LIGHTING UP A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

PANASONIC HIGH BRIGHTNESS PROJECTORS USED TO HELP COMMEMORATE THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND JAPAN
For nearly 2,000 years the Colosseum has served as a symbol of ancient Rome.

Having played host to gladiatorial contests and public spectacles in Roman times and functioning as housing, workshops, a fortress and a quarry in medieval times, the latest incarnation for the famous circular arena is as a projection canvas on which to mark a special anniversary using light.

Motoko Ishii Lighting Design and Ishii Conception Office Network (ICON) were commissioned by the Japanese and Italian Embassies to help commemorate the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

An original programme with the theme 'Love to humanity, love to earth' was specially written for the occasion. The production team of mother and daughter Motoko and Akari-Lisa Ishii chose the theme to raise awareness of today’s fragile political, social and environmental climate and to communicate a message of friendship, love and peace to the Italian people and to the world.

The special ten minute programme was free to attend and took place over three nights in May 2016. It started with a dynamic, dramatic light performance spread across the façade of the Colosseum, followed by an original animation, using ink drawings created by Akari-Lisa Ishii, telling a story of love.

It is the first time that a suibokuga (traditional Japanese monochromatic brush and ink drawing technique), has been transformed in to a light projection and applied to the façade of a World Heritage site.

The lighting and projection show was accompanied by a newly composed score, which was partially inspired by Japanese traditional music, such as taiko (large Japanese drums) and gagaku (ancient Japanese court music).

In total, nine Panasonic PT-DZ21K2 Evo projectors were used to create a high brightness projection capable of filling the giant ancient canvas.

Featuring 20,000 lumens of brightness and a host of rich creative capabilities, the projector is packed into an extraordinarily compact body.

With the PT-DZ21K2 Evo, every feature is designed and developed to meet the needs of highly critical projection professionals.

It is the updated version of the DZ21K series which has been used extensively across the rental and staging industry Europe-wide. The projector was used most recently at the Circle of Light Festival in Moscow, when 142 projectors were used to create a Guinness World Record for the largest projected image.

"Because the DZ21K2 has a four lamp system, we knew that there was inbuilt redundancy"

The projectors and AV equipment was supplied by STS Communication in Milan. Sabrina Miali, Account Manager, said, "The brightness of the projector was important in order to cover the distance between the Colosseum and Foro Romano, and because there was a lot of ambient light in the area. The compact, light-weight nature of the projectors was important as we were installing them in a very high profile ancient site, so avoiding the use of machinery like cranes or forklifts was preferred."

"And finally, because the DZ21K2 has a four lamp system, we knew that there was inbuilt redundancy, so that even if a lamp blew during the performance, the show could still continue without the audience noticing," added Sabrina Miali.

The Projectors were stacked in three sets of three, meaning over 60,000 lumens of light helped illuminate the ancient ruin.

"It was reassuring to know that the projection technology was going to help make this a success"

The projection included a light message, with the word 'love' displayed in 150 languages from around the world. The 10 minute show was repeated continuously 15 times a night for three evenings and the opening night was attended by VIPs, including members of the Japanese imperial family.

Akari-Lisa Ishii, Lighting Designer Principle at ICON, said, "We tested a single projector two weeks before the event started. I was delighted and pleasantly surprised with just how bright the image we got from just a single projector was.

"This is a very high profile event for the whole team and it was such a personal honour to be asked to create a lighting show on the surface of one of the most iconic structures in the world. So it was reassuring to know that the projection technology was going to help make this a success.”