

New Atterbury Theatre

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Will it work or won't it? The proof is "bums on seats" and so far the brand new Atterbury Theatre at the striking Lynnwood Bridge, situated in the east of Pretoria, is playing to sold out houses. It was a privilege for DWR Distribution to work alongside Pieter-Jan Kapp, affectionately known as "Kappie", to supply the lighting equipment and be part of this 400-seater West-End styled theatre.

From day one, 19 June, the theatre and shopping complex was welcomed with enthusiasm and interest. "We learnt the hard way," said Kappie. "If we don't book a space at a restaurant for after the show, we go to sleep hungry." Atterbury Theatre, which embraces culture with the enhancement of cutting-edge technology, opened with the South African musical "Stuur Groete", created from songs composed by Chris Torr and songs by Laurika Rauch. The show was lit by the talented Mannie Manim.



Kappie was appointed Theatre Consultant for the new Atterbury Theatre. His experience in huge festivals, continual work with musician Laurika Rauch and most importantly his passion for lighting and the arts made the developers of Lynnwood Bridge comfortable that he was the man for this life-size task. Kappie won't have a program to remind him of an opening night, instead he'll have a beautiful building, a monument of a job well done.

His involvement in the project started 18 months ago when receiving a phone call from musician and producer, Matthys Maree. "He told me that advice was needed for a new theatre being built," explained Kappie. Although he did not initially think anything would come of it, Kappie flew up from Stellenbosch for a meeting. "I walked into the boardroom filled with engineers, quantity surveyors, builders and interior design people. They had already received a reference from Laurika Rauch and were looking for an independent person to assist them. They asked questions. Essentially the theatre was designed to be more of a music conservatorium, so he had his work cut out to change it into a theatre." Two hours later, they told Kappie the job was his.



Kappie" (right) with Dan Riley, DWR
Distribution

"I was more involved than I had anticipated," said Kappie. "The developers went to see a West End Theatre and there were lots of things they, being more accustomed to putting up shopping

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malls, were not familiar with.” These were little traditions like, to mention a few, having the dressing rooms in the right place equipped with a nice name boards in which a name card can be slotted into, making the facility user friendly for artists in wheel chairs, having a catwalk in the ceiling and how the aircon should flow in the venue to prevent drafts! “It’s amazing, you don’t realize how much you learn over the years,” said Kappie.



Kappie called DWR Distribution to find out more about lighting gear. On that day, the phone was answered by Nicolet Britz, who had worked with him on regular occasions on festivals a few years before, so it was a fantastic reunion.... this industry really is small! A large file was sent to Kappie with product information and references and he also experienced a hands-on demonstration at DWR to see the various desks available, light fixtures and equipment that could accommodate his budgetary figures.

DWR Distribution was thrilled to be awarded the tender to supply the theatre. It was a team effort, but thank you to Dan Riley, Nick Britz and Easy Moeketsie who headed installation from start to finish.



“Kappie” with DWR’s Dan Riley and Nick Britz.

There should always be time for a cuppa. Opening night was great, with a lot of mixed emotions. “When you’ve been so closely involved, you know all the great things as well as the not so great,” said Kappie. “The most difficult thing to accept is that you can’t make everyone happy and one has to distance yourself.” The response to the theatre, which looks warm yet stately elegant, has been amazing. Well done to all!

Kappie was delighted to be part of such an amazing group of people including Atterbury Property Development, DC Electrical, Studio 3 Architects, Dirk and Helen Henzen, the QSs and the man how wanted a theatre, Louis van der Walt, who all supported his ideas and decisions in every way. “Every success I’ve had has a great deal to do with the people around me. You need to have personal confidence and that.” He adds, “The success of DWR Distribution is the people. Everyone knows the gear we have is quality, but I had a gut feeling about who I wanted to use for this project.”



Equipment List:

30	x	Par 64s
1	x	Robe Fog machine 1550
1	x	Le Maitre MVS Hazer
6	x	Selecon SPX Axial 14 degree fixed profile spot light
12	x	Selecon SPX Axial 19 degree fixed profile spot light
6	x	Selecon SPX Axial 26 degree fixed profile spot
12	x	Selecon Rama Fresnels
4	x	Selecon Lui Cyc 3 Battons
6	x	Robin 300 E Spot

2	x	Griven Inse 1.2kw MSR Followspot
2	x	Griven Colour Changer Mag 5s
6	x	LSC Redback 12 Channel Dimmers
1	x	LSC Minnim 24 Fader Control Desk
2	x	LSC MDR Rackmount Splitters
2	x	Strand Dim1 Single DMX
3	x	Strand Accent DMX 8 Preset
12	x	LTM LoadGuard® Motors
2	x	Motor Controllers
1	x	Avolites Pearl TigerTouch

(complete with wireless i-Pod Touch for remote control)

Cabling

Prolyte Trussing

Kappie's background

After studying electrical engineering at Technicon Pretoria, Kappie joined Production Projects in 1992, where he stayed for the next 15 years. The English speaking bunch there thought they'd never remember the name Pieter-Jan Kapp, and did not want to name him "Kappie" either, so he was aptly "re-christened" as PJ. "That was the time the Lost City at Sun City was built," recalls Kappie. "As I had an electronic background, I ran the maintenance contract on behalf of Production Projects for the next three years." Thereafter he found himself running shows under the helpful wing of Nic Michaletos, Rudi Kesting and Otto Wijnberger.

Six years ago, Kappie felt he had "hit the ceiling" and it was time to move on. He currently provides technical management for various festivals such as KKNK Arts festival, Aardklop and the

Woordfees, University of Stellenbosch and has worked with Afrikaans artists as they travel abroad to host mini-concerts in countries such as London, Europe and Canada. “Arts Festivals have become a beast of its own,” said Kappie. “You are looking at twenty venues for the larger ones where I employ 70 people to help, the pace is high and there is a lot of gaffer tape!” For the past thirteen years, Kappie has also been proud to work with his icon, Laurika Rauch and the greater Afrikaans entertainment scene.

Visit www.atterburytheatre.co.za or www.atterbury.co.za for more details

