

Align Selects Analog Way's Aquilon C+ for the Core of the Joseph Urban Theater in New York City's Hearst Tower

New York City's Hearst Tower, the global headquarters of media and information giant Hearst, has opened its Joseph Urban Theater where an Analog Way Aquilon C+ fully modular and scalable 4K/8K multi-screen presentation system and videowall processor drives all the displays.

The 165-seat theater is Hearst's event space and auditorium for department town hall meetings and other internal functions as well as public-facing events such as book signings, speakers and celebrity interviews. The new theater is housed in the Norman Foster-designed Hearst Tower, which rises above its landmark base of the International Magazine Building built by William Randolph Hearst in 1928.

New York City-based Align provided AV consulting and design services for the theater, which was carved from existing space, and replaced an existing AV system last updated in 2013. Justin Passey, who relocated to London to serve as Align's Director of Audio Visual, EMEA, designed the theater and completed the project from that city.

AVI-SPL served as the integrator procuring, installing, commissioning, configuring and programming the new AV system and training Hearst staff on its use. The theater features a single large projection screen and confidence monitors plus a green room with its own display.

"Justin and I started discussing this project at Infocomm 2019 when he first saw the Aquilon," recalls Seth Teates, Analog Way's Regional Sales Manager. "Aquilon was the perfect fit for the project he had upcoming at Hearst. Once he had a chance to discuss this with his client, we were able to meet at Hearst later that fall for a complete hands-on demo for the Hearst team. When they saw the capabilities and the ease of use of the Aquilon platform, they moved forward. Unfortunately COVID-19 greatly impacted the installation timeline. Still, the system has now been installed and is a cornerstone of the successful outcome of the overall project."



A previous user of Analog Way equipment, Passey was eager to utilize Analog Way products again. “For the Hearst theater, I needed to handle some signal routing but also wanted to be able to composite and layer images,” he explains. “Following InfoComm Seth showed us what the Aquilon could do in the new theater without replacing the projector and how we could grow with the system.”

“The incredible flexibility of Aquilon is almost mind-blowing,” he notes. “Everything is possible with that box – and that’s not hyperbole. It’s the all-in-one solution we needed for routing, switching and image processing. The console functions as a single piece of hardware with a lot of options for what you can do. The ease of setting up new or editing existing layouts and configuring new transitions is really awesome. We were able to sit with the client and demo the ease with which they can manage and operate the system. The Aquilon’s multiviewer outputs saved us from having to invest in other external hardware, too.”

AVI-SPL Project Engineer Anthony Blandino points out that, “Aquilon allowed for greater system design flexibility” for the theater creating “a seamless switching environment for the client and a way to futureproof the space.” AVI-SPL designed the GUI for the client’s iPads and Crestron control of the Aquilon C+.

“Right now the Aquilon drives all the destinations in the theater and, with 4K60 through and through, it’s a platform that Hearst can build on in the coming years,” reports Teates. In the future, the Aquilon is expected to send a 4K feed to the 4K videowall on street level in the soaring Hearst Tower atrium.

Elliot Lopez, AudioVisual Director, Communication Services, for Hearst couldn’t be happier about the project and how it unfolded. “This was a project that we had been working on for more than three years and was a total labor of love,” he says. “I’m so glad to see it come together.”

“One of the reasons we like to use Analog Way equipment for projects is the excellent support we get from the company and from Seth,” notes AVI-SPL Project Manager Sherman Swaby. He recently completed the Visualization and Immersive Studio at New Jersey’s Kean University, which is also powered by the Aquilon C+.

“Analog Way stepped up to the plate as fabulous tech partners for the theater,” adds Passey. “Seth and the Analog Way team were phenomenal in helping us understand fully what Aquilon can do.”

Teates says, “We really appreciate the trust that Align, Hearst and AVI-SPL placed in Analog Way to help bring their project to life.”

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About Analog Way

Analog Way is a world-leading designer and manufacturer of innovative equipment dedicated to the professional audiovisual industry. The company's portfolio includes a wide range of award-winning multi-screen presentation systems, media servers, event controllers and multi-format converters, designed to deliver uncompromising video presentation experiences to high-end staging and premium system integration. For 30 years, Analog Way has provided advanced processing technologies, which accommodate a large range of applications, from massive video wall installations to large corporate events worldwide. www.analogway.com

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