

Beauty within

Capacity and functionality have been exploited to create a state-of-the-art, multi-functional creative space for performers in Seville

Everyone in Seville, Spain remembers the Universal Exposition of Seville (Expo '92) that took place on La Isla de la Cartuja (Cartuja Island) on the other side of the Guadalquivir River. Organised to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus, it was known for its numerous spectacular large public spaces and its thematic pavilions equipped with the latest in audio-visual technology.

Today the site is divided between an R&D technology park, a theme park, the Auditorio de Sevilla (formally the Rocío Jurado Municipal Auditorium), and the Teatro Central theatre. In 2004, the Centro de Innovación Tecnológica del Entretenimiento (CITE) emerged with the goal of fostering technological innovation in the field of performing arts and entertainment in the renamed Auditorio Al-Ándalus. This allowed the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (SGAE), the main collecting society for songwriters/composers and music publishers in Spain, to bring all of its stage specialities under one roof. The building also serves as headquarters for the ARTeria performance space network.

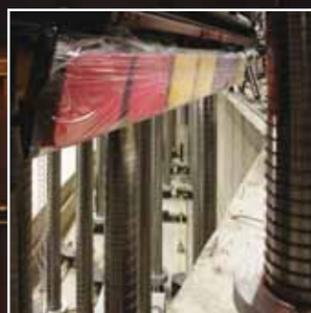
The Auditorio Al-Ándalus covers more than 14,000m² and is a dedicated space for creativity, training and innovation in the performing arts. The venue is equipped with the latest technology in each artistic field, making it a point of reference throughout Europe. The entire building is based on the same functional concept: optimising spaces, installations and passageways so that its operating capacity directly benefits the quality of the activities carried out within

it, from maintenance to customer service and, most importantly, the show itself.

In 2006, García Diéguez Consulting (GD Consulting) took on the role as speciality stage consultant for the Auditorio Al-Ándalus. Much attention was given to the architectural programme to define the spatial configurations and ensure the mechanics worked perfectly. The project was divided into four main areas, the first being access for performers, staff and goods, including dressing rooms, a rehearsal room, a secondary hall and storerooms. The second area was offices, including a restaurant, cafeteria and a terrace bar. Next was the public entrance, which includes a shop, refreshments bar, ticket booths and the Cubo Hall. And lastly, the auditorium, including the main hall, stage tower, storerooms, technical booths and a VIP box.

Flexibility in design

All stage areas have been equipped to respond to different needs with great flexibility and efficiency, the best example showing this being the main hall. This space is more than 22,300m³ with a variable capacity of between 2,000 and 3,500 spectators. It accommodates the third and largest seating riser system ever installed in Europe and just the second one in Spain. Utilising independent moving platforms, 1,000 preset seats can be rapidly deployed from their storage position below the floor to their open position automatically, using Gala Systems' Gala Venue system, transforming the space into the desired configuration. The Gala Venue system consists of a set of individual rows of self-guided seating risers driven by 132 Gala Systems Spiralift mechanical lift columns. It also features fully



DESIGN
GD CONSULTING



The hall accommodates the largest seating riser system ever installed in Europe

programmable, multiple seating configurations, which are accessible through touchscreen controls that enable fast and easy seating transformation. This state-of-the-art, event-specific venue reconfiguration technology ensures that the centre is used to its maximum potential, transforming stall configuration from theatre to opera, to Shakespeare, to cabaret, to rock concert, or even to a completely flat floor, in fewer than 15 minutes. The seating riser system is very compact and provides a solid, vibration-free structure comparable to a permanent floor. GD Consulting is a specialist in this system's design and has huge experience and training relating to its functionality.

Customised sound

The hall's reverberation times have to be modified significantly each time the space is reconfigured, in order to suit the requirements of each event. To facilitate this, the entire hall underwent an acoustic treatment to make it as 'dry' as possible, at which point a complex variable acoustics system (Meyer Sound Constellation) was installed. This comprises a matrix arrangement of 246 loudspeakers and 66 microphones, all of which are controlled by the latest-generation processors (D-Mitri, Digital Audio Platform) configured in accordance with the stalls' presets.

These factors strengthen the hall's capabilities further and represent stage resources of the future. The installations encourage innovation among the authors and professionals that use and train in the centre.

A grid has been devised for the ceiling above the stalls, complete with the loading and hanging capacities needed for an ideal distribution, which limitlessly facilitates any work proposed for the hall.

GD Consulting's stage design has more than 800 dimmer channels distributed throughout the halls, as well as a stage tower, offering versatility and a large number of possibilities for lighting and creating effects on the stage and over the hall.

Now, more than ever, the stage tower is a mechanism for transformation and creativity. It includes 65 eight-line motorised flying bars, with

an adjustable speed up to 2m/sec and a load-bearing capacity of 1,000kg/bar – a high-capacity, powerful piece of equipment that offers designers more possibilities.

The stage tower is complemented by a platform system and cover upstage. The lifting platform is 4 x 18m, running 7.5m, and is combined with a sliding cover of the same dimensions that goes under the stage, which is extremely useful for a venue where productions and scenery are continually changing.

The complete package

The other halls are no less sophisticated, the secondary one also being a multi-functional space for small productions, events and cinema. This features a retractable stand, providing the capacity for up to 450 people, which when folded away allows up to 400 people at standing events. The area is specially designed for high-quality 4K cinema, with state-of-the-art viewing and acoustic conditions. Furthermore, it is equipped with motorised systems for suspending loads from the hall ceiling, such as trusses, scenography and textiles.

With access at the same level, the rehearsal room is specially designed for auditions, rehearsals and filming – a multipurpose room that can accommodate orchestras and actors, and can even be used as a set for television broadcasting. It is linked to a recording control booth that communicates with the rest of the halls and with the centre's recording and broadcasting studios. Located on sector A's upper floor, these studios have various functions. The recording studio even has views of the Guadalquivir River and is linked to a fully equipped booth and a post-production studio, all of which are linked to a server and content management system, which can rebroadcast through radio, television or the internet.

GD Consulting designed the venue with the future of performing arts very much in mind. It is a versatile and secure system that adds value to the most ambitious futuristic shows, a platform for communicating shared knowledge created in Seville to the rest of the world. ■

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