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Arts Centre Melbourne Chooses Robe

Products Involved

ParFect 150™ FW RGBW Viva™ CMY

The Pavilion is a cool, curved multifunctional event space right in the heart of the Arts Centre Melbourne complex in Australia, offering panoramic views of the leafy green surrounding Arts Precinct nestling between the Yarra River and the Royal Botanical Gardens.

It is a vibrant hub for a diversity of cultural and creative activities, accommodating anything from around 280 – 300 people for dinner, 450 for a concert set up and 500+ for a cocktails / standing event.

A new lighting rig of Robe VIVA CMY Spots, ParFect 150s and LEDWash 300+s, six of each, has recently been installed which has dramatically changed the way in which the space can be used for many events.

Arts Centre Melbourne's technical manager for corporate events Jason Fordham explained that, in addition to the pre-existing generic rig, the new lights have expanded the capacity to stage multiple daily events in the Pavilion, a busy space which is utilised for anything from conferences, talks and debates to presentations, gala dinners and awards ceremonies – during daytime and evenings.

"The Robes have really enabled us to maximise the space properly and increase its utilisation by 60 percent or more" confirmed Jason, explaining that it's now "hugely quicker and infinitely more practical" to morph the room from a daytime conference into an evening dinner – often with live entertainment – with the finished result also looking vastly better aesthetically.

They have frequently heard audible gasps of amazement from conference delegates when they re-enter the Pavilion reset to a dinner state following their daytime conference.

It was Arts Centre Melbourne's head of lighting Bernie Manchee who specified the fixtures. They had to be LED light sources – for all the obvious reasons like power saving, as they are a publicly funded organisation and there is a massive drive generally in Australia to be carbon conscious.

Additional restrictions were weight loading in the attractive domed ceiling! When the building was designed and built in the 1980s, today's event usage was never really envisioned, and

each of three scaffolding 'technical rings' in the ceiling can accommodate only 25kg per metre!

The fixtures also needed to be quiet for conference plenaries and spoken word events like talks, shows, discussions and debates.

"So, I chose these fixtures for their versatility and light weight" states Bernie, who also conducted some comparisons with other manufacturer's offerings before making the decision to go with Robe.

The new fixtures were all demo'd by Simon Tye from Jands, Robe's Australian distributor. Bernie mentions that these three types of fixture are all ideal to cover the different events staged in the Pavilion. As they had to be rigged in the dome, he also needed fixtures that could properly bathe the entire room in light and texturing.

Furthermore, he had some prior experience with Robe in the 2500-seater Hamer Hall which is Arts Centre Melbourne's premium orchestral space. MMX Spots, LEDWash 600s and 300s were installed there in 2013 and are still going strong!

Another reason Bernie looked again at Robe again was due to the amount of European - in particular - touring shows which are now rocking up with Robe on their riders, as bands and music acts will also frequently play the Pavilion. Some of these will bring their floor packages and hook into their overhead rig, so it's good to now offer an enhanced rig and a moving light brand that is "universally acceptable".

Jason mentions that the lighting requirements of even the most straightforward events are now a lot more complex than when he first started there as a tech in 2004. He's also well happy with the system that runs via ArtNet and can be hooked in to any control console. He looks after the Pavilion with a talented team of five, covering lighting, audio and AV and any other technical.

Photo Credit: Arts Centre Melbourne



