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Changing spaces

A five-year ambition has been achieved within the chapel of St John's College at the University of Sydney, thanks to The PA People and Bose



The chapel of St John's College within the University of Sydney

AFTER five years, Richard Perrignon, master of sacred music at the chapel of St John's College within the University of Sydney, has achieved a long sought-after goal. Having previously conducted choirs within the cavernous surrounds of Australia's oldest cathedral, St Mary's in central Sydney, Mr Perrignon has dreamed of achieving the same majestic results within the more confined environment of the St John's chapel. Despite the

limitations of the chapel's natural acoustic properties, the dream has now been realised thanks to the expertise of specialist systems integrator and contractor The PA People, plus technology from US manufacturer Bose.

The chapel of St John's College is a Gothic Revival sandstone construction, completed in 1863. With its high vaulted stained glass windows, ornate stonemasonry and

gothic detailing, it is exactly the kind of acoustic space that makes speech intelligibility hard to achieve with an amplified system. It's a problem that The PA People has previously addressed, having delivered improved speech intelligibility for the space some five years ago in an installation that was centred around a Bose Panaray system.

Nevertheless, Mr Perrignon still harboured mighty ambitions for his choir. More recently, The PA People returned to the chapel determined to realise that ambition by creating an entirely new acoustic space within the room.

Leading the project was Josh Jones, project manager at The PA People, who worked with Mr Perrignon to provide a solution based on the concept of a large, reverberant Gothic cathedral in which the voices of the choir descend and expand in the manner which liturgical composers intended. With the ceiling already at 9m, Mr Jones and the team decided to use the old building's existing

character to their advantage.

'We added six Bose DS100s loudspeakers into the ceiling, three each side, spaced along the length of the chapel,' explains Mr Jones. 'They're used for the choir only, so the sound floats down from the top of the church. It makes it sound like a much bigger space than it really is, and it really does give the choir an ethereal presence.'

While the new choir system is completely self-contained with its own components including microphones and cabling, integrating it alongside the existing system was relatively straightforward. A small analogue mixer that the chapel already owned was utilised, while a single Crown DCi amplifier runs the speakers. 'We didn't need any extra processing in-line,' notes Mr Jones. 'Intelligibility wasn't the goal - we wanted to get the reverberation. Basically we're bouncing sound off the wall and letting it float down.'

www.papeople.com

Extending the Olive Branch

California's Olive Branch Community Church has made projection an essential part of its services following a recent installation

USED carefully, modern visual technologies can transform a church service, helping the congregation to feel much closer to the worship leaders on stage. This was the aim of Brian Norwood, director of technology services at Olive Branch Community Church, when he recently took up his position at the Corona, California-based house of worship.

'Our video and lighting was pretty rudimentary when I took over as director,' he explains. 'I had a vision to extend the projected content out to a panorama and invest in enough lighting to make the environment the whole room instead of just the stage.'

To achieve his goal, Mr Norwood settled on Hitachi's CP-WX8255 projector, mounting it on the ceiling to project onto a 5m x 3m screen and form the centrepiece of a five screen projection setup. However, the



Olive Branch Community Church is uniting its congregation with improved projection

purchase was not always a certainty. 'The budget for this project was very small,' Mr Norwood continues. 'I didn't even want to pursue it if the projector would not be able to work in true HD, and be bright enough to

make a major impact.' Ease of use was also a key deciding factor. 'I think the CP-WX8255 is the very definition of easy-to-use,' says Mr Norwood. 'We had it unboxed, up, aimed, sized and focused in less than an hour.'

He adds: 'Our church has left-centre-right seating and the people in the centre were having to turn quite a bit to view any content. That was especially troublesome for worship, and you had to look across people to see lyrics. The Hitachi projector and centre screen gives them a place of their own for worship content. Also it gives us a tool in outreach as we finally have a display worthy of hosting movie nights or sporting events.'

According to Mr Norwood, the church's membership is equally pleased. 'Our congregation loves the addition,' he affirms. 'Not a week goes by without someone commenting on the improvement in the visual appeal of the service.'

www.hitachi.com
www.olive-branch.org