

NETHERLANDS

Apex Audio gives Oliver! a fresh Twist

The Dutch-language version of Lionel Bart's musical presented a glorious opportunity to première the new Intelli-X²48 digital audio system management device, considers **Marc Maes**

The Apex Audio Intelli-X²48 was presented first at the 2010 PLASA show in Earls Court, and takes a step further along the path of the original Intelli-series controllers launched some 10 years ago.

Guido Olischlager, FOH operator, has been a loyal user of the first Intelli-X series for many years. When he heard the X² version was available he decided to use it in the production of a Dutch-language version of *Oliver!*, in

powered by Crest Audio Pro 8200 series amplifiers, which Olischlager completed with two Synco STS-LOW cabinets and seven Martin W8LM delay speakers serving the balconies.

The sound design for both of the *Oliver!* shows in Ghent and Antwerp was made by long-time FOH engineer and sound designer Marc Luyckx.

The production's audio (main signal and monitor lines) is controlled with a DiGiCo D5 console, using 30 inputs for

The operator reveals he was a very early adopter of the new controller. "I've been using two prototypes with brand new firmware, beta-versions but they did the job perfectly.

"In terms of software I cannot change some of the functionality – yet – but everything can be adjusted on the Intelli-X²48 itself. Since *Oliver!* is a long-term production I've had plenty of time to adjust EQs, delay times and crossover points, and the routing; and



Forty children are on stage during the opening number, *Food, Glorious Food*

once you've determined the parameters, they remain unchanged. But for touring purposes, the [completed] software will facilitate the job." Olischlager plans to use the Intelli-X²48 on the forthcoming Dutch-language version of *Spamalot*.

"We named our product a 'system management processor' and not a 'crossover', for a reason," adds Jeroen Sierjacobs, marketing manager with Apex. "The idea is that you can now

control your sound system from one single device.

"With the ability to convert the digital sound with a maximum sample rate up to 192kHz, we made no compromise on sonic quality. As Olischlager experienced, we designed the user interface in a way that you don't always need the software to program a show." 🐾

www.apex-audio.be
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be



Guido Olischlager, FOH operator, with his DiGiCo D5



Oliver! premiered in Ghent in November with two Intelli-X² machines

order to have it tried and tested on a significant theatre piece.

"*Oliver!*, a production organised by the Musichall group, was premiered in the Ghent Capitole venue in November, and I immediately decided to use two Intelli-X²48 machines," explained Olischlager. "A first Intelli-X²48 replaced the existing BSS Soundweb processors for the Capitole's in-house Renkus-Heinz SR 6 system as they sounded a bit 'dusty' and were no longer reliable. The second X² was used with the FOH for D-A conversion and matrix while we did a sub-mix for the subs, balconies and under-balconies with the Soundweb."

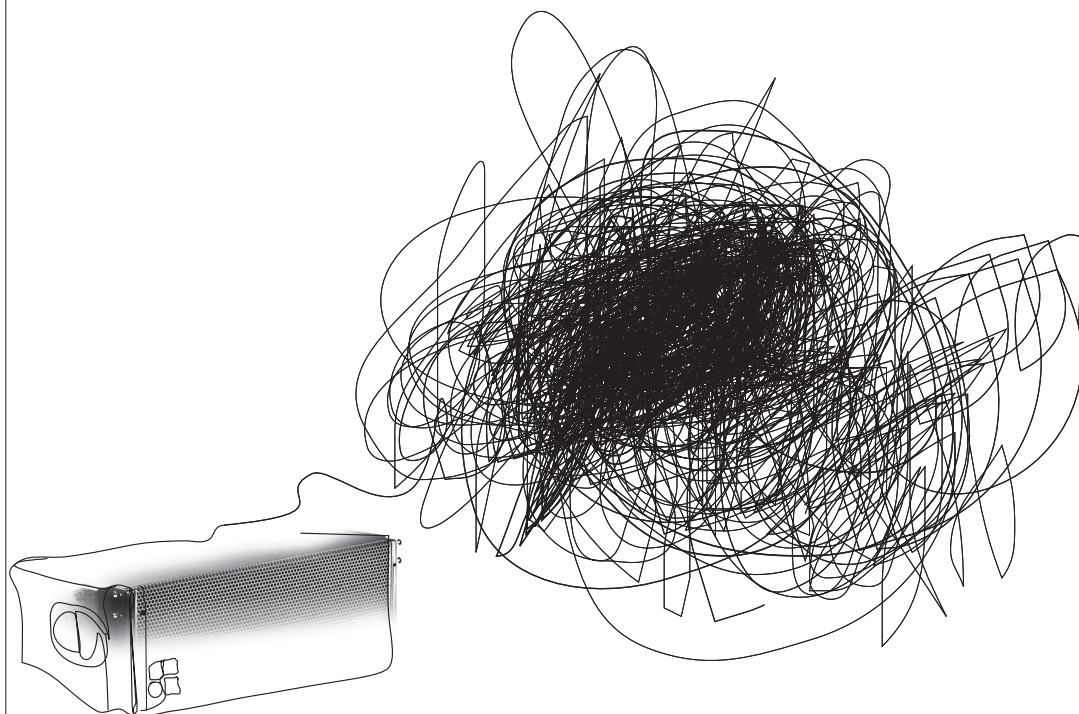
In Antwerp, where *Oliver!* played the 2,000-seater Stadsschouwburg, the production started at Christmas and ran until 20 February. The series was sold out but a return is scheduled for April. At press time, *Oliver!* had welcomed its 150,000th visitor.

Like in Ghent, the production used the in-house installation, a Martin W8LM line array of 2 x 12 enclosures

the orchestra and another 50 for the actors. "Prior to the shows in Ghent and Antwerp I travelled to see the London production. A first challenge was to work with the huge number of sources. In the UK, they used fewer wireless inputs urging the performers to swap belt-packs all the time. We thought this was quite stressful and opted for the full capacity of inputs, which meant less switching. *Oliver!* has 70 actors on stage – the 40 kids who play in the opening number (*Food, Glorious Food*) change over their packs to the principals after their appearance, and that was the only switch we had to do," explains Luyckx, adding that the system employs Shure UHF-R wireless microphone systems and Audio-Technica DP 896 microphones.

The AES outputs from the D5 console (left, right, centre and subs) are routed to the Intelli-X²48, converting to analogue and steering the speakers, delay boxes and a recording output. In Antwerp, Olischlager decided not to use a centre speaker system because of the visibility of the stage for the audience.

Spinning black.



What is behind the two worlds of d&b? Well, probably a crew of skilled colleagues, who for decades have realized democracy for listeners towards a variety of mobile applications and rider friendly performance spaces, and who intend to build on this success with new integration systems for environments that go beyond these. That's it. Honestly.