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The Wonder of RoboSpots and Robe TE Technology at Sea

Products Involved

FORTE[®] **ESPRITE**[®] **RoboSpot**[™]

The world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean International's Wonder of the Seas – built at Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, France – will have four Robe RoboSpot systems installed in its 1600-seat capacity Main Theater and two more in Studio B, which is the iconic Royal Caribbean ice rink.

The four Wonder of the Seas Main Theater RoboSpot BaseStations will be controlling eight FORTE moving lights from Robe, each running in conjunction with four motion cameras. The two BaseStations in the ice rink will be used with four ESPRITE LED Profiles.

Both FORTE and ESPRITE luminaires are from Robe's ground-breaking range of LED TRANSFERABLE ENGINE lighting fixtures, an intelligent, powerful, and eco-friendly lighting solution for now and the future which enables different engines – high powered, high CRI, 'tungsten' – to be used in the same fixtures and changed quickly and efficiently in 5 - 7 minutes.

This installation builds on the success of RoboSpots installed as a remote follow spotting solution in the Two70 venue aboard Royal Caribbean's Odyssey of the Seas, which commenced service in 2021.

The Wonder Main Theater show will be an all-singing, all-dancing Broadway blockbuster-style production, complete with aerialists, drones, and complex automated scenery, with lighting designed by Rui Rita.

Project managing the vessel's show lighting installations for Royal Caribbean was Ben Couling, who worked closely on Wonder of the Seas with Gaëtan Mornet of cruise AV integration specialist, Videlio-HMS from St. Nazaire which completed the installation.

The relationship between Royal Caribbean and Robe started when Miami-based Christopher Vlassopoulos, Royal Caribbean's sound, light, and AV systems manager for new build projects, and Amir El Yordi from Control AV Miami visited the Robe booth at LDI 2019, whilst Odyssey was already under construction.

At the time, both Chris and Amir were actually on the lookout for new and cool technologies to utilize in a forthcoming class of ships, but they were so impressed with the RoboSpot, Chris changed the spec in time to get two systems installed in Two70 aboard Odyssey, where they are positioned out of sight in the gallery, so no seats were lost in the auditorium.

Subsequently, RoboSpots were also specified for Wonder.

The intuitive and straightforward operation of the RoboSpot system - an aspect carefully crafted by Robe - is a big plus on cruise ships where follow spot operation is invariably a second job.

Often follow spotting duties will fall to cast members from onboard productions or other crew who won't necessarily have any technical or lighting backgrounds, although a big advantage of using actors and dancers in this role is that they are quick learners when picking up show cues, and their timing is usually instinctually spot on!

For the Wonder Main Theater, the RoboSpot BaseStations and operators are concealed from view on catwalks above the lighting rig, but the space is flexibly designed, and thanks to a comprehensive IP network, the BaseStations, consoles, and other essential hardware can be brought into the house and seating areas to be closer to the stage for tech and rehearsal periods.

For Wonder's Main Theater installation, the exceptional power and punch of the FORTE was required, so that was the chosen moving light, complete with the TE™ 1.000W HP (High Performance) white LED engine which produces the highest possible output.

These FORTES replace what would previously have been 2400W dedicated follow spot units.

Ben had been keeping an eye on the FORTE development for some time and comments that as ships are specified so far in advance, they must have confidence in manufacturers being in a place to bring certain products to market.

Robe ESPRITES were spec'd for Wonder's Studio B ice rink which measures 60 x 40ft and has a lower ceiling, and so is suited to a bright and versatile product that is slightly smaller.

These work in pairs on two RoboSpot systems covering each side of the ice.

Ben explains that with all the main production shows being SMPTE timecoded, utilising this system, the LD can control the size, colour and intensity of the follow spots and then also program the ins and outs into the console. “This is particularly useful for consistency as the shows can run for 5 plus years with many different operators!”

Wonder of the Seas is scheduled to set sail on its maiden voyage from Florida in spring 2022.

Billed as the “world’s largest cruise ship,” it is 362 metres long, 64 metres wide with a draft of 30ft and a gross tonnage of 236,857t, offering capacity for 6988 guests and 2300 crew across its 2,867 staterooms and 18 decks.

Photo Credits: courtesy RCCL Press, Ben Couling





