

GDS BluesSystem illuminates Princeton's Lewis Arts Complex

As a part of its mission to place the arts at the heart of the University experience, Princeton built the Lewis Arts complex. Completed in 2017, the arts complex houses the Lewis Center for the Arts' academic programs in Dance, Theater, Music Theater, and the Princeton Atelier, expands the Department of Music's facilities, and creates an additional gallery for Visual Arts. Each year, the Lewis Center and Department of Music present over 150 performances, exhibitions, readings, screenings, concerts, lectures, and other events.

For those working behind the scenes in the arts complex's Wallace Theater and Hearst Dance Theater, Princeton needed a discreet lighting solution. The Center installed 115 GDS BluesSystem luminaires in the Hearst Dance Theater, and 197 in the Wallace Theater, totaling 312 LEDs.

"Zoning and distance were key factors in selecting the running lights," said Matt Pilsner, the Center's Lighting and Stage Supervisor. "We have 20 zones in the Hearst Dance Theater and 30 in the Wallace Theater. The BluesSystem's zoning capabilities make controlling running lights much easier."

Before the Lewis Arts complex was complete, theatrical performances primarily took place in the campus's Berwind Theatre and another space converted to a black box theatre. These theatres didn't have sophisticated running light systems built into their infrastructure.

"When working in the Berwind Theatre, we had nothing to light papers while we were backstage, so we had to add our own clip lights and rope lights," said Pilsner. "The bulbs in these would often burn out or overheat. With BluesSystem in the new theatre, we save the time and effort we previously spent maintaining temporary running lights."

Although running lights now have a more permanent home in the Wallace and Hearst theatres, it was important for Pilsner to have flexibility in the lighting control. The seats in the Wallace Theater are adjustable, so Pilsner has to light different areas depending on where the seats are located.

Blue lights located under the mezzanine balcony and at floor level help guide visitors walking behind the seats. And people working backstage are kept safe by unobtrusive BluesSystem LEDs illuminating catwalks, back hallways and backstage areas.

"Planning and construction of the Lewis Arts complex has been a ten-year project, and BluesSystem has helped make the venues in the performing spaces as functional as they are beautiful," said Pilsner.

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