

Whale Coast Theatre



Close to the tip of Africa, approximately 120kms from Cape Town, you will find the Cape Whale Coast, nestled between the Olifantsberg mountains and the Atlantic Ocean. Over the years, Hermanus has transformed itself from a whaling and fishing village into one of the world's best whale-viewing sites and is renowned for viewing the Southern Right whales. The best time to observe the whales is between June and November. Hermanus is home to the world's only Whale Crier who signals the location of the whales using a kelp horn. The residents of the small coastal towns of Sandbaai and Hermanus, have now been given a 'retail therapy' opportunity with the establishment of the Whale Coast Mall, which includes a multi-purpose cinema theatre known as the Whale Coast Theatre. PJK Project Management commissioned DWR Distribution for the theatre installation.

The Whale Coast Theatre, a 200-seater dual purpose venue offers the town a live venue that will not stand empty for long periods of time. When the theatre is not being used for shows or entertainment at the busier "touristy" time of the year, it becomes a cinema playing high definition international movies with 7.2 Dolby surround sound.



Pieter-Jan Kapp of PJK Project Management was the ideal candidate to oversee the theatre project. Over the past 26 years he has worked in theatres, conference centres and has been instrumental at art festivals throughout the country giving him hands-on knowledge in stage layouts, mechanics, lighting, sound and acoustic

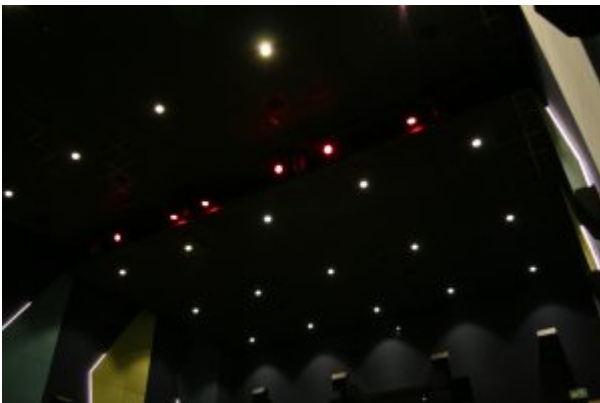
design. A feather in his cap, amongst others, was being appointed the consultant for the Atterbury Theatre in Pretoria some years ago. Kappie has skill in the practical layout required for a theatre complex and speaks the language of both production personnel and project managers.

“It was important to look at the purpose of the venue, the clients’ requirement and adhere, as much as possible, to the budget,” said Kappie. “Installations require quality equipment, and very importantly, a team of professionals who support you and understand your vision in creating an end product that will stand the test of time. To me DWR were that partner.”



Designing a dual function facility is not as easy as one would think it is. There is very little in common between a cinema theatre and a live event theatre. At the Whale Coast Theatre, however, the venue was small enough to find a midway between the acoustic needs for cinema and live performances. There are two cinemas, Cinema 01 designed for adults and Cinema 02 which is designed as a children’s cinema. A small flat stage floor was erected in front of the screen for theatrical productions.

The lighting was designed around the concept that it could be used for any scenario, including basic theatre lighting and for cinema use. It was important that lighting fixtures be hidden so that they did not reflect when movies were being screened on the 10m x 5.8m screen.



With an extremely tight install period, the site still being a building site and the mall opening to the public on December 16, 2017, DWR’s Johnny Scholtz had all his ducks in a row. He had timeously worked with Kappie to ensure a great lighting solution and then trusted in his colleagues Bradley Bruchhausen, Robert Izzett and Andi Rodgers to oversee the actual installation. Equipment supplied consisted of a hand winding stage curtain track, 8x curtain leg border bars, 3x 10m 8-way lighting bars with DMX, Lighting fixtures included 6 x Robin LEDBeam 150, 8x Robe ParFect 150s, 4x Robe Robin DL4S Profiles, 1x Le Maitre MVS Hazer, 2x Nicolaudie Stick-DE3 DMX controllers to which the house lights have been connected and a Philips Strand 500ML lighting control console.



“The installation of the Nicolaudie console was challenging, as these consoles were used on a daily basis,” said Johnny Scholtz. “We needed to ensure that there was access to the foyers and also to the children’s cinema. These areas were linked together via a network. The consoles had to take triggers from the projectors – it also had to override the projector and the house lights.” The managers of the Whale Coast Theatre requested that Bradley tweak some of the settings on the Nicolaudie as they wanted certain light levels in the foyer to be adjusted to create a more relaxed environment.

The big Philips Strand 500ML console are used for theatre events and needed to take over from the Nicolaudie console. Jannie de Jager worked late into the night programming and ensuring that the client’s requirements were met with an amazing lighting effect.



Johnny explains, “To do this we had to include a Strand DMX Merge Controller, so that the operator could merge the Philips Strand 500ML desk which would take over the control when they have events other than the cinema.”

As always, it was a pleasure for DWR to work alongside Kappie. Kappie started off as a young lighting technician at Production Projects (Pty) Ltd in 1992, after studying Electronic Engineering at the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria. “I worked and learned all I know about theatre under my mentors Nic Michaletos and Rudi Kesting”. For fifteen years Kappie then worked as a lighting technician, installation technician and as a pyro technician. In 2006, he started his own operation PJK Project Management where he focused on technical management for art festivals, such as KKNK in Oudtshoorn, Aardklop in Potchefstroom, Suidoosterfees in Cape Town and Innibos in Nelspruit. In 2010 Kappie was given the opportunity to consult on his first theatre project at Atterbury Theatre, and now, eight years later, Whale Coast Theatre is his seventh successfully completed project.

