



Backstage at the Nobel Prize Banquet

The 2006 Nobel Prize Banquet is held annually on December 10 in the Blue Hall in Stockholm's City Hall. At this year's event, for the fourth time, Spectra Stage & Event Technologies supplied all lighting, AV equipment, and crew. Per Sundin was again called in as lighting designer.

The 2006 event featured the contemporary dance/performance art group Dansens Hus. This gave Sundin the opportunity to create a colorful atmosphere in the space; he turned to video technology for a new approach.

Twenty Barco Olite 510 tiles were used to create large LED walls, positioned in the handrail behind the stage and the four ornamental windows above it, displaying moving graphics in bold colors. Images of fire, bubbles, and snowflakes complemented the dances onstage.

Four days before the event, Sundin told his production manager, Ola Melzig, "I bet you can't get me four [High End Systems] DL.2s by Friday," Melzig called High End, who found two units in Rome and two in London. Sundin used them to project moving images on the dancers and stage.

Two Barco R18 projectors, managed by the rental house, Massteknik, projected digital content from two High End Catalyst V4 media servers on the ceiling. The DL.2 digital light fixtures were used in tandem with the Catalyst to project three-dimensional rotating snowflakes on the ceiling during dessert. Timo Kauristo programmed and operated the ceiling projections, and the LED screens, with an MA Lighting grandMA console.

Catalyst artwork was specially created by Peder ("Peppe") Tannemyr of Beacon, collaborating with Sundin. "For this particular event," Tannemyr says, "the set-up time is very short, and, in many cases, Per won't know exactly what he wants until all the lights are up and we've had a chance to rehearse with the entertainment, which is usually the day before. Fortunately, I know Per well. When he says, 'I want a star, and then it explodes,' I

can quickly put together a few different looks and he'll find one that's right."

General lighting in the Blue Hall was provided by forty 500W floodlights, two James Thomas Engineering (JTE) PAR 64 six-bars, and twelve 2kW Strand Alto Profiles, along with 22 SGM Ribalta LED striplights mounted on pillar brackets custom-made by Spectra specifically for the event. Fourteen Wybron Nexera CDM Wash fixtures were used as uplights to frame the etched glass doors leading to the Golden Hall on the second floor balcony. Twelve more Nexera CDM Profiles were placed on the third floor behind sculptured windows, combined with 200 Ministrobes, which strobed during dessert.

As for the performance lighting, a Robert Juliat 2,500W followspot tracked the dancers, with additional effects added to give each of them a unique personality. During the opening dance sequence, a confetti snow machine, ramp-mounted on the wall behind the stage, released artificial snow. In a later, futuristic dance called "Electrified Stories," the Ribaltas made a flickering strobe effect.

Fourteen SGM Giotto Synthesis units with OEM-installed W-DMX from Wireless Solutions were hung from two pieces of mini-beam, flying from carefully rigged truss sections installed in two corners of the ceiling, secured on the sides by an 18" ledge. During most of the night, the moving lights provided stage light for the performances, but went full force during the final dance act, swirling in all colors for a circus-like atmosphere. The conventional lighting, moving lights, and LED strips were programmed and operated by Emma Landare, using a High End Wholehog II.

For the first time in the history of the banquet, Sundin and the Spectra team created the lighting for the Golden Hall, the adjacent room where the post-dinner dance takes place. Sundin used four Wybron Nexera CDM color-mixing fixtures, six High End x.Spots, and 16 JTE PAR 56 floor cans for wall washes and ambient



PHOTO: LOUISE STICKLAND

lighting. Four JTE chrome PAR 64 six-bars lit the stage where a live band performed.

The crew faced many challenges. There's an absence of rigging points in the Blue Hall ceiling, and the front of house has to be built from scratch in the second floor corridors, requiring hundreds of feet of cable runs for electricity and DMX, as well as the installation of wireless internet routers. The building has no ramps and only one elevator large enough for road cases. Fixtures, cameras, and cables can only be visible to guests when absolutely necessary. Everyone in Stockholm City Hall on December 10, including production crew, must wear formal attire.

The equipment was chosen for specific reasons. "W-DMX is one example," says Melzig, "The transmitters are built into the SGM Synthesis, so we didn't need DMX cable running up to the ceiling." He adds, "Excess noise is avoided whenever possible, too, which is why the Nexera CDMs were chosen. They give a huge punch of color with just 150W, and they're damn near silent."

Sundin adds, "Last year had a more formal feel, with an a cappella choir and subdued lighting, this year we were able to use bold colors and even implement strobes and moving lights—something I never would have pictured for Nobel—but they loved it!" ☺