



## CASE STUDY

# Martin Harris Centre

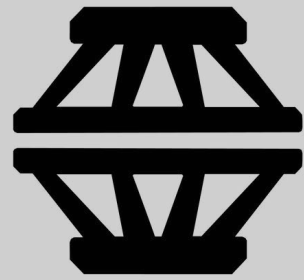
MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY

FULL AUDIO & PROJECTION  
UPGRADE

Photos: Natalie Rudek







emacoustics

The relationship between the University of Manchester and Stage Electrics began over 20 years ago with the initial installation of all Audio-visual, Lighting, Drapes and Communications systems within the Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama. Stage Electrics have been their go-to provider ever since, making them the natural choice when the time came to upgrade both the Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall and the John Thaw Studio Theatre.

With rapid development in technology over past decades, the technical team at the Martin Harris Centre had ambitions to add high-quality, large format projection in each space. Despite serving them well and truly standing the test of time,

they also wanted to upgrade their control system and existing EM Acoustics audio provision in order to align the audio capabilities with the new projection facilities. The result is an impressive upgrade that has greatly benefited The University of Manchester's students, staff, and visiting performers alike.

This project involved two distinct spaces within the Martin Harris Centre: the Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall and the John Thaw Studio Theatre. Although each venue had unique needs, they shared a common goal: to upgrade their projection and sound facilities. The improvements not only enhanced the teaching environment but also created a more user-friendly and efficient experience for everyone involved.



"The products and services that we have received from Stage Electrics for the past 20 years have never been short of outstanding. For that reason, it was a no-brainer when deciding who was going to assist us with our latest upgrade. We have always used sound equipment from EM Acoustics; their products are of such high quality that we didn't even consider another brand when beginning this project.

We needed a solution that would free up space in both venues, as well as improve the efficiency of our technical operations. Many of our courses rely on video and audio, such as our film and audio courses. We were looking for a solution with heightened audio-visual quality to provide both our students and teachers with an enhanced experience and the resources to thrive."

**Karl Spencer**  
**Senior Technical and Buildings Manager**  
**Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama**





# THE COSMO RODEWALD CONCERT HALL



# COSMO RODEWALD

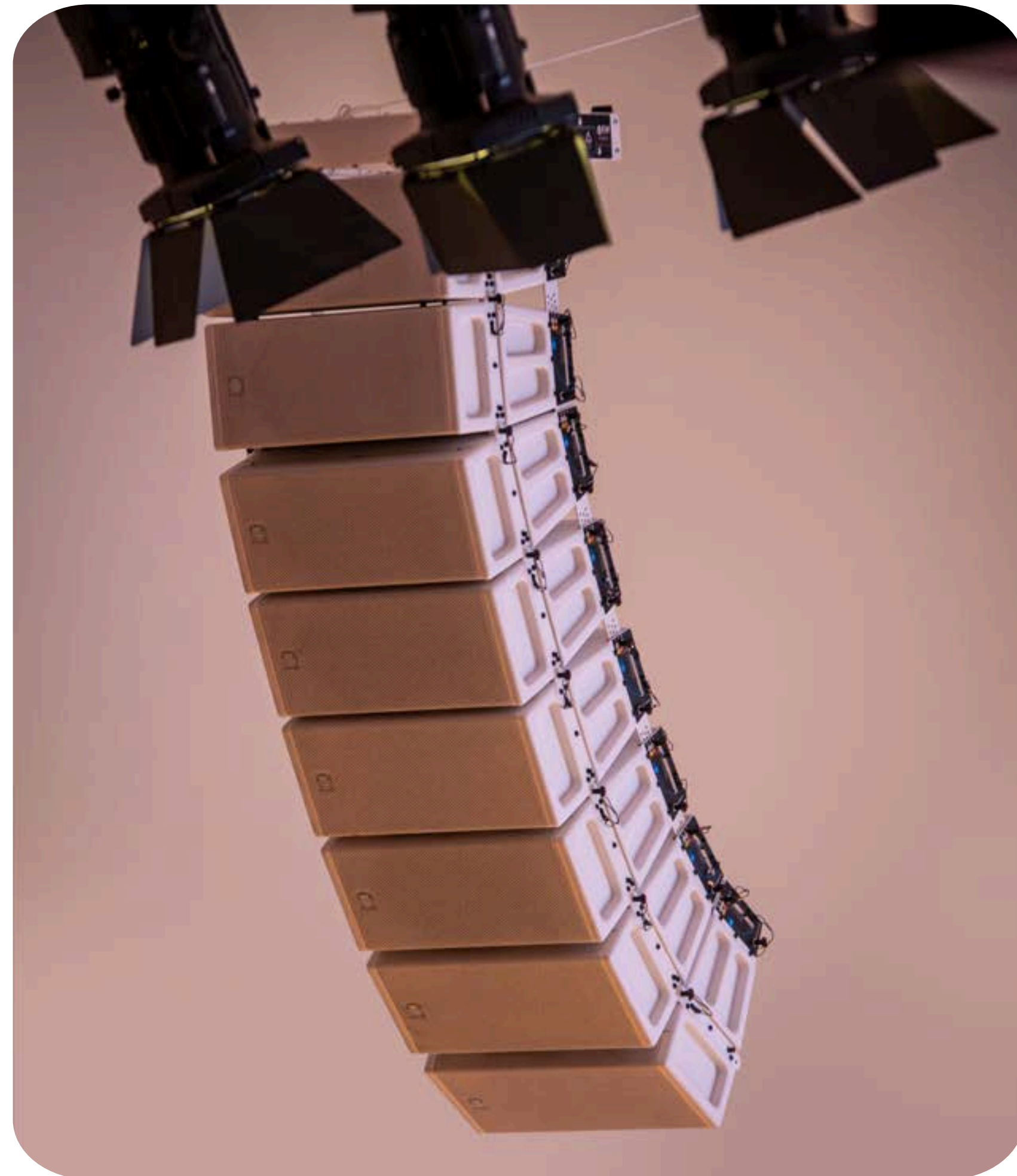
The Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall, located within the Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama, is primarily used for classical music concerts, spoken word events, and comedy performances.

Thanks to the design of EM acoustics HALO-C, Stage Electrics were able to provide a high quality sound reinforcement system that achieves full coverage of the auditorium and is sympathetic to the venue in terms of appearance. This is coupled with a control system that makes it simple and easy to operate, an overall outcome that wasn't possible at the time of the original installation.

The EM Acoustics and Stage Electrics teams designed a comprehensive new sound system comprising of eight HALO-C line array elements in both left and right hangs, two deployable R8 satellite speakers,

and two S-15 deployable subwoofers. HALO-C was the natural selection for the Cosmo Rodewald due to its sonic performance and compact nature. Combined with the subwoofers and R8 satellite speakers, the venue is provided with extra reinforcement at the front of the stage, should the performance type call for it. This new system has taken the sound in the venue to another level, ensuring high-quality acoustic coverage across the entirety of the concert hall.

The second phase of the brief was to upgrade the projection facilities within the concert hall. Before the project, the technical team in the Martin Harris Centre would have to spend an hour setting up a ground-mounted projection screen, taking up much-needed teaching space and creating cable mess.



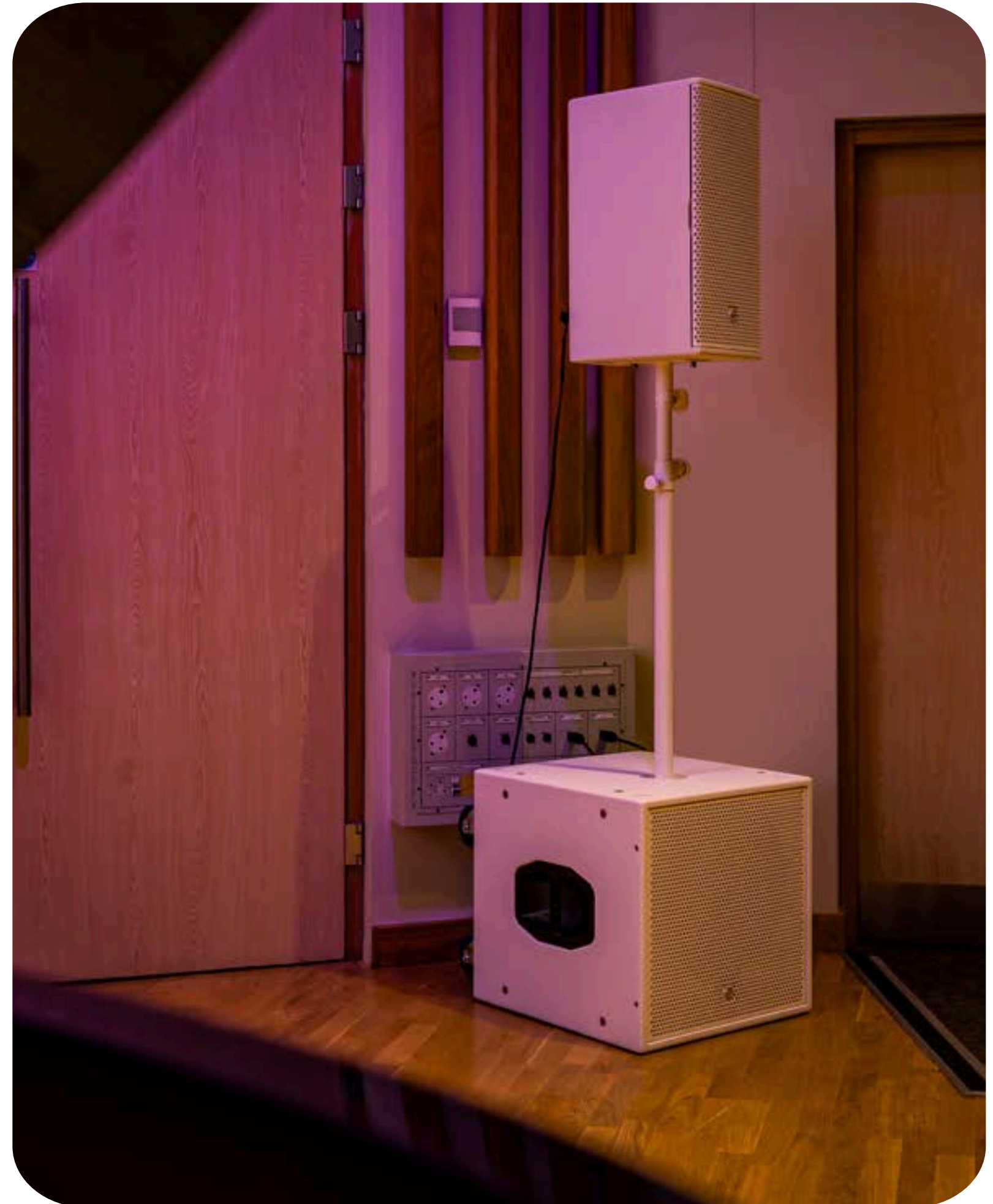
# COSMO RODEWALD

This lengthy set-up process limited the teaching experience. The new solution employed by Stage Electrics comprises a large format wall-mounted projection screen from Screen International with a touchscreen control system.

This new system means no more time-consuming set-up or cable mess, with users being able to lower the screen with the push of a button and connect their laptop in under a minute. These new features allow the space to be used in an ad-hoc fashion and allows more space for teaching on the stage. The new touchscreen system also means that the technical team are no longer required to be present whenever the facilities are in use; the systems are simple to use, no matter your level of technical knowledge.

As well as the sound and projection facilities, Stage Electrics also installed the associated steelwork and rigging suspensions from Centre Stage Engineering to support the new loudspeaker modules, video switching and routing devices from Extron, custom-manufactured facility panels, and carried out the integration of new control and amplification into existing equipment racks.

As a result of these impressive new upgrades, the Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall is now able to host a variety of new events to a far higher standard and customise its sound and projection offerings to fit the needs of each performer.







# THE JOHN THAW STUDIO THEATRE



# JOHN THAW STUDIO THEATRE

The John Thaw Theatre is mainly used as a teaching space but also features regular talks from visiting authors, poets, and comedians. The space was already performing well but needed a new surround sound and video projection offering so that it could also be used as a cinema as well as for audio courses.

The client requested a sound reinforcement system and surround sound system that would be multifunctional and able to operate in a number of different scenarios.

Having been impressed with the quality and reliability of the existing EM Acoustics sound system despite it being over ten years old, the team at the Martin Harris Centre took the opportunity to upgrade to the newest offerings from EM Acoustics.

Karl Spencer, Technical Services and Buildings Manager at the Martin Harris Centre, said that the brand to choose for their new speakers wasn't even a question: "EM Acoustics products have never let us down and have always worked perfectly. We also appreciate the fact that they are a British company because we like to support homegrown businesses."

For this space, the Stage Electrics and EM Acoustics teams chose to install a point source distributed loudspeaker system with amplification and processing. This new system comprises seven R8 right, left and centre hangs, twelve EMS-51X surround speakers, and two S-15 subwoofers. Point source boxes were chosen for the John Thaw Studio Theatre to support the use of the space as an immersive sound experience.



# JOHN THAW STUDIO THEATRE

Stage Electrics introduced a motorised wall-mounted projection screen, equipped with a user-friendly touchscreen control system. This modern solution eliminates the need for complex setups and cable clutter, allowing users to deploy the screen with a single button press and connect their laptops in less than a minute.

These upgrades make the space more adaptable for impromptu sessions and free up more room for on-stage teaching. Additionally, the intuitive touchscreen system ensures that the technical team no longer needs to be on hand whenever the equipment is used, as it is straightforward enough for anyone to operate, regardless of their technical expertise.

The result of this upgrade has been transformational for teachers and students alike. There are far fewer trip hazards and cable mess. The space is now more 'usable', has surpassed all client expectations in terms of quality, and has been described as 'an immersive sound experience'.



"Our longstanding partnership with Stage Electrics speaks volumes about their exceptional service. The team is consistently available to assist with any challenges and excels at devising innovative solutions to any issues that arise.

Student experience is always at the top of our list, and improving this was the main goal of this upgrade. Thanks to Stage Electrics and EM Acoustics, we are proud to say that our students now have access to state-of-the-art facilities.

The recent upgrade has significantly improved our operations, making life easier for everyone. Many of our courses heavily depend on sound and visual technology. Now, students enjoy a much higher quality experience, and our teaching and technical support teams can focus on their work without the burden of lengthy setup times or complicated systems."

**Karl Spencer**  
**Senior Technical and Buildings Manager**  
**Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama**



# How Can We Help You?

Stage Electrics provide technical services and products for venues and production companies.

We take care of our clients through the three specialist divisions of Stage Electrics: Projects, Equipment Sales and Venue Services.

## Projects

Our Projects department facilitates a wide range of projects and installations. Our experts will look after all your design, installation, and commissioning needs for new-build and refurbishment projects. We work on installations of all scales, from village halls and schools to multi-million-pound projects like the Shakespeare North Playhouse in Prescott or Soho Place in London. Our Projects team are ready to help with as much or as little as you need us to do.

## Equipment Sales

Stage Electrics supports thousands of venues and professionals across the UK with their production technology and consumable needs. We stock products by over 100 manufacturers in our Bristol warehouse, many of which are available for same-day dispatch. Our online store is quick and simple to use. If you require personal assistance, our Equipment Sales team would be delighted to provide you with all the help and guidance needed to make a well-informed decision.

## Inspection and Testing

The Stage Electrics Venue Services team will help you maintain a fully functional and legally compliant venue and performance space. We are a NICEIC certified contractor; providing tailored packages for electrical and mechanical inspections as required by BS7671, ISITEE, PUWER, and LOLER. Our specialist onsite crew are highly qualified, and DBS checked to enhanced level—the safety and functionality of your venue couldn't be in better hands.

**WE  
MAKE  
PERFORMANCE  
POSSIBLE**





# Let's Talk

If you'd like to learn more about our Projects services, we'd love to hear from you.

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