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Robe Calls Back Noah Kahan in Perth

Products Involved

FORTE® **Spiider®** **BMFL™** **WashBeam** **RoboSpot™**

Talented Grammy-nominated American singer-songwriter Noah Kahan – a rapidly rising star, master communicator and TikTok algorithmist – played a vibrant, sold-out show at Perth’s Red Hill Auditorium in Western Australia, delighting 5000 lucky fans with his presence and very personal, intimate performance style.

Lighting director, programmer and operator Alexandra Lutz-Higgins utilised a largely Robe lighting rig supplied for this show by lighting and visuals rental specialist, Showscreens, also based in Perth. The company has recently invested in Robe FORTES.

The Robe count totalled 22 x FORTES, 21 x BMFL WashBeams (four running on a 2-way RoboSpot system), plus 32 x Spiider LED wash beams.

Chase Hall from US-based design studio Cour Design originated the visual design and Alexandra has been onboard and on the road with it since May 2023 when the tour kicked off once Kahan’s phenomenally successful third album, Stick Season, dropped.

Alexandra originally programmed the show together with Will Flavin. Over the months the look has transitioned slightly, evolving into this latest touring version, with more songs added to the set which have been programmed from scratch. The Australian leg included 6 incendiary performances across the country, with Perth being the concluding show.

Alexandra was pleased to see FORTES on the rider in Perth, as these and BMFL Washes have been the regular spot / wash combination used on the US leg for which lighting was supplied by LMG.

The stage at Red Hill Auditorium is covered and relatively compact for the overall size of the space, but tucked perfectly into the natural scoop in the topography around which the auditorium is shaped, a gentle curved bowl with near perfect viewing angles from every direction, and the city lights of Perth twinkling magically in the background.

Kahan's great music and the lively and good-natured audience combined with the sultry late summer night gave the gig a distinctive festival vibe!

The overhead lighting was arranged across three trusses, and this was where all the BMFL WashBeams were rigged in optimum positions for general stage coverage.

The FORTES were rigged on two ladders (roll on frames in Perth) located each side of stage, 6 fixtures per side giving 12 in total with the remaining 10 x FORTES upstage on the deck just in front of the video wall, ideal for high impact back lighting and effects. In front of them on the floor was a row of strobes.

Alexandra notes that FORTES are "excellent, very powerful, they do everything I need as well as being fast and programming friendly," and she also thinks the colour mixing is very smooth and the fixture is logical to programme.

Onstage, six 4.8-metre-high towers, three per side, were each rigged with five Spiiders and some blinders. Normally, these would be located behind some sections of blow-through video wall, but in the adaptive design for Perth, these video elements were absent, so the towers took on additional prominence, well placed for creating eye-catching effects and eye-candy looks.

While the show has flashes and sections of bold and vibrant colour brilliantly accenting key moments, CTO and CTB hues are a prevalent feature of the overall lighting aesthetic, so the Spiiders were used mainly as washes and to create nice fat beams of white light rather than as pixel effects.

Under the band risers extending the depth and impression of stage space were assorted blinders, LED PARs and strobes.

The show comprises a mix of time coded and manually executed lighting cues and is run by Alexandra using a grandMA3 console.

Multiple gobo looks and texturing are also essential to the lighting which is judicious and thought-through, allowing the show narrative room to breathe and keeping the artist and his stories at the centre of the action.

Some of this is super-subtle and some very much in-the-face, contrasts that Alexandra loves, together with the chance to be part of the production team involved with Noah Kahan's trajectory as his popularity and accomplishment soars.

“His music illustrates a world that I relate to,” she explains. Incidentally, both hail from Vermont, but that aside, “he paints a full picture of the worlds he creates, and it is a massive honour for me to illustrate this with lights and engage in some of these overlapping journeys with Noah.”

At one stage whilst at art school she was contemplating being an illustrator with her drawings, but that artform’s loss is another’s gain as she can now sculpt to music so passionately and effortlessly with lights.

The once Colorado-based LD and programmer is enjoying the “fantastic opportunity” of working on this tour, together with the ability to become a ‘citizen of the world’, relishing working and staying in new places and exploring different cultures and experiences every month.

Alexandra has a good impression of Robe as a brand, having used BMFLs on several tours and has always been happy with the reliability and creative options.

On site at Red Hill, the project was production managed for Showscreens – who supplied lighting and video – by Kale Tatum, who comments that from a rental company perspective, their FORTES are proving a sound investment suitable for all weathers and all environmental conditions. Perth and Western Australia is a place where they get a full spectrum of this!

Showscreens is the largest lighting and visual rental company in Western Australia and services a wide array of shows and events from theatre, opera and ballet to music concerts, festivals, business, and corporate events.

Referring to this show, Kale said “Alexandra was a real pleasure to work with, and we all appreciated her attention to detail and the flexibility of the design”. Like everyone, he and the team appreciated the good energies of Noah’s production team and his Australian fans revelling in his charismatic performance.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland





