

The Rose Theater as a single-space concert venue with the loudspeaker arrays lowered

Photo: Serge Andreyev
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ROSE THEATER TOWERS

When the Rose Theater is used in its concert setting the eleven moving towers are positioned around the stage area. The finishes match the rest of the theatre. An audience of 1,500 can watch a performance by occupying the towers. A connection between the levels of the towers which is provided by short aluminium ramps allows audience members to reach their seats. There are also stairs in the towers which are also used for emergency exits. These provide emergency exits for audience members should there be a fire. Above the towers the retractable, folding ceiling panels are deployed in order to provide suitable reflections and to minimise the effect of the fly loft space above. The towers were built by a firm called Scenic Technologies in Windsor, New York. They are a part of the organisation called PRG, Production Resources Group, and they did a really fantastic job. As we have seen, the towers have to be modular; at 36ft (11m) they couldn't simply just be built and assembled in the shop and then brought to the theatre. So they were constructed so as to be able to be set up and tested, and then taken apart into modules which could be put into trucks and taken up in the freight lift and rebuilt on stage.

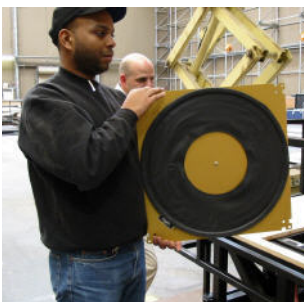
Two of the towers have a built-in ramp with doors that performers can use to come onstage through when the towers are in their setting. The air-castor system used in the towers is actually fairly old technology; the doughnut-shaped rubber membrane is inflated with a large volume of air at low velocity to create a very thin film of air on which the tower rides. Heavy plant industry has used these for years to move generators

and other huge pieces of equipment, and they have also been used in other theatres. The towers work brilliantly and are very easy to move around. You have to overcome the initial mass when you start to push one, but once it starts going, it won't really want to stop! They are very simple to control. They use a valve controller for each of the four air bearings and you power it up by plugging in an air hose from a separate compressor and opening up a valve to start the air flow.

There were co-ordination nightmares in making sure that we had the stage floor laid before the towers were constructed on site. There was no space to build the towers outside the stage house, so the stage floor had to be completed before the towers were assembled. And the retractable ceiling had to be completed before the towers were brought in. There are connection points for the electrical systems in each tower which power the general access lights for audience members, the emergency lighting and also loudspeaker systems for announcements. A umbilical cord that feeds the towers to the stage positions.

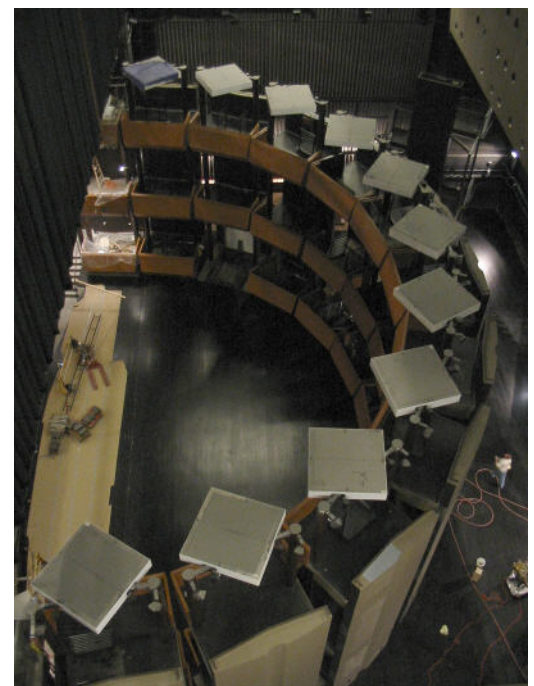
This description of Jazz at Lincoln Center by theatre consultant, Chris Darland, precedes a paper on the redevelopment of the Royal Carré Theatre in Amsterdam by Martien van Goor, and one on Teatro Polifunzionale in Botticino, Italy by Sergio Pascolo.

an expensive approach in does provide both the and flexibility. We have d tower layout for the Orchestra, but there are including accommodation orchestra. The storage air units at the rear does leave much of the stage clear. The towers, of course, can also be used without any seating or they can be turned around and used as an



A finished tower under test in the factory and the high-pressure air-castor used for their movement

Photos and opposite: Chris Darland
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The towers arranged as a concert platform