

Revolutionary zactrack available at DWR Distribution

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DWR Distribution is pleased to be the official South African distributor for zactrack, an automated “Following System” designed for open-air events, theatre stages and studios. The system was put through its paces by Denis Hutchinson, one of South Africa’s esteemed lighting designers, on Sinbad the Sailor, a festive pantomime held at the Teatro, Montecasino.



zactrack is groundbreaking! The system allows any number of performers to be tracked and registered in a 3D computer model using Ultra Wide Band (UWB) radio tracking to locate the position of actors and objects on stage. Tracking can also be achieved by importing the movement data of stage machinery systems. The zactrack system controls and precisely aligns moving lights, cameras, video (LED walls, floors or projection) and 3D immersive sound panning systems and integrates easily into

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your existing lighting infrastructure. All zackrack functions can be controlled from a lighting console.



zackrack make three different products, PRO, SMART and mini. Each separated by the size of the tracking space, number of active Trackers or the number of fixtures that can be actively used. However, all three products share the same core zackrack values with accurate, stable and reliable coordinate data.

Stephan Saremba, Managing Director at zackrack, comments, “We welcome DWR Distribution to the family of worldwide zackrack distributors. Their professional sales, support and training team, matched with an extensive product portfolio make them an ideal partner to bring the magic of automated tracking to customers in South Africa. We look forward to working together on a growing number for exciting automated tracking applications.”

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zacktrack is a game changer for DWR Distribution's Duncan Riley, and something he wanted to introduce to the South African market for some time now. "With the industry on its feet after the pandemic and an audience thrilled to be back at shows again, we were finally ready to launch," said Duncan. "The DWR team, including Jaques Pretorius and Motlotlo Makhobotloane (Mac) tested zacktrack SMART in our demo room and were delighted at its functionality and ease of use. We then reached out to lighting designer, Denis Hutchinson, who incorporated the system in Sinbad the Sailor, the first pantomime to be hosted in the Teatro at Montecasino in Fourways, Johannesburg."



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Denis Hutchinson said that once the system was set up, it was easy to operate and basically became just an extra attribute on the selected moving lights. “The zacktrack site has downloadable profiles for both MA and Eos consoles,” he adds. “Once the profiles are on the desk, patching them into the show is very simple.”

Five trackers were used on Sinbad the Sailor. “The show has eight principal characters, but I was able to do what I wanted to on five trackers with only one having to be moved from one performer to another during the show,” Denis explains. “The most important trackers for me were on the Genie and the Sorceress where I use a rotating gobo to give them both a ‘magical sparkle’ whenever they’re onstage. Of course, when the Sorceress loses her powers, she loses her light too.”

Denis was assisted by lighting controller operator Luke Draper, and by DWR’s Jaques Pretorius who was zacktrack technical support. “I think we all had quite a steep learning curve with a first time setting up of the system, and Jaques may never speak to me again, but in the end, we’re functional,” he smiles. “I suspect that when we do it again, we will be able to plan the placement of the Anchors and Pucks much more effectively and get even better results. One of the lessons learnt is that it’s not called zacktrack for nothing. When aligning to the Pucks, the lights have to draw a mirrored Z between the four positions. Set them up as a circular motion and all hell breaks loose! I’m very grateful to DWR and Jaques in particular for the effort that went into making it all work and for allowing me to play with a new toy.”



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Across the globe, zacktrack has successfully been implemented on prestigious stages. Highlights this year alone include a zacktrack SMART system found on the Main Stage at the Tampere Workers' Theatre in Tampere, Finland where it is being utilized by both the audio and lighting departments. In the West End musical, "Back to the future" zacktrack SMART was specified, allowing single and multiple lighting fixtures to be selected to follow actors and dancers using a combination of Tracker-and-Anchor and Ultra-Wide-Band real-time radio tracking technology, and which in turn has brought flexibility to the production.

zacktrack really is the way of the future! For more information contact DWR Distribution at 011 794 5023 or e-mail sales@staging.dwrdistribution.co.za.

Photos courtesy Montecasino