

d&b audiotechnik for Bord Gáis Energy Theatre

Picture: Bord Gáis Energy Theatre

Bord Gáis Energy Theatre (BGET) is, in every respect, synonymous with excellence in live entertainment. A striking presence in Dublin's Docklands, it first opened in 2010. As Ireland's largest fixed-seat theatre, with a capacity of 2,111, it was well served for 15 years by a sound system based around d&b's iconic Q-Series. In 2025, it was time for a renewal – and longevity was once again a key requirement. "With our programme well-established, we knew what we were looking for," explains Technical Manager Liam Fitzgerald. "Having seen many types of touring PA, we knew what set-ups worked well, and – unfortunately – which had let our audience down."

Working closely with sound designer Kevin McGing – a BGET regular, and a long-term user of d&b systems – they developed a detailed brief. In addition to quality, reliability, support and longevity, they also needed a system that was rider-friendly, and fully capable of serving the one-night events which filled the gaps among BGET's busy programme of musicals, opera, and ballet.

Then, because touring productions tend to depend on the house delays and fills – whether or not they bring their own main PA – great attention had to be paid to these loudspeakers. "These elements were a major focus for us," says Fitzgerald, "not just an after-thought." There was also a strong aesthetic concern. With over 360 performances per year, it was essential for the PA to remain in place at all times, but discreetly so – and, when in use, reliable dispersion control was vital. For the 'visible' delays and fills, meanwhile, it was essential that cabinets were as unobtrusive as possible. Fitzgerald turned to some of the very latest innovations in d&b's product line. "In my experience," he says, "d&b means quality, reliability, long service life, long-term back-up and quick turn-around on service. I have great confidence in their product: I don't need to ask questions. I know the kit won't be let out of the factory unless it's right."

The timing of d&b's latest models hitting the market was perfect: the CCL for main

left and right, and the new U-Series for delays and fills. A significant upgrade in specification to the previous Q-Series, the CCL provides consistent dispersion: 120° for the CCL12 and 80° for the CCL8. d&b's acoustic modelling via ArrayCalc ensured optimisation of placements, and – as the system sits permanently behind acoustically transparent cloth panels in the proscenium – d&b also advised on the precise opening needed for the CCL to maintain its cardioid control, allowing the wall openings and cloth covers to be finessed as necessary.

Attention to the rest of the system was similarly detailed. Because of the focus on delays and fills, the brief specified that these should all be from a single loudspeaker series. Despite this coming in the early stages of the run-up to the U-Series launch, d&b were able to supply all necessary measurements and advance information to allow the design to progress with the U-Series (predominantly U3 cabinets, 53 in total, plus two U5s).

Using d&b's compact 40D and 5D installation amplifiers, all delays and fills are powered by just one amp channel per cabinet, giving touring shows great configuration flexibility. Accessibility and ease of use is further increased with a series of default pre-sets, available at the touch of a button via d&b's R1 remote control software. The installation – itself a challenge with the venue having just 10 dark days per year – was carried out by the BGET team, with additional on-site engineering support from the experienced McGing and commissioned by d&b EAS (Education & Application Support) engineers.

“The CCL boxes' output is excellent for their size and weight,” says Fitzgerald, “and they sound very well together with the U-Series. Both treat the HF in a similar way, and both have the dispersion control we required – while the clean look of the U-Series really suits our auditorium too. It was a pretty easy choice in the end.” He adds, “The d&b team were amazing, working hard to make sure we had everything we needed for our very tight install windows. The new system is more powerful, efficient and capable, but also far more controlled, with a lot more primary source reaching more people, giving a much better experience for our audience and tours.” d&b audiotechnik's Stephen Hogg says, “We've always had a close relationship with BGET – an outstanding venue in many ways. We're delighted that they consulted us about new solutions – and trusted us to put our latest innovations into use for them. The result has been wonderful – it's a great validation of both the CCL and the U-Series.”

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