



CASE STUDY

Riding the Storm with Panasonic Projectors

Panasonic projectors were used to create a sold-out musical theatre show using over a 100 Friesian horses.

Product(s) supplied: **PT-RZ31K**

Challenge

To create a complete audience experience using Friesian horses and gigantic video projection.

Solution

Five PT RZ31K projectors were used to project a quality background, enhancing the visual imagination of the public.

"For creating theatre and live event productions with video projection, Panasonic is the norm because of its quality and reliability."

Arjen Klerckx
Video Designer



The Stormrider (De Stormruiter) is one of the largest productions that LeeuwardenFriesland has to offer as European Capital of Culture in 2018. The musical performance, on stage in September and October at the WTC Expo in Leeuwarden, had sold out audiences of up to 4,500 people. The script for the musical is based on the nineteenth century novella 'Der Schimmelreiter' by Theodor Storm, which is hardly known to us, but is a classic in German literature. De Stormruiter tells the dramatic life story of the ambitious dike-reeve Hauke Haien, who has only one goal: to build a dike that defies the centuries.

Two major themes

The composition and direction of De Stormruiter is in the hands of Jos Thie, best known for his enormous theatre productions on location, such as ABE!, Peer Gynt, Orfeo, King Lear and Faderpaard and his collaboration with Jochem Myjer and DJ Armin van Buuren.

"De Stormruiter is a grand musical theatre spectacle which uses more than a hundred Friesian horses and features a top cast including Jelle de Jong, Annemaaike Bakker and Ellen ten Damme. The music composed especially for this performance is played live by the Wêreldbând and choir members from Friesland and from beyond," explains Thie, writer and director of De stormruiter.

"The piece involves two major themes: the battle of man against the water and the creation of the Friesian horse breed. I have been fascinated by the Friesian horse breed for years. It originated from a cross between the coarse farm horse and a warm-blooded Spanish breed. The result is a powerful but also graceful horse. Plus, they are phenomenal theatre animals. In this theatre production, I could connect both themes in a big performance and it fitted nicely in the programming of the Cultural Capital."

Video panorama

"In the 18th century there was a flood every year that flooded large parts of Friesland. The story takes place in 1750 in a village community on the Frisian Wadden Sea coast and is about a couple, Hauke and Elke. They find each other in their passions; Hauke wants to build strong dykes and his young wife Elke wants to improve the Friesian breed," continues Thie.

"They are an enterprising couple which helps their progress but they also encounter opposition. We ask the following questions in the production. Do you have to bend God's creation to your will? And how high do the dikes have to be to really feel safe? The piece is played against a backdrop of one hundred meters wide and fifty meters deep with up to fifty horses and dozens of actors on stage at any one time.

The whole background consists of a gigantic screen that functions as a horizon with video image. This video panorama plays an extremely important role in this performance, not only as a literal background but also as a visual imagination. Sometimes the image is abstract, sometimes cartoonish, very overwhelming or very modest but because of its size it has immense possibilities. "That is why on this production I have been working with video designer Arjen Klerckx. Arjen is one of the few specialists in the Netherlands who merges video and theatre. He is very technical and understands the needs of theatre."

Imagination is important

"This is the eighth performance that Jos and I have worked together on," explains Arjen. I know how Jos thinks and what he wants. We have been talking about this theatre piece for about four years now, with a projection rear panel of eighty meters wide and eight meters high. Imagination is very important in this story; there is moving image, still imagery and 3D animations. We tried to fill in every scene, taking into account the music and the staging.



Laser projectors

"For creating theatre and live event productions with video projection, Panasonic is the norm because of its quality and reliability," comments Arjen. In a space with lots of theatre lighting, it is essential to have a powerful projector with a lot of light output. In this production we used five PT-RZ31K projectors each with 31,000 lumens, which hang on the ceiling at eight meters.

A huge advantage is that the projectors are quiet and can always perform to the maximum using the Dual Laser technique. We want to give the spectators the same experience, whether they come for the première or the finale."

The projectors were delivered by Faber AV. "We are also using a Hippo media server that combines all five projectors in high resolution and ensures that everything runs smoothly. The projectors, the media server and the content that I provide, all come together nicely in this performance. The result is beautiful! De Stormruiter is, in my opinion, an absolute highlight in the program of Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018!"

A one-off top production

De Stormruiter was commissioned by the Royal Friesian Horse Studbook (KFPS) and the Faderpaard Foundation. This foundation is committed to maintaining the Friesian horse breed and underlining the cultural value of this beautiful animal. Initially fifteen performances were programmed but there has since been demand for more.

"De Stormruiter has always been presented as a one-off top production that is not renewed," explains Thie. "However there was still room for seven extra performances within the schedule. In order to guarantee the high quality of the performance this was the maximum feasible number. Currently it is sold out, anyone wanting to see the show will have to be put on a waiting list!"

