



Projection Studio Does "Ballroom Blitz" in Style at Buckingham Palace!

However this was no ordinary Ballroom!

Right in the heart of Buckingham Palace, one of London's most famous buildings, The Projection Studio created a stunning video show, featuring much archival World War 1 and 2 footage charting the history of The Not Forgotten Association.

The Not Forgotten Association was formed in 1920 to provide entertainment, recreation and leisure to the serving wounded and ex-Service men and women with disabilities. As part of its 90th Anniversary celebrations it organised a summer concert for 450 serving personnel and veterans in the Ballroom by kind permission of Her Majesty The Queen. In the early planning stages for the event, the small team within the Charity decided that telling the 90 year story of The Not Forgotten was to be the format and, if possible, wanted projections within the Ballroom to enhance the various acts making up the concert. Major Sir Michael Parker, who has a long-standing relationship with the Charity and has produced a number of concerts for them in the past, was asked if he would take it on.

The 90 minute show was projected by 8 Christie 18K HD video projectors configured to form a fully immersive 'wrap around' projection onto all four walls - with a stage at one end - and the ceiling of the Ballroom.

The majestic space - first completed in 1855 - is 34 metres long by 18 wide and 14 metres high. It was first used for a ball on 8 May 1856. The musician's gallery is occupied during investitures banquets and receptions by one of the bands of the Household Division. The organ was moved to the ballroom from the Brighton Pavilion by Queen Victoria. It was last restored in 2002 in time for The Queen's Golden Jubilee.

The projection was required to provide a rolling narrative for the evening plus impressive digital scenery, backdrops and settings for some of the solo pieces. e.g. a 1930's style café for male vocal quartet Blake, or a downtown neonesque cityscape for comedian David Copperfield.

Ross Ashton from The Projection Studio was asked to design the show by producer Major Sir Michael Parker, a veteran organizer of Royal live and special events - following on from Ashton's work with him on many previous projects. The show featured an orchestra and choir, plus live appearances by several leading performers including Rick Wakeman.

Making a fully immersive projection happen in this room was a real logistical brain teaser for Ashton, the challenges of which only became apparent after the first site survey. Eight enormous chandeliers grace the room, all of which cause huge shadowing problems for projectors so these had to be minimised.

In addition to that, there are virtually no flat surfaces around the room, which also features numerous intricate and ornate architectural details. All of this needed meticulous positioning and line-up of the projectors.

The images on the 2 long walls were created from 2 projectors positioned at each end of each wall, cross focussed and blended back into the centre of the walls. This was the only way to avoid cross shadows from the chandeliers.

The other 4 projectors were pointing upwards at 50 degrees - almost vertical - and cross shooting onto the ceiling, again positioned and focussed to minimise the chandelier shadows. All machines were fitted with short throw lenses.

The set-up timescale was extremely tight. They had 13 hours the day before the show, and another 13 hours on show day itself before the performance started to rig this very intricate system.

The video content was created by Paul Chatfield as Ashton was in South Africa working on the World Cup Closing Ceremony for which he was the large format projection consultant.

Chatfield spent an intensive 3 weeks compiling and creating all the material. As Projection Studio has done several military themed shows before with Major Sir Michael Parker, they were lucky enough to have a reasonable amount of existing historical archive material on which they could draw.

The completed show video footage was uploaded to OnlyView control system server, and the show was programmed and operated by Richard Porter. The projectionists were Karen Monid, Glen Jenkins and Viral Patel.

It was a resounding success, with many people commenting on the impact, emotion and drama of the projections.

Ross Ashton's work has been projected onto Buckingham Palace several times in recent years - following his landmark projections for the Queen's Golden Jubilee Celebrations in 2002. However, this is the first time that he and his company have worked inside the building!

Ends.

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