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Robe Gets Close to the Edge with \$UICIDEBOY\$

Products Involved

iFORTE® LTX WB **iFORTE® FS** **iSpiider®**

Critically acclaimed and popular underground rap duo \$UICIDEBOY\$ completed their GREYDAY2024 US and Canadian tour with a production design – lighting and set – created by Ian MacDonald, who used Robe moving lights to help deliver a raw, in-the-face, lighting aesthetic.

Ian is based in Ottawa, Canada, and has worked with the band since 2021.

This latest tour design featured 42 x Robe iFORTE LTXs, 34 x Spiiders and four iFORTE Follow Spots, all supplied by Fuse, who purchased the iFORTEs for this project, which was coordinated for them by account managers Matt Kirkpatrick and Kevin Foreste. The tour was managed by Bill Nugent with production management by Keith Wailes.

Known for their stark, visceral, often brutal lyrics and fearless narratives touching controversial, complex, and difficult topics like suicide, addiction, and depression, communicating these messages and stories live is hugely challenging and offers massive creative scope. While imagination is at the essence of presenting \$UICIDEBOY\$ on tour, it is also a fine balance of presenting honesty without compromise.

It was the first time Ian used Robe's super-bright iFORTE luminaire, although he was well impressed when seeing the fixtures for the first time at the 2023 LDI expo in Las Vegas. He especially likes the colour mixing and the zoom functionality.

His starting point for the design was the "obnoxiously big" portrait orientated slab of upstage video screen trimmed at 64 ft high from the floor and flanked by two stage lift platforms framed with video panels.

The big screen needed something seriously hardcore on all the open sides to fill in the space, so he drew four lighting forms on the plot and populated them with various fixtures including some of the Spiiders ... their mission was to assault the vision of all in the room!

All the iFORTES were rigged on four finger trusses above the band, trimmed at 60 ft from the deck. “I needed a crazy bright and super raw light source to blast down at the stage with real impact,” he explained, “and iFORTES were perfect.”

Often, they were used in narrow mode for max intensity and maximising the more menacing feel that can be produced by top lighting blasting directly down onstage. Ian commented that the iFORTES held their positions very well and he rarely had to do any tweaking or adjustments. They were also solid and reliable which is always an asset for touring.

Spiiders, by contrast, are a fixture he has used many times before, usually in full ‘wide’ mode for building mesmeric and kinetic effects.

For this tour, the rest of the Spiiders were deployed on audience trusses together with six automated 2 metre by 2 metre internally lit scenic skulls constructed by Glow Motion Technologies, which tilted, pitched, and moved up and down. The Spiiders on these trusses were highly effective for room sweeps that wrapped the audience up in the action.

The whole show ran to timecode.

Programming and running a hip hop show like this is very different to a rock or a metal show, noted Ian. While much of the music is fast and aggressive, there are several poignant moments that need to be punctuated, and generally there’s more space and air onstage needing to be filled visually.

“I programmed a show with multiple contrasts,” he explained, “top lighting can be really harsh, especially with the power of the iFORTES behind it, which was great, but there were also numerous intimate and emotionally charged drops which I built these into the cue list.”

The song “whatwhat” was lit completely in green, which is unusual, but a concept that totally worked in this context, capturing the mood. \$UICIDEBOY\$’ fanbase is also very passionate and into the band, music, and conscious of lyrics which, as with all rap, are imperative to the storytelling.

Ian’s general impressions of Robe as a brand include it being “a respected industry leader” in colour mixing and generally having an excellent reputation.

He worked closely on this tour with video producer Tristan Zammit, including during the show programming to ensure that lighting and visuals worked harmoniously – either together or in contrast with one another. IMAG camera feeds were integrated onscreen – often tweaked live

using Notch effects – together with all the playback video content running via a d3 media server.

The touring lighting crew were chief'd by Temple "Mel" Dorough and comprised techs Jim Meredith, Vreje Bakalian, Jacob Jordan, Guillermo Medina, and Matt Margulis, and the video team was led by Curtis Miller (crew chief) working alongside Chris Small, Colin Johnston, Marcus Taylor, and Miles Pierce.

The tour was a huge success.

Photo Credit: Ian MacDonald





