

grandMA 2 for The Baxter



Photos courtesy Patrick Curtis The Baxter Theatre is the first in

South Africa to purchase a grandMA 2, but while they await delivery, a grandMA full size has been set to work on the phenomenally successful production of *The Tempest*, which has been playing to packed houses and has received standing ovations from the start.

"*The Tempest* was a very large and important project for us, and changing to a new lighting console as we moved onto stage was cause for trepidation," commented Patrick Curtis from The Baxter. "The grandMA, under the capable fingers of Nick Britz from DWR Distribution, performed faultlessly, and we have had a smooth run ever since."



It was time for the Baxter Theatre to upgrade their Strand 300

Series. Says Patrick, "We had a long relationship with Strand, but it seemed there was no new viable product coming out from them any time soon, so we looked around at other desks and who was buying what. The grandMA seemed to fulfill most of our needs, and we knew we would get good backup from DWR."

Lighting Designer Mannie Manim has been constantly surprised at how much feedback information is available from the grandMA, and he admires its quick versatility. "After the laborious 300, intel and scrollers were a breeze on the grandMA," said Mannie.

Dan Riley from DWR initially sold the Baxter Theatre the Strand desk. “We have felt extremely well looked after by DWR, especially by Dan and Nick. Our relationship with Dan stretches back some 30 years, so it is great to have that sense of continuity.”



The Baxter also needed to replace the Strand 300 in their Concert Hall. With lighting needs not as demanding, a smaller console was sufficient and they opted for a Pico. “The Pico will form a valuable backup function for the grandMA2 to be installed in the Theatre,” said Patrick. “It also makes sense to have the same make of console in a building where our technicians move from venue to venue.”

The Tempest, in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company, will be moving the UK, where it is expected to be equally well received. “The entire South African cast, musicians and most of the crew will be moving to a four week season in Stratford-upon –Avon, followed by a six week tour of British cities. Mannie will light it in Stratford and the first tour date, where after the RSC will take it over technically.”

Shakespeare was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon and it is thought that The Tempest was probably written in 1610-11. Probably never in his wildest imagination would he have expected The Tempest, considered to be one of his greatest works, to come back to his hometown all the way from Africa.