



www.lsonline.com

DIGITAL
EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE:

Theatre: A Midsummer Night's Dream
Staging Shakespeare in Tel Aviv

Tech Focus: MAC Encore Performance
The Martin CLD profile reviewed

Preview: Prolight+Sound
Expected highlights

Refreshing an Icon

Refitting the Joan Sutherland Theatre



SHOW REVIEW: ISE, AMSTERDAM • TF: CHAUVET'S OVATION B-1965FC • PROFILE: BRYTE DESIGN
AUDIO UPGRADE: VICTORIA THEATRE, HALIFAX • PROFILE: READ AUDIO • FUTURE TECH: DRONES
VENUE: WINDSOR PARK, BELFAST • IN PROFILE: GLP'S SIMON BARRETT - AND MUCH MORE ...

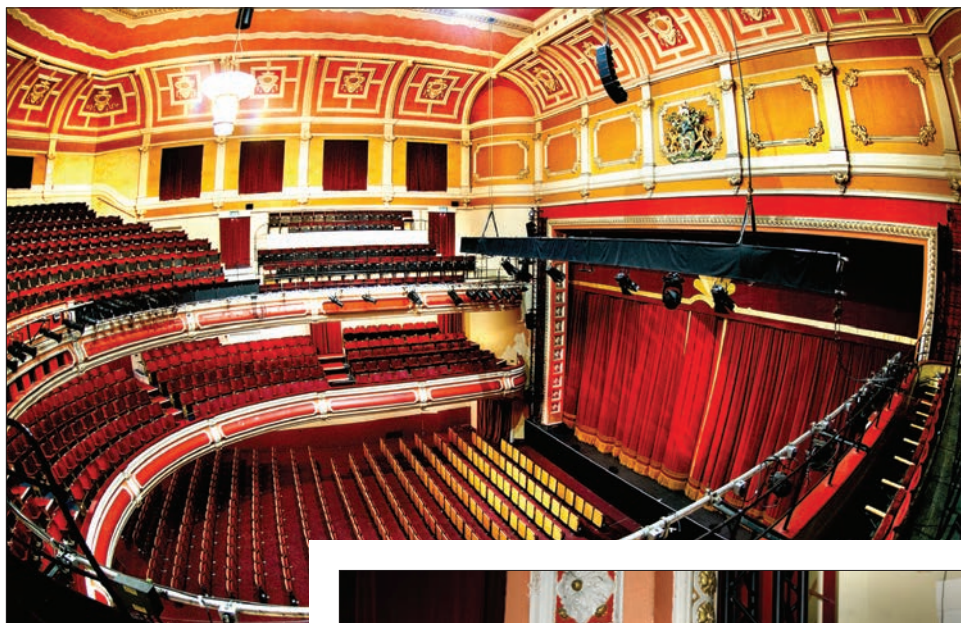
Victoria Theatre, Halifax : a sound revival

Steve Moles reveals how a Victorian theatre in West Yorkshire traded its bulky, dated audio system for a modern alternative . . .

[UK] I felt a slight frisson of familiarity when I entered Halifax Victoria Theatre. I knew I had been here before, but so long ago it was truly lost in the sands of time.

What I can confirm is the Victoria's enduring charm - this is a very nice 1,500-seat provincial theatre and a great place to see a band or show. I do wonder how it slipped off the rock and roll touring circuit so long ago; maybe the Bradford Alhambra, a similarly-proportioned theatre, was just too close? Either way, the Victoria has recently completed a new audio system installation and may now prove a tempting option for tours by breaking bands that travel with the minimum of production . . .

Oliver Brown, who heads up the technical department at the Victoria, was instrumental in the theatre's refurbishment. He comments: "I came to Halifax in 2016 as tech manager and realised immediately we needed to pull the place up-to-date. The purpose of the new system was to address many different needs. More than anything, I wanted to see if we could get a spec' installed that would attract rock bands to play here and not put their own systems in. I know most will use their own systems anyway - and I understand why - but increasingly the market is looking for venues that can provide a whole production package. We are primarily a receiving house, though we do produce our own panto each year. Otherwise, the programme is a mix of comedy, a bit of opera and ballet, some musical theatre, and we do see tribute bands (we have a policy on them: we only bring in tributes for bands not with us anymore). We also looked at lighting earlier in 2017 and ended up adding some intelligent lights to our inventory, including 12 Chauvet Professional Rogue R1 Wash



and 12 Chauvet Professional Maverick Mk1 Hybrids."

Brown's brief for the proposed new audio was clear. "Initially we approached AC-ET and Hawthorn at PLASA Focus Leeds 2017, as well as EM Acoustics. The EM Acoustics' Halo system looked good as a proposal, but the boxes were too big for us. Physical size was an important consideration for us - and price, which is where Hawthorn's quote proved beyond our budget. The Nexo proposal from Steve Easton at AC-ET was by far the best fit."

SIZE ISN'T EVERYTHING

In defining the brief, Brown reckons the previous system had been in place at least 15 years - possibly 20 - and was based on old, large Turbosound boxes. "They intruded on stage and we were forever putting them up and taking them down," says Brown.

"At a demo, Steve put in a stage stack of GEO M620 L/R and hung a centre cluster of the same. That M620 is so small that at first I thought maybe we should go for the M10. You know how it is when you see



↑ Top: The theatre's auditorium

Above: Oliver Brown and Steve Easton

→ Right: The GEO M620 in-situ

→ Facing page: The theatre's new dLive S5000 in use



Photos: Shirlane Forrest

a small box, especially when it's replacing something as large as the old Turbo system we had before? It just didn't look up to the job. But when I heard it, that all changed."

Easton agrees: "It can be a tricky system to present - especially if you're just putting a single M620 on a pole above a sub. I must admit, it makes me feel awkward - until we turn it on . . ."

On a casual listen, the theatre is relatively 'dry' and its late Victorian auditorium is ornate enough to provide plenty of audio scatter. In terms of sound reinforcement, the natural acoustic is benign. It has a well-proportioned circle and balcony - neither are too steep and both are quite deep; even the balcony seats are 500. "Olly provided us with the architect's drawings, so we could see the depth of the circle and balcony," says Easton. "We knew it would be a bit tricky, but we also knew what we wanted to do and that the M6 was the answer. Having drawn up our own rough install

proposal, we sent it off to Nexo with the drawings from Olly and they came back with something pretty close to what we had decided on. The M6 is a nice, predictable box for this kind of installation. We placed four LS18 subs below the stage, and three M620 per side at stalls, circle and balcony levels, with a centre cluster of eight M620 above. Putting the centre cluster in for the demo allowed Olly to hear what would be providing the principal coverage in the heart of those two levels."

"That uplift from the centre cluster is more important than you might think," adds Brown. "We have a lot of comedy and speech presentations. Not long after the install was completed, we had one of those story presentations that are becoming increasingly popular with audiences, Aggers and Boycott as it happens [cricket commentators Jonathan Agnew and Geoffrey Boycott]. With a capacity audience and one third of them in the balcony, intelligibility up there was



critical. We used to get issues with exactly that from the old system, so although my brief to Steve had a focus on aesthetics and size, it was as much about coverage as well, especially in those upper levels."

INTELLIGIBILITY IS KEY

The AC solution also included three of Nexo's new ID24, the company's first 'fill' style loudspeaker, as Brown

explains: "We have three across the FOH. Their profile is ideal, they barely intrude on the sightlines, and neatly address those front rows."

Easton adds: "The trickiest thing was getting the delay on the centre cluster to eradicate any comb filtering. We had to rig the centre cluster a few feet higher than we'd have liked." This was necessary so that the large coat of arms - a heritage

FLX range at **prolight+sound**

zero88

FLX S24



Powerful and portable control of 48 fixtures with 19" rackmount kit option.

FLX S48



Double the power with up to 96 fixtures, with an optional touch monitor output.

FLX



Powerful and flexible with 2048 or 4096 channels, no fixture limitations and optional Wings available.



Easy LED colour selection



Moving light controls



Apps & networking



'Step by Step' guidance



RigSync

Designed to save you time and maximise your creativity, FLX range is fully featured, portable, easy to use, and can be expanded with industry standard networking, free apps and a range of USB accessories.

Come and see the FLX range at prolight + sound Frankfurt 10. - 13. April 2018. Halle 3.0 - B50

EATON

Powering Business Worldwide

zero88.com enquiries@zero88.com +44 (0)1923 495495

f /zero88

@zero88

zero88

Fog is our passion!

Prolight+Sound Frankfurt, 10.-13.4.18, hall 3.0, stand B89

It's worth to drop over: next to our well-known, proved program of professional haze-, fog- and low fog generators we are proud to present our new extremely silent, Ethernet controllable 3kW machine - the Cobra 3.1!

Tiny S, Tiny FX, Tiny CX, Power-Tiny

Battery-operated fog generators, 30 W/70 W/400 W

Unique 2.1

Haze generator DMX, 1500 W

Viper S, Viper nt, Viper 2.6 & Orka

Fog generator DMX, 650 W, 1300 W, 2600 W, 3000 W & 9000 W

Cryo-Fog

Low fog generator 2300 W, low pressure or high pressure version

Cryo-Gate

Attachment for low fog, to be connected to any normal fog generator

Look-Fan DMX

Fan 850 W, DMX controllable

Look Solutions

Fog machines made in Germany

Buenteweg 33 · DE-30989 Gehrden
Phone +49-(0)5108 - 91 22 10 · Fax 91 22 111
www.looksolutions.com · info@looksolutions.com

IN THE NEWS



Photo: Shirlaine Forrest

artefact dating back to the theatre's foundation in 1901 - remained in full sight above the proscenium.

Brown's tech' team at the Vic undertook the installation and pulled all the cable. "We put it up in just three days in the second week in October, so from that first meeting at PLASA Focus Leeds, through the demo phase to installation, it went pretty quickly. We just happened to have one dark week at that time: perfect. The guys from Nexo came over to tune the system when we'd finished, and we opened with our first show on the system that night." He adds: "We were immediately proved right. It was the start of a comedy festival and we had compliments from the audience that first night."

RENEWED CONTROL

Besides addressing the sound reinforcement system, Brown also took the opportunity to renew control. "We had a very similar conversation with Steve about a new desk. Previously, we had a very workable Yamaha LS9, but it was no longer up to the shows we had coming in. I spec'd an Allen & Heath dLive S5000. You could say that's a bit over the top, but not long after commissioning, we had The Beautiful South come in. Prior to their arrival we had already persuaded them to use our new Nexo system, then their tour manager phoned in and said their FOH engineer was unwell, could we help? I put our resident house guy on the D-Live and they loved it. So did he, had the time of his life." Who wouldn't relish a chance like that?

"We were happy to give Olly the desk he wanted," continues Easton. "AC represents a large number of major manufacturers, so he could have had pretty much anything, but I think Olly made a good choice. It's a desk versatile enough to just do a single microphone show without too much fuss, or Olly's panto with 24 channels of radio mics plus live band." Brown adds: "It's not an overly complicated desk - it's one you can walk in on having never used it before and quickly find your way around."

A SOUND CHOICE

Brown had already hinted at the performance of the new system and explains: "The SPL from this little box is phenomenal, and the LS18 subs are fab - lots of warmth and beef. We decided not to fly the subs, though we did think about it, but as Steve pointed out, the low end will carry, and it does. When we finally came to look at the measurements - Nexo were getting in the tuning phase - we could see that real life matched the prediction they originally supplied."

"In the end, the big thing for us was - unlike the old system which cluttered up the stage - we wanted to move the L/R systems out onto the pros. Now, when visiting productions do put in their own audio systems, we no longer have to de-rig ours, and that frees us up for more show-critical things. And because it's permanently rigged, we can always say to whoever is visiting, 'would you like to have a little play with ours before you put yours up?' And there has been a lot of acceptance. The *Jersey Boys* show used it recently."

"Immersive is my word for the new system," concludes Brown. "My manager said it folds around the punters and pulls you into the stage. Before, there was a good degree of detachment - in the balcony it just felt separate. So we're really pleased."

"The Nexo speaker is the right tool for the job," adds Easton. "That's part of the AC approach: look at what speaker will address the needs, and then look at the budget. If you can make it work for both, then everybody has won."

Brown agrees: "I'm glad Steve talked me out of the [EM Acoustics] M10. I find I actually prefer the M6 for its super high-end. That, and the support we've had from Nexo, is excellent."

➤ www.victoriatheatre.co.uk

➤ www.ac-et.com

➤ nexo-sa.com