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Robe for St Stephen's Day Spectacle in Budapest

Products Involved

FORTE[®] **Tarrantula**[™] **MegaPointe**[®] **BMFL**[™] **Spot**

Robe moving lights were used in three major locations for the massive 2023 St. Stephen's Day celebrations in Budapest, Hungary, a public holiday celebrating the foundation of the Hungarian state more than 1000 years ago, which this year attracted over 1.5 million spectators to the banks of the Danube River watch the main large format projection and drone show.

Multiple events were staged throughout the country's vibrant and beautiful capital city on the day, with technical production – lighting sound, visuals, staging – for the 2023 event co-ordinated and delivered by the Visual Europe Group (VEG), working with 12 sub-companies.

The three main areas in which Robe fixtures were used were the riverside "Road Movie Live" concert stage with an all-action line up of top Hungarian artists running over three days of the holiday weekend; The Parliament Building, where Robe FORTES supported stunning projections mapped onto the building's impressive façade, and on the Elisabeth Bridge where more Robe FORTES were utilised to throw beams, colour and texturing from the bridge, across the water onto the riverbanks.

Road Movie Live

A 20-metre-wide concert stage was erected at Múgyetem Rakpart with capacity for 15,000 people who enjoyed a great line up including Tankcsapda, the Bagossy Brothers Company and Tamás Horváth.

The lighting production design was created by a talented VEG team, explained account director Kristof Nagy, who created a scheme to provide "the best visual experience for all of the bands" who played during daylight and after dark, amounting to 4 or 5 each day, festival style.

Sixteen Robe BMFL Spots, 36 x MegaPointes and 18 x Tarrantula's were prominent on this year's rig, all chosen for their power, flexibility, and reliability, run via MA control.

"These fixtures were a great combination to ensure that all bands playing on the Road Movie Live stage could have their own distinctive look and style. Getting that variation is very important on an event like this, we don't want anything to appear generic or samey," confirmed Kristof.

The Parliament Building

The imposing 268 metre long Hungarian Parliament Building (AKA the Parliament of Budapest) is the seat of Hungary's National Assembly, a popular landmark and tourist attraction in the city located prominently on the Pest side of the river. This neo-Gothic masterpiece was designed by Hungarian architect Imre Steindl and opened in 1902 and since then, it has been the largest building in Hungary!

The front façade projection mapping system was designed by the VEG Europe team who rigged 49 x 35K projectors across the opposite side river on the Buda banks, throwing a series of stunning images approximately 400 metres for the 35-minute show synchronised to music.

To augment and support the colourful and kinetic digital art being projected, 40 x Robe FORTES were positioned on two levels, with some lights placed on the building's numerous balconies and others along the ground in front.

This double layer of FORTES added a depth and resonance to the whole picture.

"We simply needed the brightest and the best fixtures to support this element of the event, so FORTE was ideal," commented Kristof, adding that they wanted "a spot / profile light with an excellent zoom to achieve the desired result, as well as a fixture that was equally bright in deep colours as in white."

"FORTE ticked all those boxes," he noted.

To blend with the projection artwork, the colour palette featured saturated electric blues combined with fiery oranges and ambers, all of which needed to be replicated in their maximum and most glorious richness!

“FORTE is the best high-powered LED moving light currently available for producing intense dark colours,” stated Kristof, adding that the fixtures had no trouble visibly throwing beams the full distance across the river. They also looked fantastic reflecting in the water as well as shooting into the night skies.

Deployment of the FORTES involved luminaires being manually carried through the building, often via tiny winding passages and up and down steep and narrow staircases, a labour-intensive exercise that was “definitely worth the effort when we saw the results,” enthused Kristof.

Elisabeth (Erzsébet) Bridge

This was the third area to feature Robe products with 76 x FORTES helping transform the bridge into a bold and beautiful visual feature for millions rocking up to see the main show live and to celebrate this seminal day in the country’s history.

Elisabeth Bridge is the third newest bridge connecting Buda and Pest across the River Danube and situated at the narrowest part of the Danube in the Budapest area, spanning 290 metres. Named after Elisabeth of Bavaria, a popular Austro-Hungarian queen and empress who was assassinated in 1898, the original eclectic and flamboyant style construction was built between 1897 and 1903, destroyed during World War II, and replaced with a significantly more prosaic brutalist version built between 1961 and 1964.

The FORTES – with SelbyGuard rain dome covers – were positioned in lines both sides of the bridge and used to light its concrete pylons and steel supports.

They were also used as beam and searchlight effects, again part of a design conceived by the same VEG Europe team involved in all the main events in and around the city.

“Every time we light part of the city for this and other events, we change it up a bit, informed by our ever-growing experiences of what works and looks best,” said Kristof.

VEG has invested steadily in Robe over recent years, a brand chosen for its general great durability and quality design and build.

All these St Stephen’s Day installations were generator powered, with a large Riedel MediorNet system utilised for integrating lighting video and sound data signals together for the time coded main show. The network stretched 4.5 kilometres along the riverside site and

included a large fibre circle embracing both sides, enabling signal / data to be sent from anywhere in between the Petofi Bridge at one end and the Margaret Bridge at the other.

The production build-up period around the city started 7 days before the event and challenges for VEG included co-ordinating around 800 crew. The main show had only two technical rehearsals to co-ordinate all the elements across this vast space, which was broadcast live on Duna Televízió (TV Duna) and its online platforms.

It included two eye-catching drone shows, one in the first 6 minutes and one in the last 6 minutes, in two different positions, each using 400 drones.

The show's creative direction was by Centrum Production who also produced the video mapped animations and other content as well as liaising with government departments about the symbols used and the narrative direction.

Spectators packed the riverbanks for the occasion and were treated to a fantastic visual extravaganza that spread a joyous party mood across the whole city.

Photo Credits: courtesy VEG, Balogh Zoltán







