

Independence on tour

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of its independence, Algeria commissioned a touring production from Lebanon's Caracalla Dance Theatre. This production called for a PA from Outline as **James Ling** discovers

TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH

anniversary of its independence this year, Algeria commissioned a special grand musical production to tour the country. The show was written, composed and choreographed by Beirut-based Caracalla Dance Theatre (CDT) and performed by a troop of 300 Algerian dancers, singers and actors. It was a co-production between the Algerian Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Mujahidin – everyone who fought for their independence – and a PA from Outline Audio was purchased specifically for the production.

The production would tour four cities over five weeks and come up against a number of technical



The 50th Algerian Independence day celebrations



The Outline setup for the show

challenges for each venue. However, for the entire tour CDT only required one sound system. 'We used the Outline GTO as the main system and the Butterfly as the surround system,' recalls Ivan Caracalla, director at CDT. 'There are a lot of sound systems in the world today if you want to buy them, it is sometimes confusing. But when you want to

narrow it down to some of the best sound systems, then it makes things easier. You filter companies and you know where to go.'

The first challenge for the production was persuading the Ministry of Culture that these speakers would be the best solution. 'It wasn't very difficult to convince them showing them the track-record

of Outline, the different systems that they have, how it can be used in many different ways and where Outline is today in the world,' reveals Mr Caracalla.

'We had many different venues, and this was the tricky part, so you couldn't really design the sound system for one place,' explains the director. 'The idea started in an indoor venue – it was a dome. We did a study for the dome, and then about two and a half weeks into rehearsals there was suddenly the decision to go outdoors. We moved to an outdoor amphitheatre and from there, the next city was indoors, then there was a huge stadium and the last city was a smaller Roman ruins. You had all these different places with multiple different challenges. The great thing about Outline was as a system it was able to accommodate us. Where ever we went, we came up with a solution.'

The GTO was the main system while also providing monitors on stage. As Italian veteran sound engineer and audio technical director of the tour Carlo Gennaro explains, it was a 50m wide stage, and nothing was allowed to be on it. This meant the production had to use GTO side fills for the performers. 'That's why we went with Outline. It gave us an excellent quality of sound, but more importantly it gave us the possibility of diversity in the different places we were,' says Mr Caracalla. 'I never had to

go with other companies and add extra material, and that was the key success of the GTO and Butterfly.'

The director is clearly happy with how the production went, both artistically and technically. 'Technically we had a very good result. Any problems or obstacles we came up against, with the diverse system we were able to find the solution and go ahead. We were actually very happy with the GTO and the products from Outline,' he says. 'It was a prestigious event and you have to give credit to Algeria for the huge production that they have done and they are searching always to improve themselves technically and artistically and this is a very big event for them. We have to respect that event and understand it in order to give a better result.'

Mr Caracalla also believes this has been a good experience for the technical staff as well. 'It was good for the technicians, discovering a new system, learning the GTO and the different possibilities with Outline. The technical department from the Ministry of Culture does many events every year and they were very happy to learn something new,' he explains. 'They have a different audio system which they were happy with, but once they got to know this new Outline, they are now asking for more equipment. They want to develop this equipment that they have and add to it. For example, the Butterfly that we used

as a front fill or surround, now they want to add equipment to it so it can be used at a smaller venue as a main system. I'm sure for Outline it has opened a new door really.'

This is not to say that the tour itself was completely trouble free. 'It's a tour for five weeks, you're bound to have some problems! We had one of the amplifiers burnt due to it being wired to 380V, and Outline replaced that immediately without any problems and without any extra cost because they believed in this relationship,' recalls the director. 'They were also willing to invite the technicians over to learn more. This kind of service is vital for the continuity of the relationship between the supplier and the client.'

For its part, Outline is also very happy with its involvement in the production. 'This was definitely important for Outline to be involved with because of the profile of the event,' says Outline CEO Giorgio Biffi. 'We have been involved since the very early days, I was there and saw the size of it and how many people were involved with it, the passion they have put on that and



Carlo Gennaro, Ivan Caracalla and Giorgio Biffi

the importance for the politicians to make everything successful.'

While the production itself can be considered a success, the biggest factor was perhaps the pride it brought to the nation. 'This was a very important event. Not only Algeria's president Abdelaziz Bouteflika was there, but the whole government was there for the opening,' concludes Mr Caracalla. 'This kind of event unites people. That is the power of the arts and culture, no matter what, it breaks down obstacles and brings people together. You don't want to have the wrong sound system for such an event!'

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