

VARI*LITE

VARI-LITE'S VLZ PROFILE SHINES FOR JUANA OPERA AT UCLA



Los Angeles, USA – Vari-Lite's VLZ PROFILE luminaire made a strong impression with young lighting designer, Luz Gaitan, when she was tasked with lighting a production of a new opera, Juana, at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The LED-based luminaire's wealth of features and performance attributes gave Gaitan everything she needed of a profile fixture to navigate the show's demanding lighting requirements.

Staged at UCLA's Freud Playhouse, a 562-seat proscenium theater, Juana is based on the life of a remarkable 17th century Mexican nun, Sister Juana Ines de la Cruz. In addition to her considerable accomplishments as theologian, poet, author, composer, artist and architect, Sister Juana's life was noted for her conflict with men of the Inquisition, and her reputation as 'the first feminist of the new world.'

Luz Gaitan, a grad student at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television's Department of Theater, said of the production's lighting challenges: "Juana was a difficult opera to design for, as we had to switch between realism, memories and mystical scenes, all with very quick scene changes. The light had to be able to support the changes and flexible scenes, but, at the same time, it needed to be precise to deal with all the movable set pieces".

Gaitan found that the VLZ PROFILE fixtures gave her the versatility, effects and performance features that she needed to meet these challenges. "The VLZ PROFILES saved my life throughout this production," she said. "They helped me to be extremely quick, precise and, most of all, flexible."





Praising the fixture's CMY-CTO color system, Gaitan said, "I really like the color flexibility of the VLZ PROFILE. In addition to the color mixing, they also have a color wheel, a CTB and a CTO that allow me to be very color specific. This was especially good for costumes, as there were a couple where it would have been extremely easy to change the color of the fabric. Without the incredible flexibility of the VLZ PROFILE, the costumes would have appeared very flat."

The VLZ PROFILE'S CTO adjustment was, she added, "an excellent tool that I kept coming back to. It's warm, but not orange, and it really helped to bring all the white scenic pieces alive, without coloring them. The CTO and CTB always looked natural and not oversaturated."

She continued, "I adore the flexibility of having the color temperature adjustment available on a wheel. It allowed me to be very specific and adjust to the different colored skin tones of the cast."

Gaitan was also impressed by the beam control and effects. "My main force for Juana was the use of the VLZ's framing shutters," she said. "The scenography presented so many challenges with extreme angles and scenic movements. Also, since the scenery was a uniform color, the use of the gobo wheels with the beam edge softening feature helped me to create more dimension and texture, sculpting the scenery and separating the singers from the background."

The designer also noted the power-saving advantages of the fixture's LED source, as well as its renowned output. "The LED output is excellent, the fixture is very bright and the color is clear and sharp," she said. "And for me, low power consumption is very important. I appreciate that stage lighting is not necessarily the most environmentally friendly activity, but consuming less power is a big help."

One other performance characteristic is especially important in an opera environment. On the sensitive issue of noise, Gaitan said, "I love the quiet operation! One of the best characteristics of the VLZ PROFILE is its quiet fans, which is important for any opera, but especially for Juana. I was worried at first because three of the fixtures were on the deck, very close to the orchestra, but there were no complaints from the maestro."

In conclusion, Gaitan commented, "The VLZ PROFILES are great, quick and quiet and exceeded my expectations. I was really happy with them." ■

PRODUCTS FEATURED:
VLZ PROFILE

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LIGHTING DESIGNER: Luz Gaitan

LIGHTING APPLICATION: THEATRE