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Generation gap: Changing face of workplace AV

The P. A. People and the University of New South Wales discuss the overhaul for historic performance venue, The Roundhouse.

Ready to perform

The Roundhouse at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), is a multifunction venue that has featured musical acts, conferences, theatre performances and private parties for over 50 years of operation. The space has a capacity of 2,200 and the building itself was first opened up in 1961.

Over the years, the AV equipment and the building has been maintained and upgraded. But recently, the venue undertook an extensive refurbishment project to ensure a spectacular experience for patrons into the future.

Shelley Valentine, director of student services, ARC@UNSW, comments: "We needed to create an audio visual and PA solution that would cater for our current variety of uses, but could also future-proof our capacity over the medium term."

Theatre consultant Richard Stuart provided the specification for the theatre infrastructure package to Multiplex which managed the complete building project. Goldline Industries was allocated the entire electrical works task, who in turn brought Sydney based The P.A. People on-board to deliver the theatre infrastructure component.

The P.A. People Installed Systems team delivered the audio, lighting, projection and

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- Shelley Valentine, University of New South Wales

control systems, working in conjunction with other suppliers. The project was delivered under two contracts of work; one for the builder and one for the University.

The old building presented some significant acoustic issues due to its round venue format and the central 'dome' structure. These had to be surmounted by design and proper product selection. Additionally, UNSW had its own set of requirements based on a clear idea of what the university wanted the audio system to be.

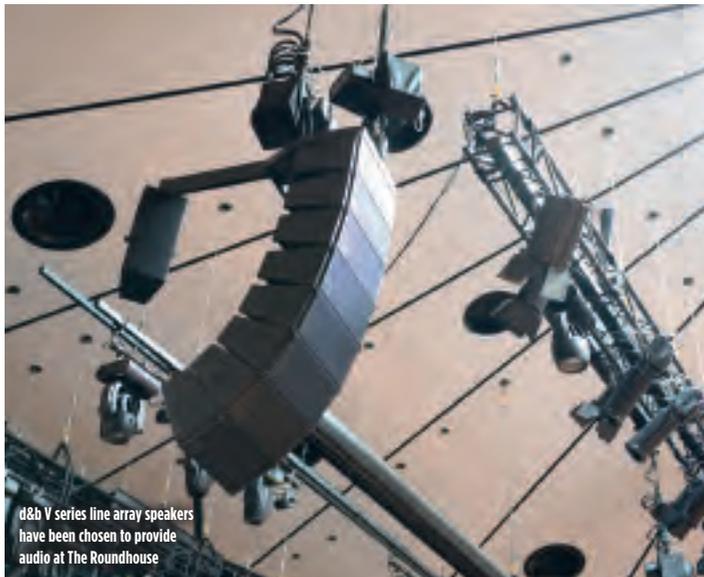
Valentine gives details: "This is a venue that needs the flexibility to accommodate a wide variety of uses - from guest lectures and conferences, to creative art productions and band performances. We needed to create an AV and PA solution that would cater for this current variety and could also future-proof our capacity

over the medium-term."

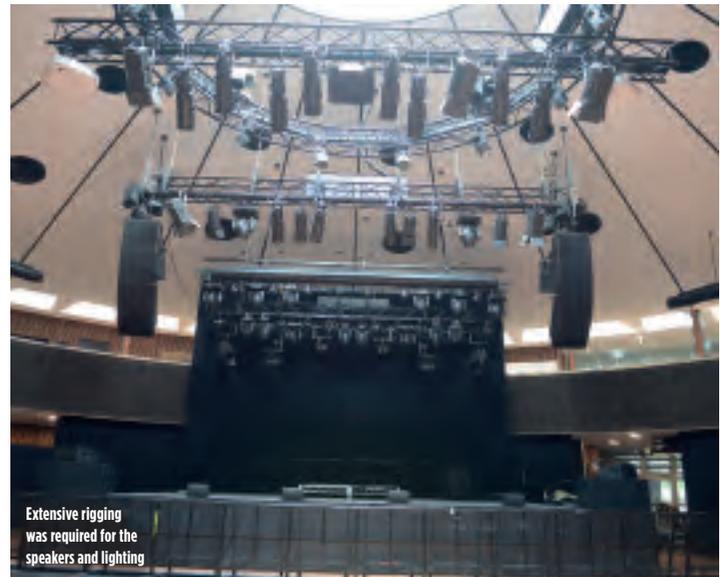
For audio, d8tb V series speakers were selected. Digico SD12-D2 audio console managed audio inputs and outputs. Audio routing and switching is provided by QSC Q-Sys control. Four Shure QLX-D radio microphones are provided for audio input.

Three Epson projectors, two with 8,000 lumens brightness each and one with 11,000 lumens brightness, are used for display along with three motorised Screen Technics projection screens. The video system is managed by a Roland XS-84H vision matrix.

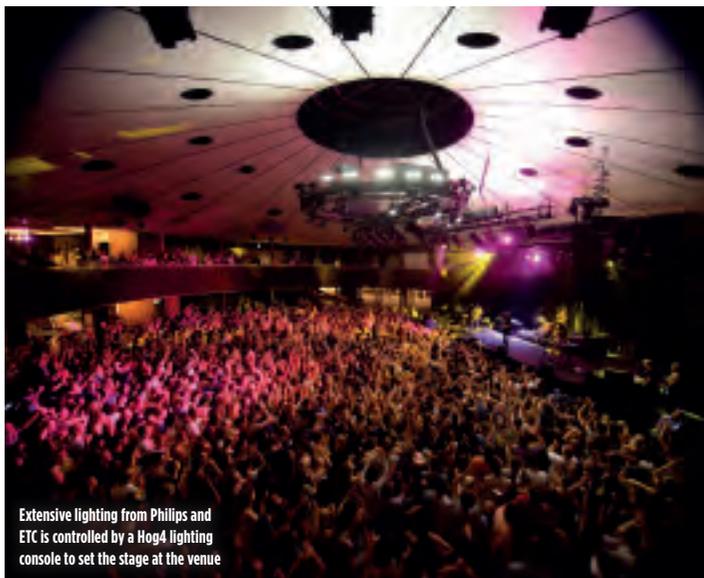
A Hog4 lighting console is provided to manage and control the lighting system which comprises 24 Phillips Showline SLBAR510 LED wash lights, 24 Philips Showline Slpars, six ETC CSSPOTs and six ETC Source4 profile lights.



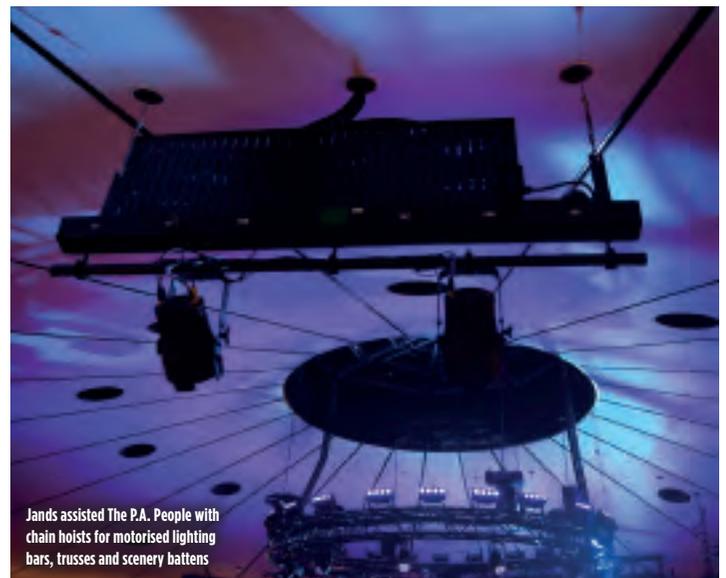
d&b V series line array speakers have been chosen to provide audio at The Roundhouse



Extensive rigging was required for the speakers and lighting



Extensive lighting from Philips and ETC is controlled by a Hog4 lighting console to set the stage at the venue



Jands assisted The P.A. People with chain hoists for motorised lighting bars, trusses and scenery battens

Tech-Spec

Audio

d&b Vi8, Vi12 speaker system
 Digico SD12-D2 audio console
 QSC Q-Sys control & audio routing system
 Shure QLX-D radio microphones

Video

Epson 8,000 lumens brightness projectors,
 11,000 lumens brightness projector
 Screen Technics motorised screens
 Roland XS-84H vision matrix

Lighting

Hog4 lighting console
 Phillips Showline SLBAR510 LED wash lights,
 Showline SLPARS
 ETC CSSPOTs, Source4 profile

A major challenge with the project was the Barrisol ceiling which is constructed with a lightweight fabric membrane stretched across a segmented pie structure. The stretched membrane needed to be cut to allow the rigging and cabling to pass through. This had to be measured and cut precisely the first time to avoid damage to the ceiling structure.

Additionally, the previous space was dominated by a large central ceiling structure, which limited extra rigging and lighting. The 'new' Roundhouse brief called for enhanced

rigging and anchor points that could facilitate a broader production capability.

Jands assisted The P.A. People with chain hoists for speaker rigging plus winches and chain hoists for motorised lighting bars, trusses and scenery battens as well as a package of curtaining for the venue.

The Roundhouse now has the ability to host major international acts, conference clients and

in-house entertainment productions and forums.

Recently re-opened, Valentine says: "We've had one sell-out student dance party, four or five comedy acts, three large gigs, one 200-person and one 1,000-person conferences. The venue is getting positive feedback from acts and potential clients; with one saying 'this is one of the best sounding venues of this size in the country.'" 

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