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Robe Makes Some Great Moves for 2023 World Gymnaestrada

Products Involved

FORTE® **ESPRITE®** **LEDBeam 350™** **LEDBeam 150™** **BMFL™ Spot**

Production and rental company For Live supplied lighting for multiple stages across five halls of Amsterdam's RAI for the 2023 World Gymnaestrada – a quadrennial global non-competitive gymnastics extravaganza – organised by TIG Sports, with all-Robe moving lighting rigs installed in Halls 11 and 12 which were also utilised for special shows.

Three thrilling, high-energy 1.5 hour gala presentations were staged in Hall 12, produced by Patricia Kok and Roxanne Wilders from Medialane, choreographed by Stanley Burleson, featuring some of the best gymnastic / acrobatic acts from 20 countries. Spectacular lighting for these shows – based on the theme of “water” – was designed by Henk-Jan van Beek from Netherlands-based design studio, Light-H-Art.

For Live took the opportunity to invest in 24 new Robe ESPRITES for the project that was organised and produced by their client, Tig Sports. This purchase followed hot on the heels of another involving Robe FORTE fixtures, so 2023 has already seen their Robe inventory jump in numbers!

For Live is involved in the lighting and technical production of many major sporting events, however it was the first time that Henk-Jan – well known for his work in television and concert touring – has designed such a Gymnaestrada gala.

The overall Hall 12 gala shows were designed by Michiel Maas from KNGU, the Royal Dutch Gymnastics Union, and Stanley Burleson.

Henk-Jan then assessed the various countries' presentations and visual needs, then proposed a dynamic lighting scheme based on a blend of theatrical drama and practical lighting from the correct angles to allow them to perform their routines comfortably and safely.

“It was a relatively lengthy show, so absolutely vital to keep the excitement and pace rolling with a good flow and rhythm,” Henk-Jan commented.

Lighting fixtures were distributed across five trusses running lengthways over Hall 12’s central area, with another two flown above the front blocks of seating on the long side, plus two more trusses flown at 90 degrees to these, to cover the short side of the arena – also above the first seating blocks closest to the arena floor. A ring of LED PARs snaked around the outer roof perimeter.

The 24 x ESPRITES were distributed around the four ‘front’ trusses, and from these positions provided front, back and side light onto the arena. Sixty LEDBeam 350s dotted along all the seven lengthways trusses were used for layering on colour, washing and assorted effects.

The ESPRITES were primarily used as white and key lights, and for those acts not utilizing all the floorspace for their performances, the shutters were great for creating specifically zoned areas.

Four ESPRITES were running on a remote follow spot system for speedy – everything moves fast in gymnastics – and precise tracking of key performers at strategic moments. Being available like this on the overhead rig ensured that the light spillage was contained, and the angles stayed tight, accurate and elegant.

The power and punch of the 35 x FORTES on the five centre trusses was mainly used for throwing top, back and front light onto all the performance acts.

Henk-Jan made the most of their “excellent” selection of FORTE gobos.

Each country had a different signature coloured gobo look and sometimes these were overlayed to create intricate and interesting kinetic looks. Just like the action onstage – the lighting was all about precision, movement, and agility!

It was Henk-Jan’s first design incorporating FORTES, although he had wanted to use them for some time, and he was impressed with the results!

“FORTE is a perfect luminaire in so many ways,” he noted. “The whites are perfect for TV and camera recording, the gobos are great - especially for this show, and the colour mixing, and colour wheel features are also excellent. It’s a perfect LED version of the BMFL!”

He also thinks FORTES are a great combination with ESPRITES and LEDBeam 350s.

Originally, he'd wanted to use just two types of fixtures on this show, FORTES and ESPRITES, but he was also delighted with the LEDBeam 350's performance and how all these fixture types could complement one another and be worked into the bigger lighting picture.

The different country themed gymnastics shows staged in Hall 11 were also lit with Robe moving lights making up the bulk of the rig, with another 12 x ESPRITES and 12 x BMFL Spots plus 50 x LEDBeam 150s.

The Light-H-Art team used a grandMA3 full-size console for programming and running the lights for the three gala shows in Hall 12 and joining him on the Light-H-Art FOH team were two excellent operators, Joost Wijgers and Sebastiaan van der Laan.

Prior to getting on site at the RAI, they all undertook 5 days of pre-viz in the Light-H-Art studios using Capture.

Creative challenges included getting the perfect balance of illumination for sporting spectacle and seat-edge acrobatic manoeuvres with daring show routines that had everyone spellbound. Additionally, Henk-Jan and his team had to ensure it looked great on camera and that all the countries received similar attention, visibility, and impact.

For Henk-Jan, who designed lighting for the 2021 Eurovision Song Contest in Rotterdam, there were some similarities in the process!

The dialogue with the different country delegations involved in the gala started at the back end of 2022 with initial discussions about the direction of their shows from which Henk-Jan started to build the visual elements.

Gymnastrada also had the same technical producer – Stefan Hoohenkerk – with whom he had worked closely on ESC 2021. TIG Sports and Willem Overdiep were the overall producers of Gymnastrada 2023.

Henk-Jan comments that it was a “great show” on which to work, “thoroughly enjoyable with lots of positive energy, great teamwork and lots of quick thinking required when it came to lighting!” He added that Ruud and the For Live team were “brilliant” to work with and appreciated the “clear brief of what TIG Sports were expecting”.

Ruud commented, “We were all hugely proud to be involved in delivering this event. It was a pleasure to work with Henk-Jan and to see a practical yet highly effective design evolve, and

it was a great opportunity for all of us to see our newest Robe kit in action and help to deliver amazing results!"

Photo Credit: Set Vexy





