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Getting Extreme with Robe

Products Involved

ESPRITE® Spiider® LEDBeam 150™ MegaPointe® Pointe®

German event technology service provider DLP Motive supplied full technical design and production – staging, automation and kinetic elements, lighting, sound, video, and LED screens – to ESL Gaming for the 10th anniversary of the Intel Extreme Masters (IEM) e-gaming tournament, including two three-day events staged at the 10,000 capacity Spodek Arena in Katowice, Poland, and the 18,500 capacity Lanxess-Arena in Cologne, Germany.

Striking lighting designs by Andreas (Andy) Mohl for these two events included over 250 x Robe moving lights, part of 15 trucks worth of production kit that helped ensure the delivery of a colourful, adrenalized, all-action three days of superlative e-gaming enjoyed by both live and streamed audiences.

The Robe luminaires included 48 x ESPRITES, 70 x Spiiders, 60 x LEDBeam 150s, 54 x Pointes and 22 x MegaPointes, and the event included all the games and associated elements plus a series of live show segments which were presented onstage in the Arena.

Starting points for these two stage and lighting designs included presenting the show and players who were right at the centre of the action; and simultaneously ensuring the whole 'being there' experience was memorable for the live audiences. Highlighting the artist segments onstage was a big part of this objective.

Over 400 square meters of LED screen were integral to the set and staging which followed the same concept but was physically different for the two events.

Bespoke video content produced by ESL's creative team infused each event and each individual game with a fresh look and vibe, so the lighting also had to match and work with this.

Other visual highlights included the team entrances and exits plus a range of other 'stings' capturing raw emotions like the jubilation and euphoria of winning moments, etc., all of which needed dramatic lighting.

The events were also designed and lit carefully so there were no distractions for the competitors, however as the action was streamed using a multi-camera system including a spider cam, it had to be effectively lit like a full TV spectacular or a major live sporting event!

All these demands meant Andy and the DLP Motive team drew on techniques from many different lighting and staging disciplines – theatre, TV, arena concerts and even architectural, ensuring that parts of the building also became features of the show and broadcast.

In each case, the venue's rigging capacities were also a consideration, and this dictated the front truss positions.

In Katowice, these were hung so they resembled a circular shape to spread the weight, with fixtures additionally rigged to the building's structural columns above the upper balcony to maximise audience coverage.

A 14-metre-high by 30-metre-wide triangle made from Layher decking with side wings was built for the projection screen which related all the gaming action plus effects.

The Robe ESPRITES were rigged all over the main arena and in the Layher grid with Spiiders also overhead and behind the audience.

"The ESPRITES were great for all the stylish TV studio style work happening onstage," stated Andy, explaining that they also used ESPRITES for key lighting within the player's booths, an extremely tricky position to reach! All the competitors had to look good on camera, especially for the small personal 'player-cams,' and the task here was to do this without blinding them during the gaming sessions!

When Andy was asked by DLP Motive to light the show, he and their team including project manager Moritz Finke conducted a shootout to choose the right key lighting, then picked the ESPRITES, mainly as they were impressed with the optical system.

MegaPointes were positioned vertically and horizontally in the Layher grid building a gateway together with a sliding LED door used for entrances and exits onto stage. MegaPointes were also fanned out from the top of the stage like a crown and used for all the big WOWs and high impact accents including the opening ceremony, player entrances and winner celebration looks. They were ideal for boosting the brightness levels and saturated colours in beam or spot modes.

"You know exactly what you are getting with this fixture," noted Andy. "There is still no other luminaire quite like it on the market!"

The Pointes were deployed vertically on the grid and on top of the delay projection screens where they worked as an 'extension' or repeat effect to the MegaPointe beams, and for the smaller but more frequent accents which were primarily triggered by the media servers as they had to be so quick and precise. The super-fast movement of the Pointe was perfect for this.

The Spiiders did an excellent job of washing the arena during the games and providing excellent light levels and colour temperatures across the audience during the breaks.

LEDBeam 150s were positioned around the arena and behind the LED doorway in a matrix pattern which looked cool for player entrances and trophy presentations. The high output and excellent zoom made them perfect for silhouetting people, with some illuminating the arena roof.

These and a range of around 300 other moving and LED lights and effects were all programmed and ran by Andy on two grandMA3 consoles.

In Cologne, a large central LED screen was flanked by five LED columns, and in between each of these were ladder trusses rigged with a combination of LEDBeam 150s and generic blinders. The 20 LEDBeams per ladder closed the gap between the columns and the LED walls and effectively extended the overall LED area, giving an epic widescreen look.

ESPRITES in combination with Robe's high powered FORTE fixtures took care of all the TV lighting, rigged above a 40 metre long catwalk emanating from the stage used for some dramatic player entrances. Both these types of fixtures were also used for the studio scenarios inside the arena.

Spiiders again proved a popular choice for audience illumination, often blended with the ESPRITES which were great for highlighting specific areas in the crowd.

The Pointes were all mounted on horizontal trusses above the stage with some cues triggered from the media servers and they contributed to all the general lighting power-looks.

MegaPointes were rigged on two trusses above the catwalk dropped down to below the ESPRITES. The theme of this event was the Cathedral of Counter Strike and the MegaPointes created great ecclesiastical style columns of light.

The biggest lighting challenge in both cases was the short timeframe onsite for creating a completely original show, plus a new stage design in Cologne. On top of this, it was building the numerous lighting looks and scenes needed to cover all the games giving each one a distinctive ambience, and supporting the screen content with completely individual sets of lighting cues.

Lighting also had to be devised and imagined from scratch for the live entertainment slots and other special moments.

There were no full rehearsals in advance and while Andy did as much as possible in pre-viz, some long days and amazing teamwork and co-ordination was needed at the venues with up to 80 crew working during the peak times in the two-day set up periods.

Working closely with Andy on the ground included DLP Motive project manager Moritz Finke, lighting systems tech Alexander Bajew and lighting tech Max Waldmüller.

Photos: courtesy DLP Motive





