

Chatting to Rinus Bakker from Rhino Rigs

Rinus Bakker from Rhino Rigs will be in South Africa to present the Prolyte Rigging Training Course hosted this year in both Cape Town from 6 to 11 February and in Johannesburg from 13 to 18 February in association with DWR Distribution. We caught up with Rinus prior to his arrival and asked him a few questions.



You travel the world training the industry on the importance of rigging structures safely. Do you find that each nation faces similar challenges, or are there certain countries that really do things well?

In my experience, all nations in the world have an entertainment bizz that includes companies (and individuals) ranging from top notch and medium quality through to unfortunately low end and sometimes even dangerous practices. I tend to say that the various percentages of these classes keep pace with the position of the economy as a whole. Even within Europe there is such a divide between the Northern and the

Southern Nations. And from my scarce observations of the African continent, a similar

pattern might run from SA up to the equatorial Nations. Also, the Asia Pacific area has a thing like that, from Australia and Japan through China into Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. But there are no Nations that can be declared as an Entertainment Technology Utopia. Not even Germany.... ?

Why is it important for someone to attend the training you offer?

I think 90% of it is an increase of safety awareness. I am often surprised by the lack of knowledge on legislation, liability, equipment properties and clear understanding of materials and methods of use. Mistakes that are made in rigging or staging can have much more far-reaching consequences than mistakes in lighting, sound or AV...

For someone who has never attended the Prolyte Rigging Training Course before, what is the greatest thing can they expect to learn?

A bit of an unfair question, as so much depends on the attendee's background. Some lighting technicians are focused on truss and truss use only, and they for example would never do any bridling themselves. Others might *'be afraid'* of trigonometry for bridle calculations, but can feel that a 'new world' has opened for them when a simple drawing with a Vector can do almost the same.

This year you will be training in Cape Town. Any thoughts on this?

I remember I was in Cape Town a few years ago as well. Back then, Nick Britz, Keith Pugin and I were in the Grand Arena at the GrandWest Casino. I recall Sean Caie, a great guy and an impressive venue, where we were with 20 attendees in a 5000+ seater! What struck me in Cape Town were the streets or industrial areas that had 100% Amsterdam names like Bloemgracht ('flower canal'). It's funny to read Dutch so far from home. I will spend a few additional days in Cape Town to visit the city and the tourist places and smell some Ocean Atmosphere. I lived in a Sea Port for 50 years and once I had moved in-land, I realised the sea was the thing that I really missed.

Anything else you may want to mention?

Over the last couple of years, I came to realise what a great job you at DWR are doing in the training efforts. Not because you and Prolyte bring me in, which I certainly appreciate, but because of what I see in the amount and scale of training that you provide over-all, in various lighting controls, sound, AV, Vectorworks and so forth. I think DWR are entitled to an Entertainment Technician Training Award of some sort. In this case I can again compare various nations and companies across 'Mother Earth', and easily put you guys in the Top Notch category that we discussed earlier. Every time you really show that 'It's all about the People' is not just some marketing yell.

My final remark would be to propose training for theatrical rigging / fly bar systems. The training we do now through Prolyte is focused on use of chain hoists and trusses. However, over the years during Prolyte Rigging Training we have had one or several attendees with a background in theatre. I wondered if it would make any sense to have a rigging training that would look into the fly bar system in a more detailed way. I have been in theatres in Durban and Johannesburg, which made me conclude that they have so much in common to what I knew and know from the Low Countries in Europe. The funny thing is that only Holland has been 100% mechanised and automated, but in the rest of Europe it is only 10-25%, and the rest is still fully hand-operated counterweight fly bar systems or hemp houses.