

EUROPE

Meyer for Antwerp Youth Capital opening event

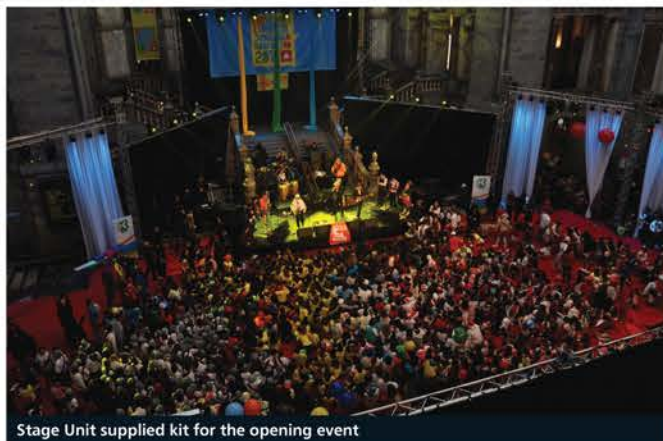
Amplifying three events in a crowded railway station is not a piece of cake – **Marc Maes** witnessed how craftsmanship and good equipment can deliver

The first weekend of March saw the official opening of Antwerp European Youth Capital at the city's central station. Audio and lighting company Stage Unit was assigned to

supply the necessary equipment for the opening events in the recently restored railway station.

On Friday, 4 March, 800 school kids attended the opening day – the event was also captured for TV broadcast on the public TV Channel KetNet.

"The big challenge here was that the railway station's main hall was not designed for audio applications," explains Karl Van Noyen, project manager with Stage Unit. "The hall is some 40m high and there was no acoustic ceiling – the only alternative we had was to reduce the sound level, and we're happy that the FOH engineer of main act Bart Peeters wanted to think along with us in this. Another element was that the hall had to remain open for the railway commuters during building, show and loading."



Stage Unit supplied kit for the opening event

Van Noyen opted for a configuration of Meyer UPA1P enclosures, two at each side of the stage on sub-cars, and two flown in the ground supports. "A line array system offers excellent results for a long throw, but for this specific event we only needed a 12m-deep 'shoot' – using a line array was not an option, the sound would also reflect on the glass ticket counters in the hall," Van Noyen adds.

The system was controlled by two analogue Soundcraft MH3 consoles for FOH and monitors on request of the artist's system tech who had plenty of time to do a proper sound check.

With the City of Antwerp organising the whole event, respect for sound threshold limitations was a key issue throughout the whole opening event. "The province's environmental department measured the SPL every 15 minutes – with less than 98dB we managed

to produce a very pleasant concert," says Van Noyen.

The next day, Stage Unit moved to the railway platform hall for the Bar Central event: a Rock Stage on the street level, and a DJ/hip-hop event, the Urban Stage, on the minus 6 floor, alongside the railroad tracks.

"Like in the main hall we decided not to use a line array," continues Van Noyen. "In the -6 hall, a triangular-form venue with concrete walls and an adjacent huge open space with the railway platforms, a line array again would be a disadvantage. We opted for Meyer MSL 4 cabinets, allowing us to beam the sound away from the concrete structure. A DiGiCo D1 was used in combination with five MSL4, three HP 700 subs per side and UPA1 speakers as front fills."

The Urban Stage welcomed DJs, rappers and DJ-musician line-ups, with Pioneer CD DJ sets, and Technics 1200 turntables supplied by Stage Unit.

At the rock stage, also right next to the rail tracks, Van Noyen returned to the analogue Soundcraft MH3 consoles, steering MSL 4 speakers and HP 700 subs, serving a huge "eighties-style" stage with lots of lights. "For security reasons, we were not allowed to use delay speakers and the FOH console was placed too far from the stage – it's a railway station and not a concert venue..," admits Van Noyen. Some 3,500 youngsters attended the Bar Central event, with Customs headlining the rock stage. 🎧

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Meyer Sound cabinets were used throughout.

Picture by AEYC 2011

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