

Projection Studio Creates Son et Lumière

Celebrating 50 Years of Hopkins Centre for The Arts at Dartmouth College

BRIEF

London UK based Projection artist Ross Ashton was commissioned by Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, NY State to produce an exclusive *Son et Lumière* show celebrating the 50th anniversary of its high profile Hopkins Centre for the Arts.

Ashton took a brief from the College's Organising Committee who discussed what they wanted, and a student committee was also invited to present ideas that could be included. From there, he originated the concept for the 13 minute work.

There was a historical and a future section to the show, together with a special dance piece devised by students and videoed against a green screen, from which elements were edited and integrated into the projection sequence.

"It was really important to make it an all-inclusive piece and to emphasise the hugely diverse traditional and contemporary performance programmes for which the Hopkins Centre is renowned, as well as the reputation of Dartmouth as a liberal arts university," explains Ashton, who knew from experience that dance as a medium "Would transpose very dynamically onto the front of the building".

Ashton completed the story and script-writing in London, while Projection Studio's Sang Gun Kim produced the motion graphics with some input from Ashton and Steve Larkins.

EXECUTION

The show 'Five Windows' was based around stunning large format projections highlighting the history, achievements and impact of the Hopkins Centre, which also houses the Ivy League College's drama, music, film and studio arts departments.

Giant images were projected on to the magnificent front façade of the Hopkins Centre, which was designed by architect Wallace Harrison and opened in 1962.

Ashton asked UK-based sound artist Howie Saunders – whose cinematic credits include *The Matrix* – on-board to compose a special sound-track. This featured recording from the first events at the Hopkins Centre including readings by poet Robert Frost.

The front of the Hopkins Centre features several enormous arched windows, each of which were covered with bespoke Spandex shades made for the occasion by Rosebrand, and attached via magnetic strips to the steel window frames.

The projection equipment was two Christie HD18 projectors, overlaid and located in a special hide positioned 17.5 metres from the front of the building. They were fitted with wide-angle short-throw lenses and supplied by New York based Atomic Professional Audio, co-ordinated by Dan Ostroff.

Ashton worked closely on site with Hopkins Centre Production Manager Todd Campbell, audio technician Doug Phoenix and video tech Will Cleveland and they also hired carpenter Donald Winams. The Watchout show control system was programmed by Karen Monid.

The big technical challenge was lining up the projectors across the Hopkins Centre façade's different depths, which vary by up to about 5 metres ... however some great teamwork resulted in a unique and memorable event to celebrate the landmark achievement.

RESULTS

Ashton comments, "It was an amazing opportunity to work with one of the most prominent educational institutions in the USA. The building is architecturally exciting, and compiling the storyboard and artwork was very interesting".