

New dimmers for Playhouse

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Dan Riley, DWR Distribution “When looking at The Playhouse Company tender we had won, I wondered if we would complete it,” said Dan Riley, DWR Distribution. “It was a major job and they put in clauses that the theatre could not close and that shows must carry on as normal. We had to change all the dimmers while it was running and the boys pulled it off. I say it exactly as I felt it.”

After 20 years, it was time for The Playhouse Company in Durban to upgrade their dimmer racks which were originally supplied by ACF Merchandise. Earlier this year, DWR’s Bruce Riley, who headed up the installation, along with JC Du Plessis, Gedeon Mpofu and Michael van Dyk relocated to the coast where it was “Go Go Go” for the team for the next four months.



Dylan Heaton from The Playhouse Company and Bruce Riley, DWR. The installation comprised 11 x Philips Strand EC 21 96 way plug in dimmer racks with full reporting capabilities of which six were installed in the Opera Theatre (originally they were MCM Plug in Dimmers), four in the Drama Theatre and one in the Loft Theatre.

The dimmer installation is fully networked with reporting in each control room for configuration. This means that the board op can quickly see if there are errors or problems while they're running a show.



In addition the existing house lighting was converted to an integrated building wide central networking system using Philips Strand Vision.net.

The foyer and house lighting dimmers in the complex, some 70 odd Strand Lighting Environ 2 dimmers, were replaced with Philips Dynalite DLE 120s and DLE 220s, leading edge dimmers. They were all controlled by the Philips Strand Vision.net and featured two central processors: one for the house lights and the other for the foyer lights, each linked to each other.



“It’s quite amazing how Bruce and his team did it,” said Dan Riley. “Initially there were going to be three separate lighting systems, but now the entire network can be controlled from any point in the building.”

DWR replaced old mains cables with new and upgraded the supply to the dimmers from single phase to three phase.



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Bruce Riley, Dylan Heaton, Richard Parker and Dan Riley. What a pleasure it was for DWR to work with the family at The Playhouse. "Things couldn't have happened the way they did without Dylan Heaton, technician at the Playhouse," comments Bruce Riley. "He was an absolute gem, helping us with everything. Le Rien Stoffberg (Technical Manager), Oscar Hlangu (Support Services Manager), Richard Parker (Lighting Manager), Peter Gorman (Head of Maintenance) and Malcolm Gray (Engineer) were incredible."

Bruce Riley, Dylan Heaton, Richard Parker and Dan Riley. What a pleasure it was for DWR to work with the family at The Playhouse. "Things couldn't have happened the way they did without Dylan Heaton, technician at the Playhouse," comments Bruce Riley. "He was an absolute gem, helping us with everything. Le Rien Stoffberg (Technical Manager), Oscar Hlangu (Support Services Manager), Richard Parker (Lighting Manager), Peter Gorman (Head of Maintenance) and Malcolm Gray (Engineer) were incredible."



Technical Manager, Le Rien Stoffberg specifically remembers the first time she worked with Dan Riley on an earlier dimmer installation. “It was at PACOFS, Bloemfontein and took place in the mid 80s. Dan did the install and I’ve worked with the Rileys ever since. Bruce and his team were amazing on this install. It was like having family here. They would sometimes pop in and have coffee and rusks with me... but did they also worked incredibly hard. At this stage, technically wise, I’m very proud to be working at The Playhouse Company. For me it’s not just about the products but as much about the after sales service we get. That’s where Duncan Riley and his team at DWR have stepped up to the plate.”



Going back in time...Le Rien Stoffberg and her team.



Technical Manager, Le Rien Stoffberg.

Duncan Riley concludes, “Enormous gratitude extends to Mhlomuli Moyo and Derek Schonewolf from Igoda Projects (Pty) Ltd, the consulting engineers on the project. DWR sincerely appreciated the opportunity to work with them on this project. We would also like to thank Graham Eales of

Philips for coming out to South Africa at a days notice and Bill Richards from Philips Strand for helping us put the spec together.

“It was an honour to be able to supply The Playhouse Company with this dimming system. I just want to say well done to the DWR team for pulling it off.”

