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The Need for Robe Speed at iHeartRadio Fiesta Latina

Products Involved

Tetra2™ Tetra1™ Spiider® MegaPointe® BMFL™ Blade BMFL™ FollowSpot
RoboSpot™

‘The Need for Speed’ – the ability to work fast and sometimes furiously – “is imperative” explains lighting designer Tom Kenny referring to the 2023 iHeartRadio Fiesta Latina event staged at the Kaseya Arena in Miami, Florida, in conjunction with LPS Production.

This year, Tom worked his creative magic with the help of a large rig of over 200 Robe moving lights supplied by rental specialist LPS Production, also based in Miami. This included 62 x MegaPointes, 77 x Tetra2s, 10 x Tetra1s, 58 x Spiiders, 16 x BMFL Blades and an 8-way RoboSpot system with 5 x BMFL Blade and three BMFL FollowSpots.

Maximizing the features and multifunctionality of these powerful Robe products, Tom ensured that the sizzling lineup of Latin stars – Ricardo Montaner, Fonseca, Servando y Florentino, Luis Figueroa, GALE, Menudo, Chayanne and others – all looked amazing onstage as they lit up with the vibrance and dynamics of Latin music.

The pacy and frenetic 1-day show featured a 48-ft-wide turntable stage for quick changeovers and each artist was allotted a 20-minute performance slot, resulting in a whirlwind “festival” broadcast which required lighting for fans enjoying the show live and all those tuning into livestreams on Hulu or the Hulu app.

Lighting was programmed by Tom and his FOH team comprising David “Fuji” Convertino and Scott Cunningham, both using grandMA3 consoles, with Fuji taking care of all the show lighting elements while Scott concentrated on all the key lighting and specials.

Due to the intensity of the show schedule, Tom’s team did all the operating, taking onboard any specific requests from any artist LDs. They also have a bank of faders available to guest LDs if they choose to highlight certain elements of their act’s set.

“There’s always many people to keep happy on this style of show,” explained Tom. Effectively it is like a big TV show, but everything must happen super-fast, and while there is also a nod to a compressed festival format, practically there is no time to load individual show files, clone fixtures etc. “So us running it is the way to go,” he explains.

Tom worked closely with Charlie Cook and Lindsey Mayer from Atomic Design Inc., who produced the slick production design, as he crafted the look and style of the lighting, and also with screens director Patrick Eaton and Sean Green who coordinated the video content.

There were two large sections of screen onstage – upper and lower – with a horizontal gap in between, plus side IMAGs, so there were serious quantities of LED to contend with, which was another reason for the choice of the very bright Robe luminaires.

The BMFLs were mainly deployed upstage in the center of the rig where they provided potent beams and back lighting. Tom never tires of using them. “They are still among the brightest fixtures around and a truly outstanding light that was always way ahead of its time,” he enthused.

The MegaPointes were all over in the mid and upstage trusses, with some on the floor. “You absolutely can’t beat a MegaPointe, and you can never get enough of them,” noted Tom, adding that these too, in his opinion were an absolutely groundbreaking product, which is why so many LDs are still eagerly embracing them!

Spiider LED wash beams are another Tom favorite, and a go-to luminaire that goes on his lighting plots when possible: “A great LED wash light, excellent colors and outstanding coverage,” he states.

Tom has been using Robe fixtures for several years and has enjoyed road testing new tech from Robe and other manufacturers when it’s released, in the process, building a reputation for pioneering new products.

He has more recently started incorporating Robe’s Tetra2s into large multi-artist line up shows like Fiesta Latina, where he layered all the Tetras across the trussing and vertical set ‘bookends’ to create a massive linear lighting look.

Tom frequently also works with LPS, a company that has heavily invested in Robe, and he was delighted that all the Tetra2s were available for this show, especially as they were also requested by one of the producers who likes their capacity for sheet of light, lensing, and pixel effects!

“They are simply super versatile,” stated Tom. “Ideal for a show like this, great for footlight style front lighting, and for back of camera effects!”

Tom underlined that apart from looking good, the megamix of all these Robe luminaires gives him the widest creative options for building spectacular looking shows under pressure.

He believes that Robe genuinely considers the wishes of – and challenges faced by – LDs when they are designing and bringing products to the market. “Their R n’ D has always been very smart,” he commented.

Many new, young, and rising star Latin LDs came and guested at the event which is “always great to see,” noted Tom with characteristic enthusiasm, mentioning that many of the artists are also highly aware of the impact lighting and what a difference it can make to their performance.

LPS Production is a rental house and has a projects division that specifies and oversees installations. General manager Juan Ugas has worked with Tom for about 18 years. The company currently has upwards of 600 Robe fixtures in rental stock – with a quantity of new iFORTES just ordered – but none of it spends much time in the warehouse as it’s constantly in demand out on jobs.

For Juan, setting up the 8-way RoboSpot system for the 2023 iHeart Fiesta Latina was one of the big challenges, when Tom made the decision not to use any venue follow spots, a first for this event.

Having RoboSpots gave him more control over the ability to tweak color temperatures and intensities as the broadcast unfolded and react in real-time to fluctuations in the video content and other environmental factors.

Five BMFL Blades and three BMFL FollowSpots were used for the RoboSpot system, with the five Blades hung above the FOH position for front and key lighting, and the three BMFL Follow Spots on the overhead rig for accenting and sharper angled work when needed.

The BaseStations were all backstage tucked out of the way, and the system was all networked together spanning long distances. Everything worked “extremely well and smoothly – it was a great asset to the show,” concluded Juan.

The LPS crew were led by master electrician and RoboSpot tech Anthony “Gato” Bolano, working with lighting technicians Harold Trenhs, Daniel Lugo, Victor Villamizar and Omar

“Omi” Maldonado, with Juan as the project manager.

Tom relished delivering another memorable iHeart Fiesta Latina event and working with the “great team of people involved,” which included event producer Dennis O’ Heron, executive producers Michael Forte and Bart Peters of iHeart Media, staging supervisor Laura Paganucci and talent producer Raphael Burne, together with Erin Hardin, Elizabeth Paige and Annie Goodroad from DPS Production.

Photo Credit: courtesy LPS Production







