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Robe T1 Profiles Enjoy the Silence at Bijloke Music Centre's Concert Hall

Products Involved

T1 Profile™

The striking and unique Concert Hall venue, which is part of the Music Centre de Bijloke in Ghent, Belgium, was once a 13th century civic hospital and now offers a vibrant and interesting blend of music often embracing additional performance and visual art forms like theatre and film.

During the pandemic, The Concert Hall which retains its original wooden curved frame roof and exterior walls, was completely renovated. New lighting was installed as part of this upgrade, including 13 x Robe T1 Profiles, which were specified by the Music Centre's technical manager, Natan Rosseel and his team.

The works included removal of the entire floor which was sunk down by one metre. This was primarily to improve the acoustics; however, it has also resulted in an additional metre gain of headroom very much welcomed by the lighting department.

The 13th century roof spans are still in place, but the venue's flying capacity has been seriously strengthened with the installation of a new ground supported steel structure that sits on legs residing outside of the walls, inspired by aesthetic integrity combined with lateral thinking engineering.

This means many more production elements can be rigged including a new d&b V8 line array sound system that, complete with cardio subs beneath the stage, has not only hugely improved the guest audio experience, but effectively enhanced the overall quietness and serenity of the whole room.

The charismatic 720-capacity venue (with 110 extra when the choir stalls are utilised) stages a performance on most days of the year. The programme often features contemporary and classical music and jazz, and the space plays a big part in several local, national, and international festivals as well as being available for hire for corporate and private clients.

Bijloke Music Centre managed the lighting elements of the Concert Hall technical upgrade themselves and went direct to Controllux to deliver the Robe fixtures once they were selected.

Robe has a long history with Bijloke and 22 x LEDWash 600s and 6 x E-Spot 600 were already in place in the Concert Hall, chosen for their light weight and unobtrusiveness.

When considering a new LED profile fixture to join these, the most important feature for the management and technical teams – including regular lighting designer Pieter Kinoli – was finding a product that was as silent as possible. Especially having worked so hard on improving the venue's overall acoustics!

When it came to the Robe product demo, the T1 Profile was powered up and everyone was happy even before it was turned on!

"While it was logical to look at Robe with the brand already in-house, we did also explore other options for comparison," noted Natan, "but there simply wasn't another equivalent fixture that came close to the quietness of the T1 Profile!"

He further commented that it wasn't simply the cooling system that needed to be silent, but all the mechanical functions as well.

"Acoustic and classical concerts require absolute silence, and even if we might not all hear the tiniest touch of ambient noise, the musicians certainly do!"

Both the sound and lighting consoles which are positioned at the back of the auditorium had to meet similar criteria, with the quietest models chosen and installed.

Other T1 Profile features that Natan appreciates and that get used extensively include the shuttering, while the zoom range increases flexibility and means it can effectively be used as a wash or a flood at times with the addition of the frosts.

While weight is not an issue any more in terms of hanging luminaires in the roof, the light weight makes the fixtures more easily handleable.

Last year, Natan visited the Robe factory in the Czech Republic and was impressed by the set up and with how proud people were of working for the company. "It's great to see that everything is produced onsite, and you can definitely feel the good atmosphere that permeates the organisation," he observed.

Natan heads Bijloke's technical team of four, who are all multi-disciplinary and work across the audio, lighting, video, and staging departments.

Approximately 100,000 people visit their shows each year, incorporating concerts, educational activities and debates, in the process enjoying the beautiful setting and rich mix of vintage and contemporary cultural history, technology and architecture.

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