

Albany Entertainment Centre Chooses Anolis

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Albany Entertainment Centre (AEC) is a contemporary performing arts and events venue famous for its stunningly cool architectural design, located on the waterfront in Albany, about 420 km south-east of Perth in Western Australia, which has upgraded the auditorium lighting of its main theatre space - Princess Royal Theatre - from incandescent sources to LED, utilising over 100 Anolis luminaires picked from different Ambiane ranges.

The Anolis fixtures were supplied via Anolis' Australian distributor, Jands, and the project was overseen for them by architectural specialist Eddie Galak, who designed the new lighting scheme from scratch in conjunction with AEC's technical manager, Erik Loew.



The 618-seat Princess Royal Theatre now has 14 x Anolis Ambiane XP56s, 48 x Ambiane SP16 'tiltable' fixtures and 24 x Ambiane HP111s illuminating the main auditorium. Thirty XP56 Ambiane Pendant remotes are rigged in AEC's studio space also for audience lighting.

Work on the project had started pre-COVID, initially envisioned as a white LED installation for the seating area. However, as the cleaning lights also needed to be upgraded - requiring 300 lux minimum - it made sense to achieve this using the same system if possible.

Everything then shifted to RGBW when Erik recognised the value of house lighting that could deliver excellent whites while also being integrated into the stage lighting control for specific events, immersing the audiences in colour and atmosphere and making them part of the action!

A colour-changing LED option had the further scope of being offered to visiting productions to embellish or blend in with their stage lighting if required.

As Australia's 'Great Southern' region's main multi-purpose theatre space, AEC hosts a diverse range of productions and events, from touring shows and concerts to community events and conferences.



At the front of the stage and on the bridge above the orchestra pit in the Princess Royal Theatre, the XP56s are fitted with 20-degree reflectors and louvres. Underneath the first catwalk are six XP56s with 45-degree reflectors and six with 20-degree reflector plus louvres. On the second catwalk are eight fitted with 60-degree reflectors.

Twelve of the recessed HP111s have 60-degree reflectors and yokes, and 12 have the 60-degree reflector without the yoke, all with the 2700K white chip.



One of the challenges of the overall lighting design was to make the new installation look and feel like the old one while naturally being far more efficient.

To reduce time and physical impact of the new lighting scheme, the existing positions were re-used, including the ones on the lighting bridge undersides and those recessed in the ceiling, and these were combined with new ones created where needed.

There was a specific requirement to ensure the new under-balcony lighting seating areas mimicked the look the previous globe fixtures had produced, which the Anolis installation achieved, together with the addition of some new positions for additional fixtures underneath the back of the dress circle.

In the Kalyenup Studio, a flat-floor, flexible area accommodating up to 200 people for events, the Ambiance XP56 Pendants are attached to points that have been chemically fixed into the ceiling, with the pendant version chosen to best match the aesthetic of the space.

Jands also supplied a Paradigm control system, which was another starting point for the new installation, explained Erik, as, together with other venues in Perth that are also run by the Arts & Culture Trust, they were keen to work with one supplier if possible. In addition, fixtures that could run on sACN were another requirement.

Everyone is impressed with the results, which are a substantial improvement. Erik and his colleagues are delighted: "It feels fresh, new and exciting to be working in this space again!" he enthused.

For Eddie, choosing Anolis was a bit of a no-brainer thanks to the wide selection of fixtures available and their different form factors.

"There is plenty of variety in the range to be able to place a light exactly where it's needed," he commented, highlighting how consistency is another huge advantage with Anolis, enabling both high and low ceilings to be lit with the same family of fixtures.

AEC's electrical contractor Shane Congram from Castlehow Electrical Services completed the installation, working to plans and drawings supplied by Eddie and Jands. Erik commented that Shane and his team's "work and commitment to the project" further helped deliver the excellent results of which everyone is proud.



This massive increase in flexibility has made the auditorium a more dynamic and interesting space, as well as tastefully and evenly lit, offering a vastly improved visitor experience. Erik – who also lights some of the incoming shows – has used the auditorium lights as part of a main show several times to great effect.

Erik also emphasised the importance of good service as part of the package, especially somewhere like Albany, which is far away from anywhere. “Jands is a good company with a great name that we know we can rely on for solid local and nationwide support,” he underlined.

Completed in 2010, the AEC complex was designed by Australian company COX Architecture and has won several awards. Its striking glass-and-steel form was intended to be a contemporary structural work of art on the harbourside, with the angular facade and extensive glazing references to the crystalline molecular structures of earth. It comes alive like a glistening giant cut diamond, transformed by absorbing and reflecting light as people move around.



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Photos: By Eddie Galak / courtesy of AEC