

SSL Media Rolls with More Robe Investments

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Mumbai-based SSL Media Technology & Solutions is one of India's largest event and entertainment technology production providers, and a company known for thinking innovatively

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and outside the box to provide clients with the very best and most appropriate technical production solutions. They have also made major investments in Robe moving lights over the years.

The enterprise is headed by CEO Ulhas Sahasrabuddhe, known for his passion and commitment as an industry trailblazer. His father originally started the company in the 1970s as a supplier of theatrical lighting so Ulhas was born into it, and his son Akshay is now also a vital part of the team as a key project manager in what's become almost a family tradition.

The most recent Robe investments have been in iFORTE LTX FS (follow spot) fixtures - eight fixtures together with eight RoboSpot BaseStations ... and these are the first RoboSpot systems in India.

The equipment was delivered by Robe's Indian distributor IES (Integrated Entertainment Solutions) headed by founder & owner Rasesh Parekh.

SSL currently holds the largest stock of Robe in India, with over 200 fixtures from the most recent Robe ranges, plus some of the classic ColorSpot and ColorWash 575 series fixtures - circa 2003 - which are still working after all these years and still perfect for parties and the more budget-conscious events.

While the Indian production market is highly competitive, Ulhas's investments in Robe both now and historically have proved savvy, as there is a constant demand on certain projects for the quality and excellence of a leading brand like Robe.

In the last year alone, SSL has expanded its Robe stock of FORTES - they now have 87 - and MegaPointes, of which they now have 80. The Spider count has been boosted as well, with the purchase of another 24 of these popular LED wash beams.

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The SSL team offers expertise in lighting, video - LED screens and projection - trussing and rigging, audio, and SFX.

The large inventories of lighting and LED screen make the company unique, and the work spans multiple genres and sectors, especially events and television production, together with most major event producers, TV channels and prominent media organisations.

Tech production for around 95% of the Hindi and Marathi TV industry producing non-fiction content is provided by SSL, whose portfolio embraces concerts and music festivals, spectacular opening & closing ceremonies, sports events, including esports, spiritual gatherings, theatre

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productions, musicals, and more!

They also work internationally throughout Asia and the Middle East, supplying both equipment and talented hard-working crew to a diverse range of projects from awards shows to concerts.

They also service top international stars when they play in India – Coldplay, Bryan Adams, Green Day, Ed Sheeran, Shawn Mendes, Guns N’ Roses, Eric Prydz to name a few over the last year. Ulhas underlines that it is essential, when dealing with this level of artist, to be able to provide the premium brands their production teams are demanding.

“We studied riders extensively,” he explained, “and this has been a factor driving us towards Robe right from the start.” He adds that SSL has arguably one of the largest fleets – over 1000 – of moving lights in the country, branded and unbranded combined.

Typically, they will be supplying around 20 / 25 active sites each day that could be shows, rehearsals, tours or events, and two or three of these will usually be using branded moving lights.

Project manager Siddhesh Susvirkar noted that in addition to shows and music-based performance, FORTES were popular for lighting conferences, trade show booths and expo areas. He sees that lighting designers appreciate features like the fantastic brightness, gobos and the overall quality of the light being emitted from the fixture.

He also mentions that MegaPointes continue to be an all-time favourite Robe luminaire, still in huge demand in India.

Akshay adds that, even when internationals might not have Robe as a first choice on their own spec, “everyone is happy to work with Robe fixtures.”

He is also seeing FORTES and iFORTES increasingly on riders together with RoboSpots. If sub-hired, any of these lights and systems are always supplied with SSL’s own highly trained crew rather than as a dry hire.

The very first gig in India for SSL’s new RoboSpot was a massive show in Chennai by Indian movie and singing superstar Anirudh. Lighting was designed by Bala Subramanya (Vinod) and Guru Somayaji of Bangalore-based creative studio, 369 Design Lab.

The SSL team did their own RoboSpot training after receiving the fixtures, which was organised

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by IES, after which their now trained crew are teaching a selection of their own operators.

Co-ordinating the RoboSpots for SSL is Sahi Jabdhav, also a lighting designer, and he was one of those originally trained by IES. He highlights how at a gig or concert, utilising RoboSpots will save on structures and will enable the prompters to have less seat kills, which is always a plus!

“Robe have not over-engineered this project. They have been clever and kept it straightforward and easy to learn, especially for those who are already adept in the art of follow spotting.” He confirms that a lot of the LDs and lighting operators also like the system, as they can work in closer proximity to the RoboSpot operators.

On top of all that, it really maximises the flexibility of fixtures in the rig, which can be used for following and as part of the general rig at different times.

SSL’s general consensus about Robe as a brand is “outstanding,” and Ulhas points out the great collaboration they enjoy with Rasesh Parekh and the IES team, which is also a critical element of the bigger-picture investment plan.

Photos are by Louise Stickland.