VARI*LITE

ARIZONA'S MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE UPGRADES TO VARI-LITE

TO REDUCE POWER CONSUMPTION AND TRANSFORM PRODUCTION LOOKS

Mesa Community College Arizona's 462-seater Performing Arts Center held its first full production in November 2022, staging a performance of The Addams Family musical. It followed an upgrade of its in-house rig to Vari-Lite LED luminaires - including the VL2600 Profile, VL800 EventWash and VL800 ProPar – which have helped them dramatically reduce power consumption, transform looks with effects and smooth, rich colors, and provide pro-lighting equipment to aid student learning.

The college's modern, architecturally striking Performing Arts Center, located just east of Phoenix, opened in 2014. It was initially rigged with a range of traditional Fresnels, pars and tungsten wash and profile fixtures, which were aging and power hungry. Kyle Rivieccio joined Mesa Community College in 2019 as PAC Technology Coordinator/Master Electrician, and he was later tasked with delivering a lighting rig upgrade with a view to installing world-class, professional lighting that would provide a powerful, effects-ready solution.

"We entered a phase of demos and shootouts to find the right package, taking into account budget and requirements," says Rivieccio. "During all the demos, designers from our scenic, lighting, AV, costume, and makeup departments were present, and we ran the lights with scenic drops and sets and costumes from a show within our season. I asked them all to give feedback on each fixture, and they would discuss the pros and cons of each demo unit. I took all that information and began selecting the fixtures."

"We were looking for attributes including color matching, mixing system, CRI count, lumen output, shutter system, ease of use, local warranty, and ease of maintenance, which led us neatly to the Vari-Lite fixtures."

Knowing that a forthcoming production of the musical stage adaptation of the classic film The Addams Family was planned for late 2022, Rivieccio worked with Andrew Witte from Witte Lighting Services & Repair in nearby Tempe to source the solution. The eventual package included 26 VL2600 Profile, 15 VL800 EventWash, and 28 VL800 ProPar fixtures, alongside 22 Cantata Full Color fixtures.

"I am in love with the smooth and even color mixing across all of the fixtures," Rivieccio continues. "The versatility in both of our theaters has given our designers even more possibilities to work with. As an end user, I am very thankful I was given the space to choose what would work best for us. From educators to students and staff, all have had nothing but great things to say about how amazing, beautiful and wonderful our new lights are."

"The high output 19,000 lumens of the VL2600 luminaires was a deal winner, along with the CRI and the color mixing system and shutters. I also love how fast the VL800 EventWash is, with a great zoom and color mixing despite its compact size. I'm using the VL800 ProPars for my backlight system at the PAC and I love the motorized zoom feature and they sure are bright!"

The Addams Family show was the first production to use the full new rig. Rivieccio served as the lighting designer for the show, with Trent Flores as board operator and heavy student involvement in creating the lighting design, rigging and programming.

"I feel that having these fixtures gives our students one of the best opportunities for creativity and exploration," says Rivieccio. "As students and technicians, they get a chance to work and design with amazing lights. We really are creating magic! When they leave our program and begin their careers and creative opportunities, they have the tools and up-to-date knowledge of technology to build upon."

Mesa Community College reports that power consumption at the PAC has fallen by half. "This is an additional bonus, given rising costs of energy and budget constraints that exist in all schools," he adds. ∎

PRODUCTS FEATURED:
VL2600 PROFILE
VL800 EVENTWASH
VL800 PROPAR
CANTATA LED FRESNEL, FULL COLOR

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LIGHTING APPLICATION: OTHER