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Festival Theatre Brings Meyer Sound Surround to Budapest

On the southern fringe of Budapest sits the city's new Palace of Arts. The new complex, among the largest of its kind in Europe, has transformed the cultural life of Hungary's capital city since opening last spring with its 1,700-seat philharmonic concert hall, 450-seat Festival Theatre multi-purpose auditorium, and arts museum incorporating the Hungarian national music library.

A sound reinforcement system comprising more than 20 Meyer Sound self-powered loudspeakers was installed in the Festival Theatre. The venue posed several aesthetic, acoustical, and logistical challenges to the system design, such as the unusually large and adjustable stage opening — measuring more than 18 meters wide — which allows seamless integration of the audience area and the stage area, when necessary, and the movable ceiling panels above the audience, which open to add volume to the hall to increase reverberation, allowing the acoustics to be varied for different types of performances, typically dance, drama or film. Additionally, the sound system performance specification in the bid tender document stipulated, among other criteria, minimum uniform sound pressure levels appropriate for movie playback.

Budapest-based designers Andor Fürjes and István Törzsök engineered architectural acoustics and sound system performance specifications for the entire Palace of Arts complex. Károly Molnár of Meyer Sound's European technical support team turned the specifications into a loudspeaker system design for the Festival Theatre, which then was installed by Studiotech, also of Budapest.

Molnár made extensive use of Meyer Sound MAPP Online Pro™ acoustical prediction software to create a surround sound system capable of evenly covering the theatre's two-level seating area. The left and right clusters are split, with one pair of CQ-2 cabinets flown overhead and a second pair mounted near stage level for coverage of the stalls (orchestra section) and under-balcony seating. The center cluster consists of two CQ-2 narrow coverage main loudspeakers with a single UPA-1P compact wide coverage loudspeaker suspended underneath and angled down towards the frontmost rows of seating. For side and rear effects channels, Molnár specified 12 UPM-1P ultra-compact wide coverage loudspeakers divided between the two levels. Each level was fitted with two enclosures on the rear wall and two more on each side wall. Additional UPA-1P cabinets are available as needed for stage monitoring and fill. When performances demand exceptional low-frequency headroom, two 700-HP ultrahigh-power subwoofers are placed at the stage front.

“Bidding regulations in Hungary do not allow us to specify products from a single manufacturer, so our tender included several options,” notes designer Andor Fürjes. “However, a Meyer Sound solution offered unique advantages. First, the active loudspeaker concept eliminates problems associated with wiring of amplifiers and placement of amplifier racks. Also, the Meyer Sound

reputation for reliability and support is well known here, as other important theatres in Budapest are equipped with Meyer Sound systems.”

Fürjes’ and Törzsök’s firm supervised the system’s commissioning, assisted by Molnar and Imre Makkay of Chromatica, the local Meyer Sound dealer.

“Throughout the process, the Meyer Sound solution proved to be design-friendly and scalable as needed,” comments Fürjes. “Also, the company’s technical support gave us and the client confidence in the entire solution, not just the individual system components.”

Of course, it is the system’s performance in use that is the real measure of the system’s success, and this is the point on which Fürjes is most pleased remarking, “We’ve been getting only positive comments back from the audiences, and this is what truly matters.”

ABOUT MEYER SOUND

Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc. designs and manufactures high quality sound reinforcement loudspeakers, studio monitors, equalizers and sound measurement tools for the professional audio industry. Founded in 1979 by John and Helen Meyer, the company has grown to become a leading worldwide supplier of systems for theaters, arenas, stadiums, theme parks, convention centers and touring concert sound rental operations. Meyer Sound’s main office and manufacturing facility are located in Berkeley, California, with field offices and authorized distributors located throughout the USA and around the world.

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