

Hippotizer Nevis+ projects captivating panorama for 'Reparation Nation'

Posted on October 4, 2024



Germany - Hamburg's historic Kampnagel performing arts centre premiered the multi-disciplinary dance show Reparation Nation in September, featuring a three-projector-strong panoramic visual backdrop driven by a Hippotizer Nevis+ Media Server.



The production, by Germany-based South African choreographer Jessica Nupen, is an interactive installation of dance, opera, visual art, live soundscapes and polyrhythmic beats, exploring the empty spaces left by looted cultural assets on the African continent. It was created following public, site-specific and digital discussions, dance workshops, open rehearsals in Johannesburg, Hamburg and Dakar, as well as an intensive and inclusive research programme in close collaboration with leading colonial experts and ethnological institutions, including the University of Hamburg, MARKK, Museum für Kunst & Gewerbe and the Lübeck Ethnological Collection.



To realise the visual aspects of the production, which form the backbone of the dance performances and narrative, Nupen worked with designer Wilhelm Disbergen of Yellow Bunny Productions. He travelled with his own Hippotizer Nevis+ Media Server, originally supplied by DWR Distribution in South Africa, to drive three Panasonic PT-MZ16KLBE 16K Lumen projectors. The content consisted of video footage collected from various parts of the world – particularly Africa – and was assembled over the course of 18 months.



“The team, led by Namibian curator Vitjitua Ndjiharine, visited cultural establishments and libraries, archives and storage facilities to collect photographs and videos from these current places and the bounty that is kept, hidden or archived inside,” explains Disbergen.



The video content was created by Jonas Nellissen from Siehste Productions and was pre-loaded onto the Hippotizer Nevis+ Media Server by Disbergen, using the in-built Nevis+ Media Management software. "Image blend/merge made the video mapping easy," he says. "The preset control meant that I could control many layered videos and trigger them at the appropriate moment, as many dance sections were elastic in time. Having the content created for the specific dimensions of each wall meant that separate videos could bounce of the different walls to create a visual dialogue 'tennis match' and sync with the performance and archival content. Jonas Nillisen was amazing in conceptualising this and trusting Green Hippo to make it work seamlessly together."



Disbergen then used an AV splitter and upscaler to blend the images coming out of the Nevis+, driving them to the projectors to achieve an enveloping visual projected onto the back wall, and the stage left and stage right walls. "Hippotizer enabled me to programme and manipulate the visuals quickly, often on-the-fly," says Disbergen. "Some colour adjustments and modifications were required to match the lighting and the mood of each dance section, which was simple to achieve within the Hippotizer ecosystem. It allowed me to paint the stage like a brush."



Disbergen notes that the compact, robust 1/2 RU chassis made it easy for him to travel long-haul with the Nevis+ as hand luggage, and the Media Server's one DisplayPort 1.2 output with EDID Management that supports splitters allowed him to use an external AV splitter to feed the three projectors. "The Nevis+ has enough processing power to create, visualise and playback video in real-time," he adds. "This was the first time I was challenged with realising an on-stage panorama using three projectors from one 4K output, but the Nevis+ delivered. I had guidance from Dylan Jones at DWR Distribution, who helped me through the set-up process and from there it looked and worked great!"



Reparation Nation saw artists and dancers from a range of countries perform, including Senegal, Namibia, Kenya, Cameroon, South Africa, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Hamburg. The Kamnagel is Germany's biggest independent production venue for the performing arts and is based on the premises of a former mechanical engineering factory.