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Streaming Home for Christmas in Belgium

Products Involved

BMFL™ WashBeam LEDBeam 150™ Spiider® T1 Profile™ Tetra2™

The Belgians definitely didn't let the pandemic dampen enthusiasm for the festive season, and while it was "different" in every sense with a lockdown in place and none of the usual round of parties and celebratory shows ... theatrical musical producers Deep Bridge created a special streamed 'Home Edition' version of their 2020 Christmas Show, with appearances and special Christmas collaborations from a host of celebrities and music stars, all presenting unique festive musical moments.

The event was recorded over three days at Deep Bridge's HQ in Antwerp with lighting designed by David Smeets of event design and production company The Creative Factory, (TCF) based in Meerhout.

David specified Robe moving lights including T1 Profiles, Spiiders, LEDBeam 150s, Tetra2 LED bars and BMFL WashBeams ... all of which were supplied by rental company L&L Stage Services.

The action-packed artist line up included a star-studded cast of Belgian singing and dancing talent.

The challenges of the project included an incredibly tight turnaround time - just 10 days from when the idea germinated to the stream being recorded across 10 different locations at the Deep Bridge HQ including offices, dressing rooms, corridors, and foyers as well as their dance studio and rehearsal room and outside the building.

That meant that any lighting kit must be portable, versatile, low power and - for the exterior scenes - able to deal with a bit of wind and rain!

David and his team frequently use Robe products in their work which includes theatre, music, and touring shows ... and in the more recent months since the pandemic, there's been a steady flow of livestream / broadcast recording production work.

Deep Bridge's fabulous 15-piece house band was used for backing all the vocalists.

For logistical reasons and for Covid-compliance – which restricted the amount of people allowed in the building and in the filming areas at any one time – these tracks were pre-recorded in the studio, with the singers then going live-to-track playback.

The 24 x T1 Profiles were deployed on the floor of the various spaces or rigged on wheeled stands which could easily be moved around. T1 Profiles were picked for their output and colour mixing ... they easily and authentically reproduce the vivid colours needed for TV work and are also ideal for front and key lighting due to their excellent range of CT whites, explained David. In addition to many other refined advanced features, they also consume very little power.

The 24 x LEDBeam 150s were perfect for their small size, zoom, colour mixing and ideal to light the smaller spaces like dressing rooms and corridors. "They are compact, light and portable enough to be used literally anywhere," enthused David who also ran them as a set of linked up-lighters daisy-chained through one unit's power supply, as well as for back light, camera candy and even wall washers. "They are a must-have on a project like this!" he stated.

David included 18 of his current favourite Robe products, the Spiider LED wash beam.

"I use Spiiders on EVERY show I do," he pronounces, reckoning they are the most versatile fixture with their central flower effect, individual LED ring control and excellent zoom which means they can work equally well as a beam or a wash luminaire.

The eight BMFL WashBeams were used for the outside shots, primarily for illuminating the building and gobo projections, while the Tetra2s were utilised on the floor in the walkways and corridors as an effect. It was the second time that David had used these on a show.

All the lighting was run via a grandMA3 console programmed by Stijn Vanholzaets and operated by David assisted by Christophe Hellinckx making up a talented and fast-working FOH lighting team.

Enforcing the social distancing rules and ensuring that the site was fully Covid compliant meant that everyone needed 4 square metres of space around them, something that presented both logistical and psychological conundrums for artists and crew!

"For example, to stage a 15-piece band with this in mind ... you need a large space," explained David, "and they have to very quickly get comfortable with playing together whilst being much further apart than normal."

All the lighting was operated 'blind' by observing the action via screens as the control position was in a sectioned off room behind walls and with no direct line-of-sight.

"We needed some time to ensure that everything looked just right for the 3-camera shoot, but we also all had to work fast and ensure it was a safe working environment for all. As always with our industry, the technicians, crew, and the artists all learnt and reacted very quickly to make it happen."

The "Christmas Show Home Edition" was available as a pay-per-view for 2 weeks over the festive period and has proved extremely popular.

David and the TCF team have been lucky enough to have a steady trickle of work for the latter half of this year, mainly streaming and TV shows, but it's enabled them to stay afloat and working at least some of the time, getting other companies and freelance crew involved as much as possible.

Like everyone, David is glad to see the back of 2020 and is looking forward to the industry getting a chance to recover and start re-building as vaccine programmes roll out across Europe and further afield. TCF already have some theatre tours on the calendar for the second half of 2021 and everyone has their fingers crossed that this will go according to plan.

Photo Credit: Steven Hendrix





