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2012 MTV Video Music Awards show

Products Involved

ColorSpot 1200E AT™ ColorWash 1200E AT™ MMX Spot™

Leading international Lighting Designer Tom Kenny used Robe among other moving light fixtures in his design for the 2012 MTV Video Music Awards show.

The star-studded event was staged at the Staples Centre arena in downtown Los Angeles and honoured the very best of music videos from the previous year.

A host of live appearances included sets from One Direction, Rihanna, Green Day, Taylor Swift, Pink, Alicia Keyes, Lil Wayne, Frank Ocean and dance guru Calvin Harris among others, and the pressure was on to produce a truly spectacular visual environment for the occasion. It was the fifth year that Kenny has lit the main show working for producers MTV and Jesse Ignatovitch and Jen Jones from Den of Thieves.

He was joined by an equally stellar international line up on the production side, with set designer Florian Wieder (German idol, Voice of Germany and numerous high profile TV shows), creative director content producer Lee Lodge, known for his work with leading artists, art director Tamlyn Wright and legendary music television director, Hamish Hamilton.

The event was telecast worldwide and received a massive following on various social media streams and, naturally, on MTV.

Miami based Kenny is a master of lighting cutting-edge Awards shows, and knows how to create large visual experiences together with individual 'worlds within a world' for each live act.

He worked very closely with the artists' creative teams to ensure each looked unique and different within the overall event theme-line.

He needed the moving light system to be as flexible as possible, and so Robe MMX Spots and ColorWash 1200s - around 40 fixtures in total - were included on the spec to help make it rock.

These were supplied, together with the rest of the lighting equipment from VER Rentals' Burbank, California operation.

Kenny first used Robe's new eco-friendly 'smaller, lighter, brighter' ROBIN MMX Spot earlier in the year on the Country Music Awards and then again on the Teen Choice Awards. He likes

the quality of the beams, the light weight and the very versatile dual graphics wheel which is great for producing animation effects.

“Overall, the MMX is a great multi-purpose lighting fixture for illuminating stages, artists or scenery, and also for dramatic projection effects”.

For the VMAs the MMXs and ColorSpot 1200E ATs were rigged on vertical trusses that were ‘book-ending’ the massive LED screens which were integral to Weider’s set design.

“I continue to be surprised by just how adaptable and good fun the Robe products are to work with,” he quips.

He especially likes the new MMXs – with their numerous features making them “Ideal for fast-moving multi-layered shows like these”.

The creative and technical challenges of lighting the VMAs includes having to make decisions and programme exceptionally fast during rehearsals, keeping the focus on the stage action and simultaneously aiming to top all other shows in terms of technical production values!

Kenny always tries to use as many new products and technology as possible on these events and many new lighting fixtures have made their debut on the VMAs thanks to him.

The lighting was programmed by Mike Appel and Dirk Opt Ende using four grandMA2 full size consoles including ‘hot’ backup.

UK boyband of the moment One Direction were the biggest winners of the night, taking the Awards in all three of their nominated categories including Best New Artist and others included Rihanna for Video of the Year.

M.I.A’s “Bad Girls” Video directed by Romain Gavras won the Best Video Direction Award, and Skrillex’s “First of The Year” won the 2012 VMA for the Best Visual Effects which were produced by the Deka Brothers and Tony ‘Truand’ Datis.





