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Samuel Thery Shapes Dance at Les Ballets de Monte Carlo with Elation's Paragon Platform

For Samuel Thery, Lighting Manager and Tour Technical Manager for the internationally acclaimed Les Ballets de Monte Carlo (The Monte Carlo Ballet), light exists to guide the audience's eye, reveal emotion, and support the choreography—not call attention to itself. It is a subtle storytelling tool, one that demands precision, consistency, and restraint.

That philosophy has shaped Thery's work throughout his 17 years with the company and is why Les Ballets de Monte Carlo recently adopted Elation's complete [Paragon](#) platform across its productions.



A Different Approach to Lighting

Based in Monaco and performing throughout the year on stages around the world, the classical ballet company is renowned for its contemporary repertoire under Artistic Director and Choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot. With a demanding touring schedule and productions that range from the intimate to more exuberant works, every lighting fixture must serve multiple creative roles.

“Lighting for dance is very different from lighting a concert,” explains Thery, who worked in concert touring before transitioning to the Ballet. “On a concert tour, you have the artist’s show, and then you have the lighting show. In ballet, there is no lighting show. It’s more minimalistic.”



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We don't want people to notice the fixtures or see beams moving around the stage. The purpose of the light is to direct the audience's attention to a particular action or something on stage, a dancer or dancers. You may have 50 dancers on stage, but for the audience you need to tell them, 'Look here. This moment is important.'"

Lighting That Serves the Performance

Unlike many large entertainment productions that rely on hundreds of fixtures, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo uses a remarkably compact lighting package. "Our current production uses about 50 moving lights and some conventional fixtures, but everything fits into one truck," says Thery. "That means every moving light has to do many different jobs."

Those jobs can change from scene to scene and even cue to cue. One moment a fixture may provide a soft wash. Moments later it becomes a sharply framed profile, projects custom gobos, follows a principal dancer across the stage, or creates subtle movement that enhances the choreography without distracting from it.



"I use movement, but it's very subtle," he says. "Sometimes it's simply following a dancer or slowly moving a shutter to follow the action. During a pas de deux [dance duet], for example, I can even use the fixture as a followspot. The audience shouldn't notice the movement—they should simply feel that the light is supporting the dance."

One Platform, Consistent Performance

That versatility is exactly what drew the ballet company to Elation's Paragon series. Paragon, Elation's award-winning flagship luminaire platform, combines powerful output with precision framing, rich color, sharp gobos, and IP54 protection while incorporating innovative technologies including TruTone variable CRI, an interchangeable lens system, HEPA filtration, and advanced optical performance.

"The Paragon is fantastic because I can do so many different things with one fixture," Thery says. "Sometimes I need a wash, sometimes a profile with shutters, or a lot of gobos on stage. I can use the same fixture as a spot or as a wash and switch back and forth very easily."



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Today the ballet uses 24 [Paragon S](#), 28 [Paragon M](#), and 14 [Paragon LT](#) fixtures, along with eight [Artiste Rembrandt](#) luminaires. The fixtures, rented through Dushow since December 2025, have replaced an earlier Elation rig consisting of Elation Fuze Series fixtures.

The three Paragon models work together as a single creative platform to bring a level of consistency to every production. “Having the S, M and LT is a huge advantage,” Thery says. “Everything is consistent—the color, the shutters, the beam quality—which is very convenient. It’s very fast to make everything precise, and it’s easy to copy from one fixture to another. That saves me a lot of time.”



That consistency is especially valuable during rehearsal, when there is limited stage time to fine-tune the lighting. “The stage is for the dancers so we may only have a few hours here and there, so I need to make lots of adjustments very quickly. Being able to copy settings between Paragon fixtures makes that much easier.”

Matching Every Position on Stage

Each Paragon model fills a distinct role while maintaining the same creative language. “I use the S model for many things,” says Thery. “For me it’s like a 2K Fresnel or PC fixture. The M is like a powerful backlight or something similar, and the LT is more like a large profile. I love the LT because it’s like having a 5K Fresnel and for me it opens up a lot of possibilities.”

He often combines all three fixture types within a single production. The S fixtures frequently provide sidelight from booms and overhead positions. Multiple rows of M fixtures cover the stage from above, often 14 units as wash and 14 as spots, while the more powerful LT fixtures handle long-throw front-of-house positions.

“On our last production, the stage was 22 meters wide and 19 meters deep with very high trim heights,” he explains. “The LT was perfect for the front because it has the power I need. When you close the zoom, it becomes incredibly bright.” Thery also uses custom gobos created specifically for productions such as *Cendrillon* and *Romeo and Juliet*, further tailoring the lighting language to each ballet.



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Moving Away from Conventional Fixtures

Thery says that moving from conventional fixtures to moving lights can be a difficult transition in ballet because choreographers often prefer a certain lamp or a certain color. “They know exactly how conventional fixtures look, so it’s not always easy to replace them,” he explains. “It’s hard to find that same look in a moving light but Paragon helped bridge that gap. I was able to change step by step. Now some of our latest productions use only moving lights on stage. It’s unique. That would have been very difficult before.”

Thery continues to explore the platform's capabilities and looks forward to working more extensively with its TruTone variable CRI technology. “I look forward to keep working with the fixtures to discover more of what they can do.”



Silence Matters

Among the qualities Thery values most is one appreciated by every audience – silent fixtures. Because ballet often includes moments performed in complete silence or accompanied only by the dancers’ movements, fixture noise should be carefully controlled.

“The choreographers are so happy now because the fixtures are so quiet,” he says. “Before, you always knew when the lamps turned on. Now we hear almost nothing. And if I need complete silence, I can simply change the fan mode. That’s very important for solos or pas de deux without music.”

Designed Through Collaboration

Thery also credits Elation’s willingness to collaborate with understanding the unique needs of dance. While touring in Costa Mesa, California, he visited Elation headquarters, where he spent time discussing optical requirements with Eric Loader, Elation’s Global Vice President of Sales & Marketing.

“We talked a lot about the different frosts I needed, and he came to see the production,” Thery recalls. “One challenge unique to ballet is creating frost effects that completely soften and even eliminate projected gobos when required. That requires a heavy frost that isn’t easy to find in a



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moving light. After seeing the production, Eric understood our needs, and I can see that reflected in the Paragon.”

Busy 2026 Season

Today all European productions performed by Les Ballets de Monte Carlo use the Paragon platform. When touring internationally, They actively seeks rental partners that can provide Elation fixtures, including working with Elation Mexico during performances there, ensuring the company maintains visual consistency wherever it performs.

The company’s busy 2026 season has included new productions of *Ma Bayadère*, *Miniatures*, and *Core Meu*, alongside international tours of *Romeo and Juliet* in Latvia and *Lac* in South Korea. The fixtures also played a central role in the company’s 40th Anniversary Gala on July 4 in Monaco, a three-hour celebration honoring H.R.H. The Princess of Hanover while bringing together former dancers from across the company’s history. The company performs extensively on international stages throughout the rest of the year.

For They, however, the technology always remains secondary to the art. “The audience should never think about the lighting,” he says. “If we've done our job well, they're only thinking about the dancers and the story.”

Photos: *Ma Bayadère* by Alice Blangero

About Elation

At Elation, we collaborate with leading professionals in the lighting industry to help bring extraordinary experiences to life. As a designer and manufacturer of a wide range of high-performance entertainment lighting products, we’re proud to be a trusted partner to top lighting professionals and production/rental houses around the world. Our commitment to quality, innovation, and creative solutions has made us a go-to resource in the industry. We also offer an advanced line of lighting control products through Obsidian Control Systems, and a full range of dependable specialty effects called Magmatic. Elation serves clients worldwide through offices in Los Angeles, Mexico City, Canada, and the Netherlands. We invite you to take a closer look at elationlighting.com

For more information, contact:

Elation US

6122 S. Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90040
USA

Tel: (866) 245-6726 (toll free)

Tel: 323 582-3322

sales@elationlighting.com

www.elationlighting.com



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Elation EU

Junostraat 2.
6468 EW Kerkrade
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)45 546 85 66
info@elationlighting.eu
www.elationlighting.eu

Elation Mexico

Av Santa Ana 30,
Parque Industrial Lerma,
Lerma, Mexico 52000
Tel: +011 52 728 282 7070
ventas@elationlighting.com
www.elationlighting.com