THE PERFECT BACKDROP FOR PIPES AND DRUMS

THE PROJECTION STUDIO UTILISES HIGH BRIGHTNESS PANASONIC PROJECTORS TO ACCOMPANY WORLD FAMOUS MILITARY SPECTACLE
Standing on an extinct volcano cap, Edinburgh Castle is a fortress that dominates the skyline for miles around.

Situated at the top of the Royal Mile, the castle plays host to the annual Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, which every year attracts 220,000 spectators and a global TV audience of 100 million.

The Tattoo has been held every August since 1950 and is one of the 12 festivals that take place in Edinburgh.

The event features performance from the British Armed Forces as well as a wide range of international and Commonwealth military bands and display teams.

Since 2005, slide projection has been incorporated into the performance, with images that complement the show projected on to the façade of the castle. The Tattoo integrates this form of son et lumière evening light show with traditional ceremonial military music, marching and pyrotechnics.

For the 2016 Festival, the Tattoo organisers felt that their incumbent projection systems were outdated and insufficiently bright, struggling to stand out against the rest of the lighting design and pyrotechnics, that had advanced year on year. In addition, the inclement weather meant that often the Castle was wet, making it even more challenging to project on to.

The Projection Studio has created the content at the Tattoo since 2005 and was asked to advise on a suitable, high brightness projection system. Creative Director Ross Ashton said, “The main reason for upgrading the projection was that the projection forms part of a much wider sound and light show.

“There is a lighting designer who needs to light up the many hundreds of participants on the Esplanade sufficiently for the audience. As a result, there’s a lot of light being poured into the arena, so the projection has to be able to stand up to that and still look impressive despite all that light in the foreground.”

Following late night test shoots, organisers decided to invest in Panasonic projection technology. In total, 12 PT-DW17K2 3-chip DLP™ projectors were chosen, due to the incredible brightness and strong colour reproduction of the projector.

"It’s added immeasurably to the audience experience"

Each features 17,000 lumens of brightness with a contrast ratio of 10,000:1. Like other Panasonic large venue projectors, the PT-DW17K2 has an extremely compact body and provides a variety of advanced features, such as DIGITAL LINK connectivity, portrait mode capability and multi-screen projection. In addition, to ensure that every visitor leaves happy, the DW17K2 is equipped with a quad-lamp system, meaning if one lamp fails, the show will go on.

Doug Cook, Head of Operations for The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, said, “The projectors we had originally were very dated, and we wanted to upgrade those so we had some state of the art technology.

"I always ask the audience what they’ve enjoyed about the show and this year it’s been very noticeable because of the improvement in the images that these projectors provide. Those who’ve seen it before notice the difference, particularly because the images are much brighter and sharper and there’s a lot more light from these projectors. It’s added immeasurably to the audience experience.”

The modern projection system has given the opportunity for the 3D video projection mapping experts at The Projection Studio to incorporate more complex visual elements into the show, such as geometric sequences, image montages and stone cracking effects, which all display brilliantly on the castle façade.

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“We’ve got waterfalls, we’ve got Mordor, we’ve got the castle cracking and exploding, so it’s much more exciting from that point of view,” said Ross Ashton.

Stretching 90 metres wide, the projection area covers the full width of the castle walls as the live performances play out on the esplanade below.

The show lasts under two hours in total and brought with it challenges, in particular in relation to the projection surface.

“‘The Castle is entirely asymmetrical and features multiple exterior walls and ramps that were up to 60 metres further away from the projection stack in places. I think it’s probably the most difficult surface I’ve ever had to work with, it’s dark, it’s even darker when it’s wet,” he added.

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