

Lighting technology: trends and developments in 2018



Whether it's for an imposing stage show or to create the right mood: with the right choice of products, the lighting technology can make a crucial difference to an event. Roni Huber, Technical Design Manager at Winkler Livecom, discusses the latest trends in this fascinating area.

Roni, in the first half of the year, two of the most important trade fairs for event technology took place, the ISE in Amsterdam and the Prolight + Sound in Frankfurt. What were your highlights? Is it worth going to these trade fairs every year?

Definitely. Both are among the most important networking events of the year. These trade fairs are the best way to get a feel for the market. New products are presented for the first time, you meet like-minded people and you can even speak to the developers about future plans and ideas.

GrandMA3 – the latest light desk product range from MA Lighting – was presented at Prolight + Sound.

It has been hailed as a milestone in light control systems. What do you think of it?

Yes, there is a huge amount of hype around this new range of products. You could see it on social media prior to the presentation and by the number of visitors at the MA Lighting exhibition stand at Prolight + Sound. With GrandMA3, MA Lighting has created a new platform that is extremely diverse and forward looking. This product range lays the foundation for future developments, creating a state-of-the-art product. It has deliberately broken down the old structures and forged new paths. On the one hand, this represents considerable risk but it is the right way to go. We will find out more with the first software release.

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Are there other exciting developments?

Companies are constantly developing their products further, pushing each other and attempting to continually raise the bar. In the LED field, there are now devices with exceptionally high light output. One good example is the P18 from JB-Lighting with a 1000-watt engine. There are also developments in light quality. Martin Professional, for example, has created a moving light family with exceptionally high light quality in the Encore series. The traditional use of the follow spot is also increasingly changing. While the operator previously sat in their spot seats over the audience, the spotlight can now be controlled remotely. As well as being more secure, it also makes it possible to control several fixtures, even at the same time. Products like the PRG GroundControl or the Robe RoboSpot allow this type of applications. However, this is just the start and we can look forward to further developments in the future.

The new spotlights are increasingly multi-functional. Is it possible for the operators to manage all these functions?

Since LED technology brings numerous additional features with it, it is no longer possible to make full use of all these functions in reality. In the old days you could pan to the left or right with a spotlight, generate various colours and add a gobo, a

prism or a frost filter. It's a lot more complicated now. There are so many ways to use the spotlight that you don't have time as an operator to use or programme them all. That is why software developers are becoming increasingly involved with the idea of how to control these numerous fixtures without wasting time. The media server manufacturer Arkaos has found a solution to this for example: the Klingnet product makes it easy to control individual spotlight pixels, producing lots of additional opportunities to exploit the creative potential of today's complex spotlights without losing too much time in production. You can pull a picture directly into the protocol for example and Klingnet transfers the individual pixels of the picture onto the spotlight.

Now we can increasingly use the same spotlights to cover different application areas. How does that affect the market?

Niche markets that previously required specialist spotlights from specialist suppliers are now opening up to lots of other suppliers. This can be seen in theatres, for example. In this area, event technology service providers that previously only specialised in theatre productions and were protected providers in this area are now being threatened by other providers. LED technology allows them to deliver the same light at the same quality.

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Summer is here. What highlights can we expect from Winkler?

The festival season is here again. For us that means we started with the Argovia Fäscht festival where we were responsible for the light design. We will also take on the lighting technology for Rock the Ring. We are particularly excited about the Landesstreik 1918 project for which we will provide the audio in August. We can therefore look forward to a great summer.

Many thanks, Roni. We wish you lots of success!