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GES Circle Around with Robe

Products Involved

LEDBeam 150™ MegaPointe® BMFL™ WashBeam RoboSpot™

Hugely successful Swedish pop supergroup GES (a nifty acronym derived from the surnames of three of the country's biggest singing stars – Anders Glenmark, Orup (Thomas Eriksson) and Niklas Strömstedt – continued a rollercoaster tour that started in 2021, wrapping up 2022 with a 33-date sold-out residency at Stockholm's famous Cirkus venue.

A stunning lighting and visual stage design was created by Palle Palmé, based around the architecture of this unique circular-shaped venue which was also where the tour had originally kicked off all those months ago after the first Covid restrictions were lifted.

The design featured two truss circles – large and small – and a curved LED screen on an automation system, with an all-Robe lighting rig in the air.

Think elegance meets superlative pop – lots of dynamics, colour and movement and an environment where dynamic lighting and visuals reinforce the fun, joy, and exuberance of superlative pop music.

Palle chose Robe to give him all the versatility and energy needed to make this show rock and to match the enormous energy and enthusiasm of the band, who are among Sweden's finest pop aficionados! GES and the guy's three individual careers started in the 1990s, so Palle was inspired a little bit by other artists of that era like Electric Light Orchestra (ELO) who brought a spherical spaceship theme to their landmark creative work, but with a bang-up-to-date look and feel.

Palle was also informed by working with two of the GES stars back at the start of his own career, one of the reasons he was asked onboard to design this tour.

Backed by a fantastic band, the whirlwind-paced show romped through a string of hits from the collective and individual careers of GES to which the audience knew all the words! The energy pumped relentlessly from the first bars to the last strains of the final number, and Palle's major task was keeping everything looking fresh and vital for two hours.

The overhead rig comprised 64 x Robe LEDBeam 150s, 16 x MegaPointes, 17 x BMFL WashBeams, with three RoboSpot systems running six of the BMFL WashBeams – two for each member of GES. The RoboSpot system had also been an important element of the touring lighting system.

All of these Robe fixtures, supplied to the Cirkus dates by rental company Musiklagret from Borås, were chosen for their versatility and power, the essential requirements needed to create lots of dynamics and fluidity.

The 64 x LEDBeam 150s were equidistantly spaced out around on the larger 10 metre diameter circle truss, which offered the perfect size and geometry for this set up, a format extremely easy to programme this quantity of fixtures with as it was divisible by 8!

Palle wanted LEDBeam 150s for their small size, speed, and uniqueness as a compact LED wash luminaire. He loves the “fabulous” zoom which adds a different dimension and finds them effortless to handle.

A volley of 16 x MegaPointes rigged in the smaller 3 metre diameter truss worked in conjunction with the LEDBeam 150s.

MegaPointes are a go-to light for effects and Palle maximised the gobos, prisms and other features that make this fixture an ultimately useful addition to any lightshow.

Palle remarked on how well the two fixture types – LEDBeam 150 and MegaPointe – blend and contrast in this case and notes the great match in colours. The interaction between the two fixture types becomes more pronounced during the closing numbers of the set where the circles are flying into multiple dramatic positions, pitching, and flying in and out within one another.

Automation was also integral to the show, used judiciously and carefully to bring an edge to an already spectacular looking stage.

Eleven of the BMFL WashBeams are on the front truss, used for keys and specials, with the other six upstage on the floor, shooting through from the back.

The six RoboSpot controlled BMFL WashBeams were all on the front truss, with two lights dedicated to each member of GES.

“I’ve tried a lot of different remote systems in recent years, and this is one of the best and the most straightforward to set up and use,” Palle stated.

All the BMFL WashBeam parameters were run through the grandMA console, so all the RoboSpot operators had to do in this case was concentrate on following their targets.

For one song, "Rain with Me" (Regn hos mig) a fixed breakup gobo together with the animation wheel in the BMFL WashBeam is used on Orup, a rain-effect that would have been impossible using a standard follow spot. Palle thinks that having access to these possibilities adds real value to the RoboSpot package.

While he loves traditional follow spots and respects the associated art of operating these, he feels that RoboSpot, with its human element, combines new tech with traditional skills very well, adding that his follow spot operators have been fundamental to this show. "It's always been a really vital role," he confirmed, "which continues whether it's a manual or technology assisted operation."

The show's grandMA2 lighting console operator Edvin Nyström worked on the whole tour and will also work for Palle on pop and country singer Jill Johnson, who plays multiple dates at the same venue through the first months of 2023, also using a large Robe lighting rig.

Palle, who also designs for major theatre, musical and opera productions, really enjoyed working on the GES show.

"There was much scope for interdisciplinary and crossover techniques," he enthused, which resulted in creating a fabulous pop-tastic aesthetic that merged moments of theatre with arena show and classic pop, rock and EDM lighting as the band ripped through a masterwork of GES's individual and collective hits ... to the massive delight of their diverse fanbase.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland







