

# Hale Centre Theatre Invests in zactrack

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Hale Centre Theatre is a family company headquartered in Sandy, Utah, USA, and dedicated to enriching lives through its world-class productions, which include a range of traditional Broadway and off Broadway plays and musical theatre shows – around 10 per season – staged in two venues under one roof.

The larger auditorium, the Young Living Centre Stage, has a capacity of 911 for its dynamic in-the-round format and has recently invested in a zactrack SMART real-time tracking system.

The venue's head of lighting and video, Jaron Kent Hermansen, was lighting a recent production of *The Little Mermaid* directed by Ryan Simmons, which involved extensive people flying, and

decided that the time was right to purchase zackrack which he could see would be a massive asset to this and other productions.

Jaron has lit several flying heavy shows before, and was never happy with various aspects of being able to light the scenes, especially when the shows were performed in-the-round, as was the case with *The Little Mermaid*. This presented a scenario where he wanted main character, the lively and assertive Ariel, to be constantly lit.

He had previously seen a demo by zackrack dealer Barbizon around a year before, when he had been contemplating using this very intuitive tracking system on a production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. He had also looked around at a few other options, before deciding that zackrack was THE best, right and most appropriate solution for the theatre both for now and for future productions.



After this extensive research, Jaron and Hale Centre Theatre's CEO Mark Dietlein reckoned the product would work very well for them, so the purchase of the zackrack SMART system complete with 20 x Trackers proceeded.

A typical show schedule might include up to four shows a day, so for *The Little Mermaid* they

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needed one set of live trackers with another charging / on standby.

The Little Mermaid's 24 x zacktracked moving lights were a mix of High End SolaFrame 750s and SolaFrame Theatre fixtures - a perfect amount for the zacktrack SMART system. These were selected from the theatre's house rig of around 120 moving lights and 350 other luminaires. The show featured 507 luminaires in total, of which those working with zacktrack were essential to the show narrative.

The 12 x overhead zacktracked lights were rigged on two catwalks - center and outer - with 6 fixtures in each position. The other 12 were deployed on the vom headers just above each entrance around the circular auditorium.

The Trackers were diligently concealed in various wigs and costumes.

Numbers 1 and 2 were on lead character Ariel, 3 - 5 were on the other leads and five shifted across the cast as needed with the other 5 shifted around to other cast members as needed, so 11 were used in total with some recycling. This precise process was tightly co-ordinated by a team of zacktrack wranglers, a new job title for crew at Hale Centre Church known as the 'z2'.

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“Utilizing zactrack enabled me to create numerous looks and scenes that would not have been possible without the tracking,” declared Jaron, explaining that he could isolate specific bits of the stage, and also achieve excellent follow spotting and key lighting from all angles, particularly during Aerial’s flying scenes.

zactrack’s PSN (PosiStageNet) outputs communicating with four Trackers were used to track lightning video effects from a disguise media server to Flotsam and Jetsam, the two ‘enforcer

eels' of sea witch Ursula.

Jaron worked closely with lighting programmer Renee Fowler, commenting that “her incredible skills at building custom ‘magic sheets’ make programming zactrack so simple,” and her understanding of the zactrack system generally have “set us up for success!”

Renee implements updates and co-ordinates the day-to-day upkeep of the system with the assistance of the z2.



Hale Centre Theatre’s house lighting console is an ETC Eos Ti and every lighting cue for The Little Mermaid also contained zactrack data.

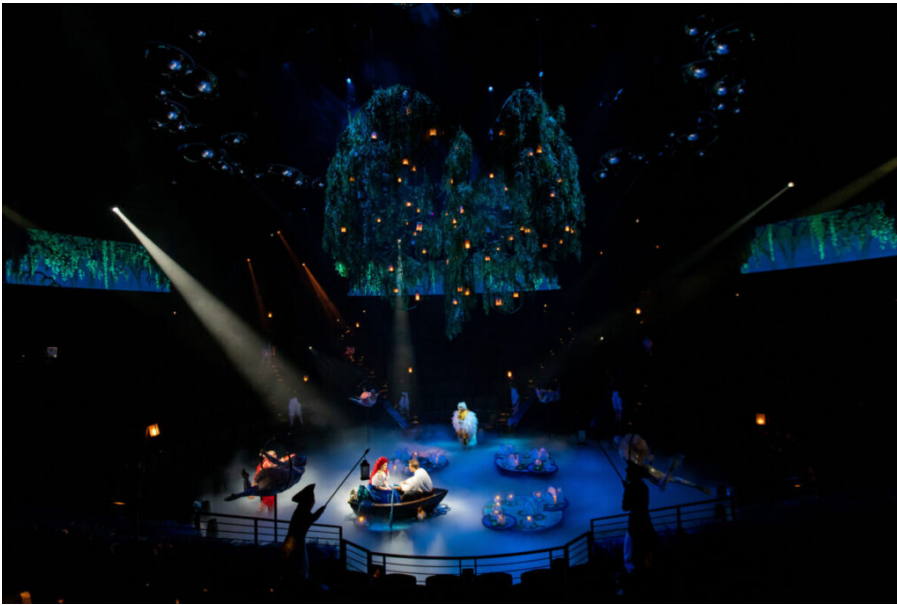
“It is a very powerful and flexible system from which we will all benefit,” stated Jaron, adding that the overall reception has been great, together with “brilliant” technical support from Barbizon’s Michael Gray and zactrack’s US distributor ACT Entertainment’s Aria Hailey, who headed up the installation and training.

Hale Centre Theatre’s own production manager, Tyson Leavitt, was another big advocate for getting the system underlining their commitment to offering the best production values.

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The next production using zacktrack, Titanic, saw 20 people tracked by lighting through the show.

Photos: © Leavitt Wells / Courtesy Hale Centre Theatre



### **About Hale Centre Theatre**

The smaller Sorenson Legacy Jewel Box Stage seats 467 people, and in addition to its acclaimed productions, Hale Centre Theatre provides learning opportunities for students and aspiring acting, production, lighting, sound, and composition professionals. Complimentary tickets are issued to schools around Utah to promote exceptional theatre experiences, attract new audiences and engage the community, a successful outreach has earned Hale Centre Theatre a loyal fan base comprising people of all ages and from all situations who can engage with the fun and possibilities of live performance.