Johanes Strate of German rockers Revolverhead

Everyone's a Berliner, baby

It's been 25 years since the wall came down, but it was French PA company
Nexo that helped the celebrations along in the German capital

The fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 paved the way for German reunification, which finally came into being on 3 October 1990. Now a public holiday, the city of Berlin throws a hell of a party to celebrate the Day of German Unity. This year, the 25th anniversary of the nation's unification, the official ceremonies were enhanced by a three-day street 'festival of unity', sponsored by Coca Cola, running along the Strasse des 17 Juni (often known as the *Fanmeile*, or 'fan mile'), and featuring national, international and 'schlager' acts, like ELO with Phil Bates, Lena, Jupiter Jones and Revolverheld on the main stage in front of the Brandenburg Gate.

Many of the large-scale events held at this iconic location are handled by organiser Wohlthat Entertainment and sound company auvisign, with technical direction from Steel Visign.

Berlin-based auvisign chose Nexo's STM modular line-array technology for the main stage's PA and extensive delay systems, supplementing them with plentiful numbers of cabinets from other ranges of NEXO such as GEO, Alpha and the PS series. Controlled by Yamaha mixers, the systems were set up over Dante and EtherSound networks to deliver entertainment over 1.5 kilometres to nearly a million visitors.

Nexo's flagship STM system is distinctive in that it allows users to configure different systems by using varying combinations of four loudspeaker modules, typically a main and bass cabinet flown as a set, with a separate down-fill box available if required. This down-fill module can be used as a main cabinet in its own right, with or without the bass module.

Although auvisign has used STM in several different configurations at Brandenburg Gate/*Fanmeile* events, this was the first time that M46 large-format cabinets have been deployed as the main modules.

auvisign's sound designer, Johannes Raack, and specialist STM operator Norbert Bund exploited fully the versatility of Nexo's modular design. "A vital feature of the Nexo system is the proprietary NS-1 modelling

Crowds on the Berlin Fanmeile

> SINCE NEXO CHANGED ITS BUSINESS MODEL IN GERMANY 18 MONTHS AGO, IT HAS BUILT A NETWORK OF COOPERATIVE USERS IN THE RENTAL MARKET

Nexo hangs either side of the main stage

software," says Bund. "At pre-planning stage, we were asked to fly the main PA next to LED panels, but we used the NS-1 projections to demonstrate the strong reflections that would result from such an unfavourable acoustic position.

"A new PA tower was planned, but this one could only accommodate half the load of the previous one! By leaving aside the separate B112 bass cabinets that would customarily fly with the M46 main cabs, and increasing the number of ground-stacked S118 subs, we were able to achieve the PA weight without impairing the sonic results."
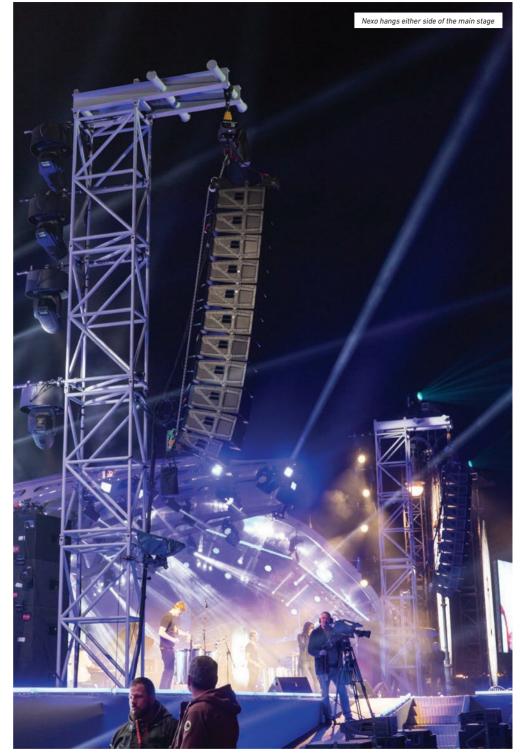
For the main stage, left and right PA, each deployed 10 STM M46 main modules with one M28 downfill below. Additional M28s were used for nearfill, and 32 STM S118 sub-bass cabs across the front of the stage provided the required bass response. Yamaha CL5 mixers were used for both FOH and monitor control, under supervision by Philip Grygier and Lars Krumpelt, respectively.

Delay towers running the 1.5km length of the *Fanmeile* comprised a variety of Nexo systems: primarily STM M46 cabinets for the positions at the top of the avenue, with GEO D10, S12, S8 and Alpha used further down.

Sitting at front of house, network operator Peter Sobisiak had the job of coordinating four different networks – Dante for the mainstage PA, EtherSound for all delay lines, EtherSound for the inputs to FOH and Dante for the inputs to monitors – consolidating them in a common Gigabit network, which used fibreglass connections (to meet the requirement for redundant ducting) to cover distances of up to 400m from device to device. Total cable runs stretched over 2.2km.

auvisign has forged a strong working relationship with other Nexo STM rental houses in Germany, in particular acoustic NETWORK. Since Nexo changed its business model in Germany 18 months ago, ending a long-term distribution arrangement in favour of direct sales, a network of cooperative users has been built in the rental market.

Nexo's sales manager for Germany, Reinhard Steger, explains: "The STM modular design is particularly well-suited to inventory sharing and sub-hire among rental companies. Standardised rack design for amplification and control is an essential part

of this. We are seeing a high degree of collaboration between STM owners like satis&fy, Sound Linear and acoustic NETWORK, Limelight, In-Phase and Show'em, which enables them to come together and service large-scale events. The Awakening concert this summer, a satis&fy project, required more than 170 STM cabinets to fill the Grundig Stadion in Nuremberg."

Drawing on Nexo's newly created engineering support division, Steger has established a national programme of training and public seminars, spreading

the principles of modular line array, as well as the general Nexo ideology for popular mid-market systems like the GEO and PS series.

"We've also focussed heavily on service," says Steger. "By setting up spare-parts centres around the country, we've been able to decentralise our technical support, which has significantly improved speed and flexibility when it comes to repairs." ∎

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