

PRESS RELEASE

2014 AWARD FOR PRACTICAL EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN OF BUILDINGS FOR PERFORMANCE

STC announces winners of the 2014 Award for Practical Excellence in Design with three very different buildings for the performing arts receiving accolades.

The winner of the 2014 Award is

STAVANGER KONSERTHUS, Stavanger, Norway.

Two Runner-up prizes were given:

The MAC , Belfast, UK

THEATER SPEELHUIS, Helmond, Netherlands

Stavanger Konserthus has two concert halls, one seating 1500 for acoustic music and one seating 850 (1900 standing) for amplified music. Situated beside the glorious fiord in near the quay where cruise ships dock this magnificent building was judged to have achieved a practical solution to the problems of providing first rate music auditoria with practical working spaces and a perfect environment for the artists (including the regional symphony orchestra based in the hall).

Dara O’Briain (comedian and Trustee of the Theatres Trust) in his address to the conference accorded the new Konserthus his own award for simply the best place in which he had worked.

The MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre) in Belfast is part of a new development in the heart of the city. This multi faceted arts centre is truly serving the needs of its community giving practical working environments for artists and public areas centred in a stunning triangular atrium enhanced by the simplest yet most effective work of art.

Theater Speelhuis in Helmond in the southern part of Holland had a small theatre which burnt down and an urgent replacement was required. The resulting temporary insertion of a 405 seat theatre within an existing Romanesque church (described as a “ship in a bottle”) achieves the feat of providing a good theatre whilst respecting the character and atmosphere of the church. So successful has the result proved to be that there is talk of it being the permanent theatre provision for the town.

The STC Quadrennial Award places emphasis on ‘practical excellence’. The complex and difficult task of designing buildings for performance requires sensitivity to the needs of the performer and the audience, and of those technicians who bring the performance to the stage. These buildings combine a hotel like space in the foyers; a place in which to feel warm secure and involved in the performance in the auditorium with a stage which intimately links the performer to that audience. Backstage there are factory areas for scenery movement and for the huge task of bringing in scenery, costumes, properties, wigs, shoes and so forth and a further ‘hotel’ for the artists. Buildings entered for the Award must have been opened in the last 4 years and have had a minimum of 6 months full operational experience to validate the practicality of the building.

The judging panel. An independent panel of judges is assembled for each quadrennial award. This year they were Karin Gartzke (Development Director of Ambassadors Theatre Group), Jason Barnes (Production and Operations Director of Bristol Old Vic) under the chairmanship of Ken Bennett-Hunter (freelance journalist, theatre producer and consultant).

The Judges visited 9 buildings in 5 countries to select the winners from 15 shortlisted buildings.

ENDS

For more information

See pictures attached

Contacts:

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Architects: RATIO Arkitekter, Norway

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The MAC, Belfast

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Architects: Hackett, Hall McKnight

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Theater Speelhuis, Helmond

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