

Blue Array lift audio to new heights with Fenix towers

Posted on May 31, 2022



Reotshepile Tlhowe and Nathan Thiart with the new Fenix Hercules 8.

Blue Array Productions, a professional rental and production company, has invested in two FENIX Stage Hercules 8 front-loading lifting towers supplied by DWR Distribution. The units were put to work for the very first time at *Liefde by die Dam*, a festival attracting 8 000 revellers and held recently at Emmarentia Dam in Johannesburg, where Blue Array supplied the audio solution.

The Hercules 8, made from aluminium, is the tallest tower by FENIX at 8m high. The system lifts line array systems, trussing or LED screens with a maximum load of 300kg from the floor and is height adjustable.

“We initially tried out the smaller AT-906 FENIX towers, only to find that we had some weight limitations which forced us to go for the bigger towers,” explained Nathan Thiart, senior sound engineer at Blue Array. “It was a happy coincidence because we definitely had a need for something of this stature.” Blue Array specialise in audio and always outsourced the structures

Blue Array lift audio to new heights with Fenix towers

and scaffolding needed for the PA or delay towers. Nathan had recently seen a few write-ups on the FENIX range and presented the solution to Kobus van Rensburg, owner of the company.



Blue Array's Nathan Thiar and Reotshepile Tlhowe tried out the FENIX AT-06, but in the end decided on the Hercules 8 front-loading lifting towers.

"Stacking a PA is fine when doing an event for a smaller audience, but when it comes to coverage, the audio does start thinning out towards the back and it's here, when flying a PA, that you can address the problem and utilise the line array."

Blue Array lift audio to new heights with Fenix towers



The Fenix towers are less conspicuous when it comes to events. “Putting up the water ballasts and towers, often clad in black, are not attractive,” said Nathan. “There are times when clients feel you are taking away from the image they hope to create or blocking the stage view. At *Liefde by die Dam* the lawns are raked, and when someone is seated 80 +m away from the stage, they have quite a small view of the stage.” When you add obtrusive towers, it becomes problematic, and with this in mind, Kobus started talking to DWR Distribution.

Blue Array lift audio to new heights with Fenix towers

The units were delivered by Jaco Beukes of DWR Distribution who gave a short training session followed by a tutorial video to demonstrate the set-up. "It was super quick and where any other tower structure would take days to figure out, this took 15 minutes," said Nathan.

Audio technician, Reotshepile Tlhowe, adds, "The set-up was quick, and we didn't have to stress."

Nathan and Reo agree that the new solution is also a time saver. "You no longer need to rely on a rigger, someone to build the tower and fill a water ballast," said Nathan. "Now you arrive, set up the Fenix stands and fly the PA. The system also enables you to drop the PA should you need to change the angles very easily and without needing power where setups often haven't allowed for rigging power. "With this tower it's as simple as dropping the PA, moving the PA slightly and then going back up again."

Needless to say, *Liefde by die Dam* was a success and the show also travelled to Cape Town. "There was a lot of excitement, and everyone was very happy to be doing a show of this scale again," said Nathan. "It was almost nostalgic as we haven't worked on such a large production for over two years, and then to hear an audience of this size screaming at the stage!"