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Royal Theater Carré is illuminated by ANOLIS

The Royal Theater Carré (Koninklijk Theater Carré) is an attractive Neo-Renaissance style theatre in Amsterdam, the Netherlands located on the banks of the river Amstel. Founded in 1887, it was originally built as a permanent venue for the Carré circus family and their popular 'horse-play' circus-theatre shows, but was later repurposed to also stage a variety of performances, revue theatre and operettas. Currently, the impressive circular design 1700-capacity auditorium is used for a mix of musicals, pop and music concerts and cabaret shows.

The auditorium lighting has recently received an upgrade with the existing lighting replaced by 36 x Anolis Ambiane XP56 LED fixtures fitted with 20-degree lenses.

These were delivered by Lumen Solutions, the architectural division of lighting sales specialist, Controllux, and installed by the Carré's in-house lighting team working with Keijzer Techniek utilising custom designed brackets that were also part of the package.

The operation was overseen from the Carré side by the venue's head of technical Marco Hartendorf and lighting specialists Michel Redeker and Julia "Jules" Clark. Lex Oudshoorn project managed for Lumen Solutions.

Marco explained that they generally wanted a more sustainable lighting solution to illuminate the spacious auditorium and supersede the old white halogens bringing in more cost efficient and dynamic LED fixtures.

The new lighting also had to match the dimming curve of 8 magnificent chandeliers – also recently refurbished with 72 LED light sources each – which are a vital part of the venue's history, heritage, and visual elegance, together with the plush red seating and velvet décor and elaborate roof frescos.

So Anolis was specifically chosen not only for its value and reliability, but because of its smooth and well-defined dimming curves – especially during that critical final 0-10 % – which were needed to work in unison with the ornate chandeliers.

An overall push to operate the venue more sustainably and efficiently in terms of carbon footprint had begun some time ago, and this was underway when Marco joined the team five years ago.

He had previously used Anolis fixtures to up-light architectural pillars at the Philharmonie concert hall in Haarlem, but apart from this, no one else had worked with the brand.

It is a heritage listed building, so the Ambianes had to fit into the venue's existing over-audience lighting positions, however as they sat 4 centimetres higher than the gap, the bespoke brackets were made to bring them flush with the auditorium ceiling for a seamless look.

Carré had first approached Lumen Solutions about replacing the chandelier light sources, so when the discussion about the general overhead house lighting arose, Lex produced some 3D visualisations in Delux and visited the venue again in 2022, this time with Anolis products on hand to conduct tests.

He surveyed the venue and the available rigging spaces and other practicalities, and listened to everyone's input, opinions on the various products and from there created a proposed scheme utilising a minimal number of fixtures.

They discovered that the Lux requirements for the space – even with 17 metres of height to the ceiling – could be achieved using just 25 just Ambiane XL56 fixtures!

However, 36 units with the 20-degree lens option gave more optimal coverage as well as better colour saturation and increased vibrance – the red seating literally popped out with pseudo-3D texturing – enhancing the grandeur yet simultaneously blending in.

It was a transformation that brought a hugely better look and feel to the auditorium ... so that was the final decision, the 36 x Ambianes.

Installation was a tricky process requiring diligence and attention to detail undertaken by the Carré's own lighting crew.

Having the Ambianes in the house also saves time and the rigging of additional lights for productions needing colour changing audience lighting or assorted colour temperature whites in auditorium space.

“We have a basic preset for house lighting and ‘specials’ scenes also programmed,” explained Jules, which is great for atmosphere setting, e.g. pink for US drag artist Sasha Velour, etc.

The Ambiance’s are also much easier to use. At the touch of one button, lights can be changed to provide nice moody lighting for dinner events or bright crisp whites for boxing tournaments. “The system is MUCH more versatile than before, has a greater output and saves labour and energy,” she confirmed.

The Ambiances are running via DMX with RDM and can be controlled from the house stage lighting console if needed – to integrate with an incoming production – as well as from their own Paradigm touch-screen house lighting controllers.

Lex enjoyed Lumen Solutions and the Carré working together “very collaboratively and as partners in this project to arrive at the solution they wanted. This is a very satisfying way of working,” he concluded.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland





