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FORTES for Sam Fender's Homecoming Shows

Products Involved

FORTE[®] **RoboSpot**[™]

British rock singer, songwriter, and musician Sam Fender played two tumultuous homecoming shows at St. James' Park in Newcastle with lighting designed by Sam Tozer – also the show's creative director – and equipment supplied by event technology specialists, Adlib, including 11 x Robe FORTES running on five RoboSpot systems.

Sam Tozer has been working with the artist since he re-started playing live after the pandemic in 2021. Working alongside him was lighting director Luke Avery, who was heavily involved in the design process, together with set designer Flora Harvey. Video content was created by UDC.

Sam's overall vision for these shows was to make the lighting look epic, large scale and 'industrial strength' to cover the vast and invigorating dynamic range of Sam Fender's music.

The FORTES were all rigged on the front truss and utilised for spot lighting, key lighting and specials. "I needed a very reliable and stable remote follow spotting system for the task of key'ing the band," explained Sam.

He wanted a stage left and a stage right spot for every band member to give excellent, even coverage across their bodies and faces, and this setup was a perfect solution, as well as a great example of how the RoboSpot system can be used flexibly and creatively.

FORTE is currently Robe's highest-powered LED profile luminaire; it has a high CRI and a quality of light that is ideal for this exact application.

The RoboSpot BaseStations were located behind the stage, and operated by local crew, and the FORTES were used throughout the set. Each RoboSpot operator was allocated a band member and stayed with them. Harry Williams was spot calling, and all the fast blackouts

and other special effects utilised on the FORTES were programmed and executed from the main grandMA3 lighting console.

“This show is all about the music and Sam Fender’s distinctive sound,” explained Sam, “and it is critical to be able to see the band throughout. The FORTES enabled me to do this, and as they have so many features, I was also able to add texturing and other effects on top of the essential follow spotting at various times.”

He appreciated the intensity of the FORTES, especially in colours, as the lights really needed to punch against all the LED onstage, plus the approximately 300 other fixtures on the rig.

Sam uses RoboSpot systems on almost all of his shows. He thinks Robe is a “workhorse lighting manufacturer” and has the confidence to know he will have “reliability, quality and consistency” when using their products.

He generally observes that there are a lot less conventional follow spots being specified now. “I don’t think many miss the days of carrying follow spots up countless flights of stairs, corridors and service lifts into the far corners and recesses of venues. And even then, the optimal positioning isn’t always guaranteed. It’s seriously easier, more efficient – and enhances creative options – to hang some additional fixtures on your front truss or fly an advanced truss with some remote-operated fixtures!” he concluded.

Adlib have been Sam Fender’s lighting supplier since 2019, when they first supplied his academy tour. Since then, his success and career trajectory have soared, and the Liverpool-based event technology specialists have continued to supply the North Shields’ artist with production support. “Through the years, we have had a fantastic working relationship with Sam Tozer, production manager Rob Simpson and the rest of the Sam’s crew,” noted Adlib’s project manager and account handler, Jordan Willis.

Adlib have purchased several RoboSpot systems in recent years, and the FORTES joined the rental inventory last year. Jordan agrees this was a brilliant investment as “Robe is one of the market leaders when it comes to spot lighting”.

Photo Credit: Steve Sroka





