



The Bodyguard in Madrid

After 647 shows and a massively successful run of almost two years at the Beatrix Theatre in Utrecht - delighting more than 800,000 fans - Stage Entertainment Holland's blockbuster production of "The Bodyguard" has opened at the Teatro Coliseum in Madrid.

Imaginative and eye-catching lighting is again designed by Luc Peumans of the Belgian mixed-media visual design practice, Painting with Light.

Luc was integral to the original Dutch production's creative team, who were all commissioned to bring their style and magic back to the show in the vibrant Spanish capital. This included Carla Janssen Hofelt, responsible for the impressive automated video set featuring content produced by Ad de Haan.

Juxtaposed against this, Luc's lighting captured the drama of the story and presented it in the distinctive cinematic aesthetic they developed for the Dutch show that garnered critical acclaim.

"It was great to be back working with everyone again and enjoy the synergy we all shared on the original production," commented Luc.

The main challenge in Madrid was fitting the production into the reduced stage space, which was 4 metres narrower and 3 metres shallower than Utrecht. Working with these parameters, they replicated the Dutch show as closely as possible, maintaining all the spirit and the excellent production values.

The five large flying scenic video screens were accommodated together with a number of set trucks, some partly covered in LED ... so it wasn't possible to work with standard overhead lighting positions.

Instead, 12 x Claypaky Mythos 2s are hung on separate winches above the main performance area, attached via RSC Lightlock motion stabilisation collars, a product especially developed to enable moving lights to be rigged on motion controlled structures ... and remain steady as these move.

The Mythos 2s replaced the original Mythos fixtures used in Utrecht. The lights can fly in and out and are also used for close work with the actors. Their multi-functionality is really maximised in this show.

In addition to those on the winches, ten Mythos 2s are rigged on the five screens which moved up and down stage, and 25 x Vari*Lite 3500 Q Spots are distributed around the FOH bars, side ladders and an advance truss which hosts most of the key lighting.

Thirty-six CP Sharpie Wash 330s were also used, including five rigged on the moving screens below the Mythos 2s, with the rest dotted around on the booms and side ladders.

Twenty-four Chauvet ColoRADO Solo 3 LED PARs are tucked behind the moving screens in a boom-like arrangement, with 12 other LED PARs on the booms for cross lighting, and 38 carefully positioned ETC Source Four profiles, 22 fitted with Wybron Coloram scrollers.

Effects lighting includes a pair of Martin Atomic 3000 strobes and six Robe Cyclone fans with LED ring which appear in the opening concert scene, built into the stage deck, rising up on little elevators. Eleven Chauvet Geyser vertical foggers are also concealed in the decking.

The impressive target-shaped set piece that flies in during the first number - with lead character Rachael Marron strapped to the centre - features 77 metres of DigiFlex pixel strip.

The lighting inventory is completed with two Robert Juliat Merlin follow spots.

Luc asked Amsterdam based Invent Design to build some custom PAR 16 'Birdies' for the Dutch production, which are fitted with Cree 6W multi-chip LED modules, and the company also made assorted LED specials for the set staircases and proscenium show portal.

Lighting wise, The Bodyguard is layered and complex, emphasizing the acting, helping ramp up the many atmospheric moments and establishing the multiple locations and settings running through the narrative. It also has to rock out during the concert scenes, and all is delivered by Luc with characteristic passion and flair!

Luc was on site in Madrid for a month before opening night. He worked with regular Painting with Light collaborator Niels Huybrechts on the programming, a high-pressure task, that due to the nature of the set and stage automation meant all departments needed to be present. It wasn't a case of the lighting team being able to studiously get on with their work while other departments were away from the theatre.

The lightshow was also transferred from the original grandMA 1 console showfile to a grandMA2 full size, which essentially meant starting from scratch! The cues are triggered by timecode from the band's MD.

The Madrid show is produced by Stage Entertainment Spain, and is initially scheduled to run for at least 10 months, with further international transfers potentially on the horizon.

Ends.

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