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25. bis 28. April 2023

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Prolight + Sound 2023: Opus Award for innovative “Pandaemonium” stage at Staatstheater Kassel

This year’s “Opus – German Stage Award” honours the “Pandaemonium”, a completely new kind of box theatre concept that realised a wide variety of scenic areas and sightlines and brought the audience close to the action. The sophisticated construction and safe distances between the seats made it possible to realise large opera productions such as “Wozzeck” or “Tosca” with a large orchestra and choir in front of the audience at the Staatstheater Kassel, even in times of pandemic challenges. The Opus will be presented on 27 April 2023 at Prolight + Sound, the leading international trade fair for the event and entertainment technology industry.

As a renowned industry award, the Opus honours special achievements in the fields of staging, technical realisation, set design and lighting design. The award has been an integral part of Prolight + Sound since 2002. The Opus is granted by the Association of Media and Event Technology (VPLT), the European Association of Event Centres (EVVC) and Messe Frankfurt. An expert jury consisting of association members, industry experts, media representatives and representatives of Messe Frankfurt chose the project as the winner.



The Pandaemonium: a spatial structure which integrates the audience into the space. Image source: Sebastian Hannak

Pandaemonium: 60 tonnes of scaffolding material against the Covid tristesse

As hard as the restrictions of the past few years have hit the entire event industry, so great is the amount of creativity and visionary power that the pandemic has unleashed among many professionals in the arts, culture and stage business. The Pandaemonium is downright

emblematic of the forward-looking approach to the challenges of the crisis. Not only did the innovative stage concept provide maximum planning security through the extended distance between the individual visitor seats. The team around Florian Lutz (Intendant/Artist Director Staatstheater Kassel, Director of Wozzeck), Sebastian Hannak (Scenographer) and Mario Schomberg (Technical Director) also succeeded in exploring new theatrical forms of use and successfully realised a visionary concept.



The entire scaffolding of the Pandaemonium had a length of over one hundred metres. Image source: Sebastian Hannak

As a three-story, cross-shaped installation on the main stage, back stage as well as the side stages, the Pandaemonium connected the auditorium with the different performance areas into a space for shared theatrical experience. The entire stage was equipped with a scaffolding construction with a total height of 7.90 meters – a 16-metre-long bridge led diagonally across the main stage area and connected the side stages. The orchestra was located in the centre of the stage, while up to 270 audience members were seated around the stage area on all three floors of the complex construction. The scenographic concept allowed the performers to move freely within the entire installation, which led to completely new possibilities for involving the audience in the productions. In addition to the large screens, numerous flat screens ensured that the stage action, which was spread throughout the entire space, could be seen from every seat. Video artist Konrad Kästner was responsible for the video concept and video design of the two opera productions.

The openness to explore new approaches was an essential element right from the start of the project. Prior to the set-up, the planning and preparation took place in digital space due to the pandemic. Vincent Kaufmann, a member of the “digital.DTHG” team of the German Theatre Technical Society, modelled the project virtually and accompanied the entire production process digitally – from the first sketches to the stage mockup with VR Headsets until the premiere. In times of contact restrictions, this approach was an elementary foundation for the successful cooperation of all those involved.

The architect Oliver Mann supervised the project as construction manager, Björn Schmidt-Hurtienne from EHS was in charge of the statics, and head of workshops Harald Gunkel supervised the building of the set design within the installation. As head of the sound department, Karl-Walter Heyer and his team were responsible for the operation of the spatial

sound system. Stage manager in charge Andreas Lang and his fellow stage managers as well as the stage technicians and props department under the direction of Anne Schulz contributed a lot in advance to the preparation and supervision during the run of Pandaemonium.

More information about Prolight + Sound can be found at www.prolight-sound.com.

As an international trade fair brand, Prolight + Sound is present with events in Germany, China and Dubai. More on the global activities at www.prolight-sound.com/worldwide.

Prolight + Sound

The Global Entertainment Technology Show

The event Prolight + Sound will be held from 25 - 28 April 2023.

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Background information on Messe Frankfurt

The Messe Frankfurt Group is one of the world's leading trade fair, congress and event organisers with their own exhibition grounds. With a workforce of some 2,200* people at its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main and in 28 subsidiaries, it organises events around the world. Group sales in financial year 2022 were around €450 million*. We serve our customers' business interests efficiently within the framework of our Fairs & Events, Locations and Services business fields. One of Messe Frankfurt's key strengths is its powerful and closely knit global sales network, which covers around 180 countries in all regions of the world. Our comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. We are using our digital expertise to develop new business models. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services.

Sustainability is a central pillar of our corporate strategy. Here, we strike a healthy balance between ecological and economic interests, social responsibility and diversity.

For more information, please visit our website at: www.messefrankfurt.com/sustainability

With its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent).

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* Preliminary figures for 2022