity of the light source, good CRI, quiet operation and sharp edges in the case of profiles,” explained Olev, adding that the first Robe products were delivered in late 2023 and the final ones were in place by the end of summer 2024.

Most of the theatres also already had at least some Robe in their house rigs after a major moving light initiative – also spearheaded by the Ministry of Culture – in 2013.

Impressively, most of that kit was still going strong 12 years later, so the decision-makers could already draw on great experiences, value and reliability with Robe, plus the fantastic service and support of E&T as the local supplier.





