



All photos: Sam Dodds / The P.A. People

THE ROUNDHOUSE



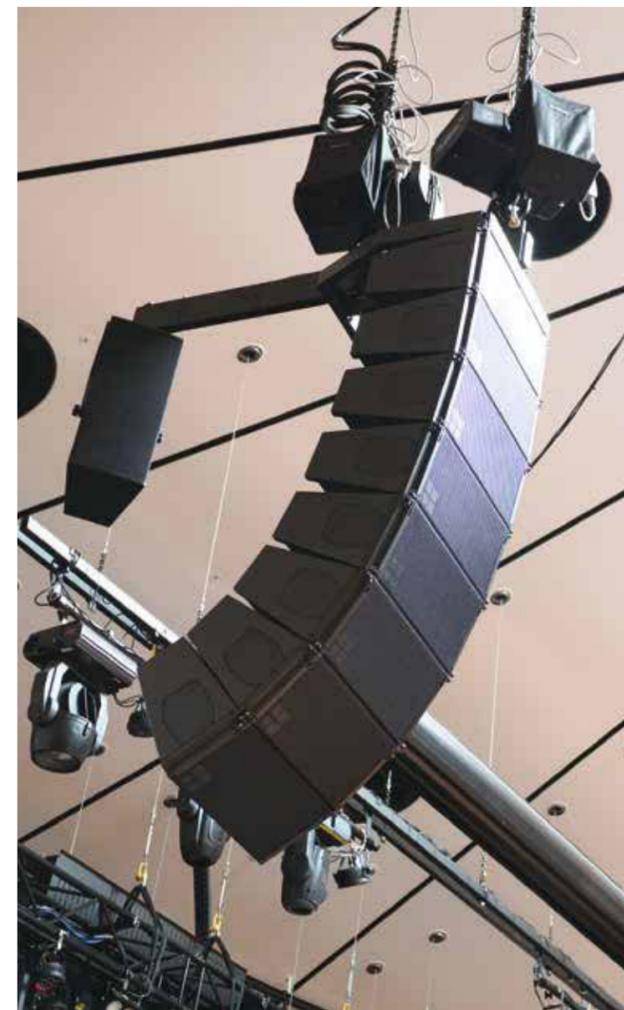
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
APAC

A concert, conference and hireable venue in the University of New South Wales that goes back over 50 years. In 2016, ARC - an organisation of students and alumni that manage the venue - initiated an 18-month project to give The Roundhouse the thorough refurbishment it has long deserved.

The Roundhouse at the University of NSW is a multifunctional venue with a rich history going back over 50 years. It has hosted some of the biggest musical acts, including the Foo Fighters and Green Day, as well as conferences, theatre performances and private parties. Since first opening in 1961, there has been work at the 2,200-standing-capacity venue in the past, however, with one eye on the future, the decision was made to begin a substantial transformation. This project included overhauling the audio system, which was of huge importance to the events held at The Roundhouse. "This is a venue that needs the flexibility to accommodate a wide variety of uses - from guest lectures and conferences, to creative-arts productions to band performances," said Shelley Valentine - Director, Student Services, ARC - an organisation comprised entirely of UNSW students and alumni that run the venue. "We needed to create an AV/PA solution

that would cater for this current variety and could also future-proof our capacity over the medium-term." Sydney's The P.A. People, delivered the audio, lighting, projection and control systems, working in conjunction with other suppliers. This project was delivered under two contracts of work; one for the builder and one for the University. The 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 The P.A. People onboard to deliver the theatre infrastructure component. The P.A. People installed a new d&b V Series performance sound system, along with a DiGiCo SD12 desk and a QSC audio control system. The Roundhouse enlisted the help of NAS, asking the company what it would suggest for the audio system, given the

opportunity. "From the initial chat, it was clear that the set up they currently had wasn't performing to the standard demanded by the multiple modes the venue runs in," explained Chris Braun from the projects team at NAS. "The Roundhouse runs all kinds of events from live bands to university lectures to presentations and they needed a system that could set up fast, no matter the requirement on the day." The Roundhouse is a unique venue, with the first challenge being the fact that the room is round - meaning that there were issues to overcome in terms of achieving constant, even coverage. Chris explained how the NAS team tackled the challenge: "The first step was talking to the venue to identify what they wanted from the system. The team at The Roundhouse have been there for a long time. It became obvious in our discussions that they are invested in the room, they love it, and they pour their heart and soul



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• Above
The lighting
fixtures
installed at
the venue.

into it on a daily basis.

“The expectations they had for the system were high; with multiple modes, full coverage and excellent clarity being at the top of the list. They also needed to know that the system was going to be rider friendly, and last them well into the future.

“Once we had a clear idea of what was required of the system outside of the normal expectations, we were able to get to work. Having been in the room for concerts over the years, I wanted the system to cover 160° on both levels of the venue and be as even as possible within that listening area.”

After taking everything into consideration, NAS opted for a d&b audiotechnik Vi-Line system due to its directivity - making it ideal for the round venue design - as well as the fact that it is extremely rider friendly.

“As a touring FOH Engineer and Production Manager, I know that when you’re going over rider specs during the advance for a tour, seeing d&b as your PA and then seeing V8/ 12 listed is instantly met with a tick and ‘that’ll work!’ - and that’s what the venue wanted,” said Chris. Also, from a design perspective, the Vi-Line system is compact and light, which saves sightlines and keeps up with the SPL required, while targeting its energy where it’s pointed without spraying the walls excessively.

Chris added: “The d&b audiotechnik Vi8 and Vi12 loudspeakers have the advantage of maintaining constant directivity dispersion control right

down to 250Hz. This means that I get extremely accurate control from the array. The maximum SPL the Vi8 and Vi12 are capable of meant there was never going to be a shortage of horsepower either.

“To continue the horizontal coverage around to my 160° target, we deployed d&b audiotechnik V-Point loudspeakers in a horizontal fashion on the ground level while they were flown vertically for the balcony coverage.

“Choosing V-Point meant the actual sound of the loudspeaker from line array to point source are matched in voicing, allowing for a seamless handover from the main array to the outfill. The V-Point downstairs lays on top of the B22 subwoofers either side of the stage, while the upstairs V-Point is

flown behind the main arrays on one of the coolest custom rigging solutions I’ve seen for a long time.”

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 loudspeaker rigging, plus winches and chain hoists for motorised lighting bars, trusses and scenery battens, as well as a package of curtaining for the venue.

A major challenge with the project was the Barrisol ceiling, which is constructed with a lightweight fabric membrane stretched

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SOUND

12 x d&b audiotechnik Vi8 loudspeaker; 4 x d&b audiotechnik Vi12 loudspeaker; 2 x d&b audiotechnik V7P loudspeaker; 2 x d&b audiotechnik Vi7P loudspeaker; 8 x d&b audiotechnik E8 loudspeaker; 6 x d&b audiotechnik B22 subwoofer; 10 x d&b audiotechnik M4 stage monitor; 1 x d&b audiotechnik B6 subwoofer; 7 x d&b audiotechnik 30D amplifier; 1 x DiGiCo SD12-D2 mixing console; 1 x QSC Q-SYS control system; 4 x Shure QLXD radio microphones; 1 x Jands flying control system

LIGHTING & VISUAL

24 x Philips Showline SL BAR 510 LED luminaire; 24 x Philips Showline SL PAR luminaire; 6 x ETC ColourSource spot fixture; 6 x ETC Source Four profile; 3 x Epson LED projector; 3 x Screen Technics motorised screen

www.arc.unsw.edu.au/roundhouse
www.papeople.com.au
nas.solutions



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.

As well as the audio and control systems, The P.A. People installed the lighting and projection technology at The Roundhouse.

For the lighting system, 24 Philips Showline SLBAR510 LED wash lights have been utilised, along with another 24 Showline SLPARS from Philips. These are supplemented by six ETC CSSPOTS and six ETC Source Four profiles. Control comes from a High End Systems Hog 4 lighting console.

For the projection system, three Epson LED projectors are used, along with three Screen Technics motorised screens.

Now, with the technical revamp completed, The Roundhouse can host major acts, large conference clients and in-house entertainment productions and forums.

In the first month of operating, when the venue re-opened earlier this year, Shelley

· Above
The iconic
Roundhouse
hosting sell-
out gigs.

said: “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 conference. The venue is getting positive feedback from acts and potential clients, with one saying that ‘this is one of the best sounding venues of this size in the country’”

Chris of NAS was equally enthused by the project: “To be honest, this was a really nice project to be involved in. It was different from a lot of jobs as the client was so invested and involved in their room. They’d been suffering for a long time with an old and underpowered system. They knew what the venue could be capable of, which put a lot of pressure on us to deliver, but it also drove us even more to make sure it was going to absolutely surpass each and every expectation they had.

“The venue has reported nothing but love for the solution we came up with. I’ve checked in with touring engineers that have gone through the venue to make sure it performed to their standard as well and everyone has been blown away with how easy it is, which is what we want.” 