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Robe Helps New Year's Eve Live: Nashville's Big Bash Go Large

Products Involved

iFORTE® LTX WB **iFORTE®** **iSpiider®** **Tarrantula™** **LEDBeam 350™**
FOOTSIE2™ Slim **RoboSpot™**

Nashville – well known as a vibrant and major hub for the production and live entertainment industry – staged its own superlative concert – “Jack Daniel’s New Year’s Eve Live: Nashville’s Big Bash” – at Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park to celebrate the new year rollover, featuring an impressive artist lineup and an eye-popping lighting and production design created by Robert W. Peterson of Real World Lighting.

Bob added 86 x Robe iFORTE LTX moving lights to his lighting plot, together with 46 x iFORTES, 38 x iSpiider LED wash beams, 20 x Robe Tarrantula large LED wash beams and 20 x LEDBeam 350s, all supplied by Solotech, project managed for them by Austin Schussler and Steven Morgan with Joseph Logsdon providing excellent account oversight for the whole project.

The five-hour CBS special concert kicked off at 7 p.m. It was directed by Sandra Restrepo and broadcast live offering a series of superlative back-to-back performances beamed across multiple time zones live from ‘Music City’. It was headlined and co-hosted by four-time GRAMMY award-winning Keith Urban with Rachel Smith, together with Kane Brown and Jelly Roll, with rousing sets from Shaboozey, Brittney Spencer and many others, ensuring that everyone attending live, watching on TV, or streaming the event, enjoyed an awesome New Year’s Eve experience!

It's the second year that Bob has lit the concert. The telecast also involved pre-recorded cut-ins that were filmed in various live music clubs along Nashville’s famous Broadway in December (shown on the IMAG screens for those at the concert), however, as he explained, in terms of stage design, lighting rather than video was very much the dominant visual aesthetic.

Gently curving trusses at the back were divided by horizontal strips of LED, rather than a big upstage slab of screen, a decision made by Big Bash executive producer Robert Deaton, who wanted to unify the theme and place the focus firmly on the artists rather than any supporting video content. The main screens were the stage left and right wing IMAGs.

Bob's challenge was to ensure that all audiences saw something unique and different, with memorable visual treatments for all artists, so lighting was designed with flexibility and multifunctionality at the core.

In addition to the trusses, a series of arched structures upstage were populated with Robe fixtures plus other lights - a nod to the many arched bridges that define and traverse Nashville's section of the Cumberland River and serve to help define its cityscape.

iFORTES and iFORTE LTXs were the workhorses of the rig.

They were positioned on the over-stage trusses front and back and on 6 self-climbing towers located in the audience together with two more towers at the FOH positions. Bob commented that the luminaires were "rock solid" and worked extensively throughout the event period and the show, despite high winds and rain throughout the week.

Being a celebratory broadcast, good audience lighting was critical, and "these were some of the best-looking crowd shots I've seen, fully bathed in the iFORTE LTX beams," he declared.

He also used iFORTE LTXs as rear follow spots onstage, and notes that both iFORTES and iFORTE LTXs will be going on all his future lighting designs when possible, noting that their "power and reliability" make them a perfect choice for large scale outdoor events.

The LEDBeam 350s were rigged on the arch structures and used as band back light as well as for numerous other rear-lighting and back-of-camera effects. The iSpiders were also on the rear trusses where they provided great contrast to the iFORTES including lots of twinkling and sparkling pixel effects which looked fabulous on camera.

Onstage, Robert used 32 of Robe's FOOTSIIE2 Slim RGB luminaires to assist as low-profile key lighting for the left and right sides of the mainstage.

It was the first time he had used the Slim version of the FOOTSIIE - a stylish low design, IP65-rated reduced footprint version of the original product, designed to take foot-lighting into a new era - and thinks that "the functionality and size are great."

Twelve of the iFORTE LTXs – positioned on the FOH and sides of the onstage rig – had RoboSpot cameras added and were controlled by 12 x RoboSpot BaseStations with their operators located downstage right in a designated tent.

Robert worked closely with lighting programmer Scott Cunningham on the Big Bash event. Scott also programmed and operated lighting for many of the pre-recorded venue segments, and Tal Kochav took care of audience lighting of the TV show.

Solotech's lighting crew chief was Tommy Smith, Dave Carr managed FOH and was the team's RoboSpot wiz, the dimmer tech was Robert Winfree, and they worked alongside lighting techs Josh Dirks, Robbie Sheene, Hayley Cass and Jimmy Healey.

Video crew chief Marshall Blair with techs Kenny Kightlinger and William Sherman, and the screens – and lighting director was Taylor Price. Lead rigger was Jake Lanier, and Gabe Boardley co-ordinated the automation elements.

The entire event was managed for the City of Nashville by David Spencer and Chris Lisle.

A major task for lighting Big Bash is taking care of all requirements for both camera and live enjoyment, an area in which Robert excels. He started his professional lighting career in touring and was introduced to the television world by the legendary Allen Branton, finding the transition interesting and productive for growing his skill set. He now works on many music television shows, Netflix comedies and other genres that 'crossover' these two demanding disciplines.

Robert has been using Robe products since the early days of the brand and has seen the company develop and grow from strength to strength. He feels that Robe "really appreciates the importance of quality optics in professional-level tools."

Photo Credits: Alan Poizner, Jake Matthews





