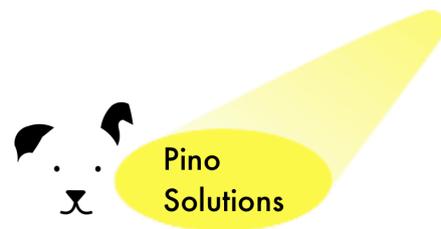
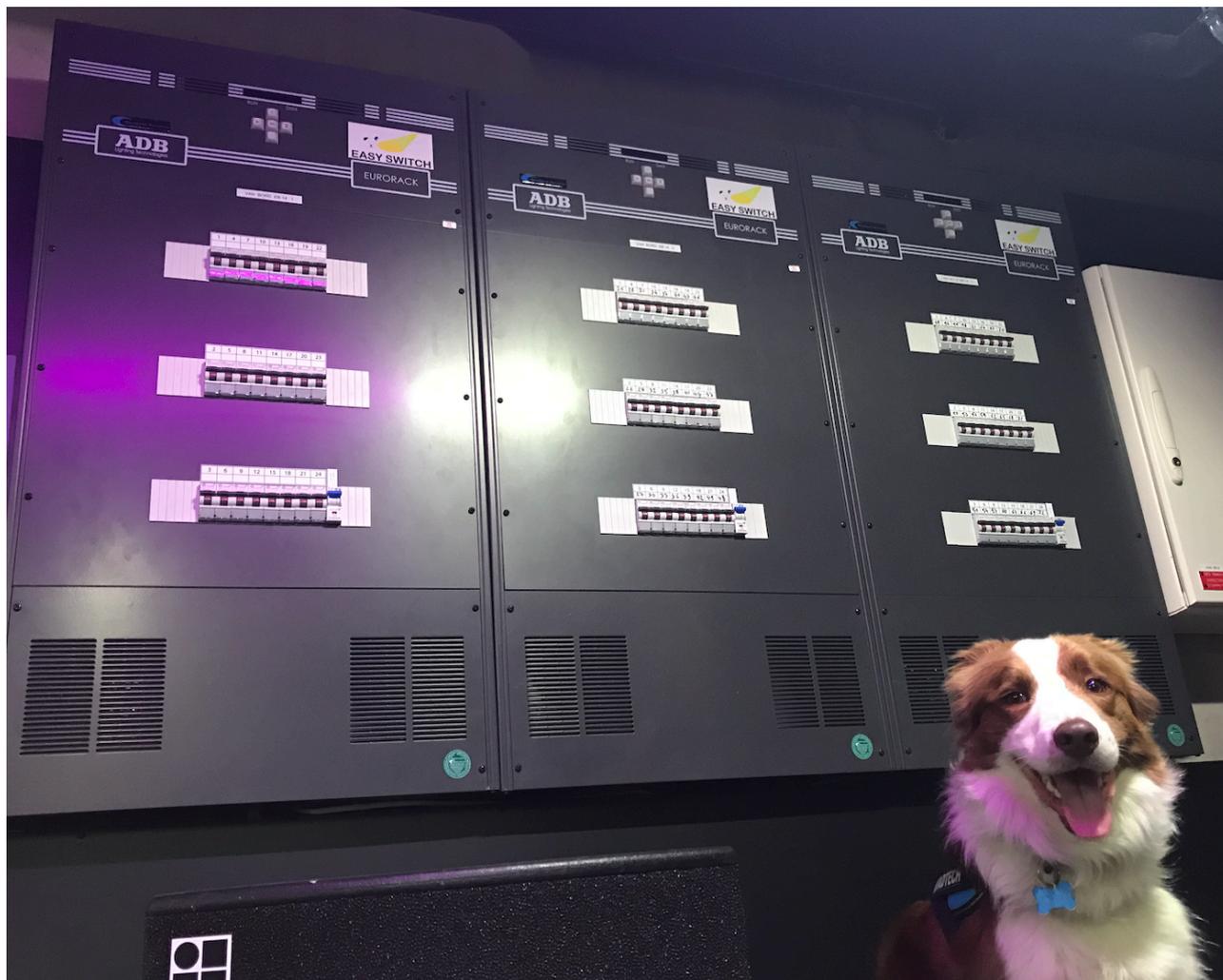

Focus on File

Project : CC MUZE - Heusden Zolder



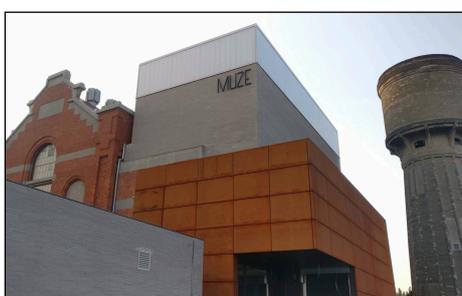
Installation: March 2020



Introduction

As the lighting market shifts away from incandescent and discharge bulbs end users are left with a difficult dilemma: do we buy new fixtures or do we adapt our dimmer infrastructure so we can use both if we gradually make the transition to LED?

Every venue will have its own approach to this question, factoring in their unique situation. Especially for venues that have recently been totally refurbished, newly built or have invested in new equipment. There is not always room, budget wise, to rethink technical needs in short time spans. But, however, it is a reality that needs to be faced sooner or later.



CC MUZE, a new building on an industrial site

In September 2019 the cultural centre MUZE in Heusden-Zolder relocated to a new building on the former mining site of Zolder. The new centre meets today's needs and creates new opportunities through its versatile indoor and outdoor spaces. Many productions were sometimes too large, in terms of technology, to accommodate for the old hall dating from the 1970's with facilities that had passed their prime. Showpiece is the grand theatre with 400 seats. There is also a multipurpose Black Hall with an extendable grandstand that can seat 120 people. Both are housed in the former machine collection of the mine building. The ballroom and the theatre tower are in a new building right next to the old one. Upgrading an old industrial site offers architects and technical designers many opportunities and challenges. The building was completely gutted and could so be redesigned and furnished according to the latest industry standards.

So why was there a need for the Pino Solutions Easy Switch to be installed in a newly built cultural centre with a brand-new dimmer installation?



A Minor Start

Where until recently conventional dimmers were sufficient to power all halogen fixtures, the availability of real fixed power is a necessity for powering devices that cannot be dimmed such as moving lights, LED fixtures, beamers, active speakers, etc.

It is an absolute requirement to have dimmers equipped with a physical relay in order to be able to switch between real fixed power or to dim the same channel when connecting conventional lighting.

The so-called 'dim-switch' function present on most dimmers isn't actually real fixed power (see insert) because there is still aDe zogenaamde 'dim-switch' functie die aanwezig is bij de meeste dimmers is geen échte vaste spanning (zie inzet) because they are still phase angled. When superficially reading the instructions of the constructor one could easily fall into this trap. But even with a limited technical understanding it is easy to fathom that a 'dim-switch', like in this case, will not give the desired result.

Most 'Dim Switch' functions are not what they appear to be...

The 'Dim Switch function' on dimmers are phase angle and therefore only suitable for *resistive* loads. It isn't real 230 Volts needed for *inductive* or *capacitive* loads e.g. moving lights, active speakers, smoke machines, dmx/ arnet devices etc.

Using this function for this type of equipment can lead to serious damage to equipment.



House technician Benny Engelen explains: *"The dimmers that were installed proved to be unsuitable for switching safely between dimmable power and real, safe fixed power, although this was clearly indicated in advance as our entire work arsenal of light fixtures contains little conventional and we will gradually replace our old workhorses in the future."*

Staff at CC MUZE were surprised when they first became acquainted with their new infrastructure.: *"It was quite clear from the start that a wrong type of dimmer had initially been recommended. With regard to a theatre in motion and the lighting fixtures we already had, these dimmers were not suited for daily use as we had in mind. Our auditorium bridge, for example, is exclusively equipped with LED spotlights. Fortunately we noticed this before the theatre was put into use and our equipment was luckily not damaged by this."*

So new auditoria, but with 'unsuitable' dimmers. Inconvenient, time-consuming and frustrating for the technicians.

Benny: *"This should have been a new beginning for us with a venue Zolder can rightly be proud of, but we had to get extra cabling from everywhere to light everything."*



From the bridge, over fly beams, right up to the roof. It wasn't just a case of how late we would finish the prep, we had to stop each time because the performance was about to start. Despite the fact that we, as a technical team, were well atuned to each other, this required a great deal of adjustment and it was clear to all that this could not be a permanent solution. Especially in view of the high number of productions taking place in the theatre in a very short time span."

Putting in new dimmers was of course out of the question: "It goes without saying that installing other dimmers in a building that is less than a year old was absolutly not an option. Of course, we actively sought solutions ourselves, because neither the supplier, installer or consultant came up with a suitable and feasible outcome."

Pino Solutions Easy Switch to the rescue

Easy Switch: Exactly what was needed

So Benny went to work with the internet search engine and ended up on the Pino Solutions website: "I couldn't believe my eyes. Someone had actually already thought about our problem. The Easy Switch was exactly what we needed!"

Benny contacted Roadtech Services to obtain more information about the Easy Switch and to find out if the dimmers in CC MUZE were suitable for upgrading with the Easy Switch system.

"We received and enthusiastic message from Victor. A few years ago we also had some LED pars repaid by Roadtech Services, so the link with their reliable services was quickly there."

The CC Muze staff studied the information on the Pino Solutions website, familiarized themselves with exactly how a dimmer works and what phase angle really is. "The FAQ section on the website came in handy. It was clear and answered all our secondary questions we had." So the entire MUZE-team was well prepared when they attended the CUE trade fair in mid-January 2020 at Rotterdam.

Pino Solutions was also present with a stand at this biennial trade fair for event, installation and entertainment technology. The team were able to get to know all the options and possible configurations of the Easy Switch system in detail.



The physical interaction with the system was a big plus in deciding whether it would be suitable for CC MUZE: *“We had already heard of the positive experiences our colleagues in CC Bolwerk in Vilvoorde had had with the Easy Switch during the current season. What’s more, the system proved to be very user-friendly. This made it a decisive factor for us that this would be an ideal solution for our venue.”*

Easy Switch: Maintaining a sound budget

It is, of course, important -as in any publicly funded institution- to use the resources allocated as intelligently and efficiently as possible.

“Convincing our management of the need to have an efficiently functioning dimmer infrastructure was not difficult. There were sympathetic to the difficult conditions we faced. It wasn’t just the best solution for the CC budget-wise, this small investment would really make a world of difference for us. The time saved and the peace of mind we have now after the installation is priceless.”

In addition, the Easy Switch is also much cheaper and more flexible than standard options currently available on the AV market. As the Easy Switch is an innovative upgrade for existing equipment, it can also be referred to as maintenance and so be budgeted under a different cost item.

Standard maintenance of the dimmers is also included in the Easy Switch installation. This means an additional saving on operating costs in the year of purchase.

Because the Pino Solutions Easy Switch system is installed exclusively by Roadtech Services -which developed the Easy Switch in collaboration with JG Electronics- the user is always assured of a correctly installed and up-to-date system.

Easy Switch: distance not a problem

The dimmers in CC MUZE are spread throughout the building. Both in the theatre and in the Black Hall (where a lot of work is done with LEDs) the existing dimmers had to be upgraded using the Easy Switch.

The theatre has 168 dimmer channels. 7 ADB Eurorack 60 cabinets, each with 24 x 3 kW dimmer circuits are spread out across the house: two are on stage left and right on floor level, one cabinet is on the footbridge on the first floor and 4 on the gangway on stage right.





The central Easy Switch controller is on the stage on stage right. It has been mounted in an existing 19" rack, in the main frame for lighting and sound. The controller module is only 2HE high and so take up little space; space that is sometimes vary scarce behind the scenes.

On the stage a 7" touch screen control was chosen. From here, 1 technician can switch the 168 dimmer channels of the theatre between dimmable voltage and *real* fixed 230V. The controller is set in a sloped table top housing. This has the extra advantage that the control can be used on a table as well as against the wall with the VESA mount on the back. In addition, the detachable control is equipped with 5 meters of control cable so the technician can also walk onto the stage with the controller in hand.



The Easy Switch is as versatile as the more intimate Black Room itself. A 7" touch screen controller is also in use here. It sits in a black housing and is discretely mounted on a VESA wall mount behind curtains. The controller is datachable and makes it easier to use if you want to operate it further down. The four ADB Eurorack 60 cabinets that are connected to the Easy Switch system are located in a neighbouring room.

The distance between the seven dimmer cabinets in the large auditorium and the Easy Switch controller is also no problem at all. *"In some places the distance is even greater than 150 meters."* says Victor Anderssen, senior maintenance engineer at Roadtech Services. *"We were able to use the existing CAT6-A cabling to get our bi-directional control to the individual dimmer cabinets."*

A customised Pino Solutions system is devised for each location. Our development is continuous. *"Because we develep, design, execute and assemble everything ourselves, we can offer a tailor-made solution for every possible configuration. Lack of space? Long distances? Wireless? Lout-proof? Anything is possible."*



Easy Switch: More than just a simple upgrade

Easy Switch: a stand-alone system

Because the Easy Switch is fully autonomous and stores the settings -even when the dimmers have been switched off at night- the CC MUZE team can start as soon as they reach the stage first thing. When a performance had finished and the stage is ready to receive another production, all settings can be reset to the default setting with one simple touch on the screen.

Benny: *“It wasn’t just the user-friendliness of the system in terms of operation that initially charmed us. Even the first time the system was used , more advantages of it came to the fore. For example, we do not need a DMX signal to*

control our dimmers during testing. The Easy Switch is a fully stand-alone system and we were very pleased with that. No more hassle with having to connect a lighting desk before we can get to work. Bang, another time saver.”



Easy Switch: saves time

“In the old venue, we as a team, were able to improve our own ‘record’ in terms of load-in and load-out time. We look forward to seeing what this will give us in combinatino with the Easy Switch in this new building. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to fully enjoy all the benefits that the system offers us. But I can already say with certainty that it will be like night and day.”

Of course, the compulsory lockdown also played a role: *“Because the CC had to remain closed due to the corona virus, we also had some breathing space to think about other things in the theatre; among other things, to remedy all the teething problems quickly and without extra costs and time loss. We were able to detect faults very easily in our multi’s by using the Easy Switch system.”*

Notwithstanding the fact that the installation of an Easy Switch system only takes a few days, the planning of the install could be rescheduled.

“Roadtech Services was very flexible in adapting their planning. There was always timely communication when a technician would come to work on the install, provided all social distancing and hygiene measures were observed. The closure even made it possible to complete the installation in both rooms earlier than originally planned.”



Easy Switch: sustainable

The Easy Switch also has an additional advantage for the future: if CC MUZE makes the complete switch to LED, the dimming infrastructure is already equipped for because of Easy Switch. So Pino Solutions was not only a solution for the short term, but also for the longer term. So there is no need for any new plan (or investment). After all, the auditorium has new, properly functioning ADB dimmers that will remain in operation for many years to come thanks to the Easy Switch upgrade. As a result, the waste heap does not increase and it is truly a sustainable solution.

This also applies to other venues where older ADB dimmer cabinets still work perfectly and, often after maintenance following an Easy Switch upgrade, can be used for many years to come.



It is certain the Easy Switch can count on wide interest. Next to CC MUZE is CVO De Verdieping, which has a training course in Stage Technology. The students have already seen the Easy Switch and were very enthusiastic about it. They will soon have practical classes in the theatre and will therefore be able to experience all the advantages of the Easy Switch system to the full.

Easy Switch: complete service included

Benny continues: *“Victor also thought about other problems we had in the venue, which were completely unrelated to the Easy Switch install. For example, he made some suggestions for improving the suspension of our multi’s, solving DMX problems, detecting faults in our structural cabling and even the suspension of our legs without tab tracks.”*

“The icing on the cake was also seeing our own CC MUZE logo in the touch screen of the Easy Switch controller. That completed the picture.”



But the Easy Switch is so much more than just a simple dimmer upgrade! *“If equipment is regularly maintained, there are no surprises during a show. After all, you want your equipment to be fully operational and reliable at all times”* says Victor from Roadtech Services. *“We don’t just install the Easy Switch. We also check the contacts, wiring, connections and soldering on each board. We even check whether the dimmers have received the latest updates since they were installed and carry them out if necessary. All this is part of the standard maintenance service we offer.”*

Finally, the MUZE team also met Pino, the Border Collie of Roadtech Services who was the inspiration for ... Pino Solutions.

“It was very endearing to also welcome Pino to Zolder. I also have a Border from the same shelter where Pino was adopted. It is a nice gesture to know that for every Pino Solutions Easy Switch installation a donation goes to the Animal Shelter in Sint-Truiden”.

A word of advice from the technicians at CC MUZE

“We are very happy with this solution because it saves a lot of time and is super user-friendly. I am sure when our CC is up and running again after the corona period there will be a lot of interest from travelling technicians and colleagues. They will certainly want to see it and try it out. All interested parties are welcome to see the system ‘in action’ and experience it first hand.

The collaboration with Roadtech Services was also super. They had a very flexible planning and worked very meticulously and after each visit everything was always neatly tidied up.

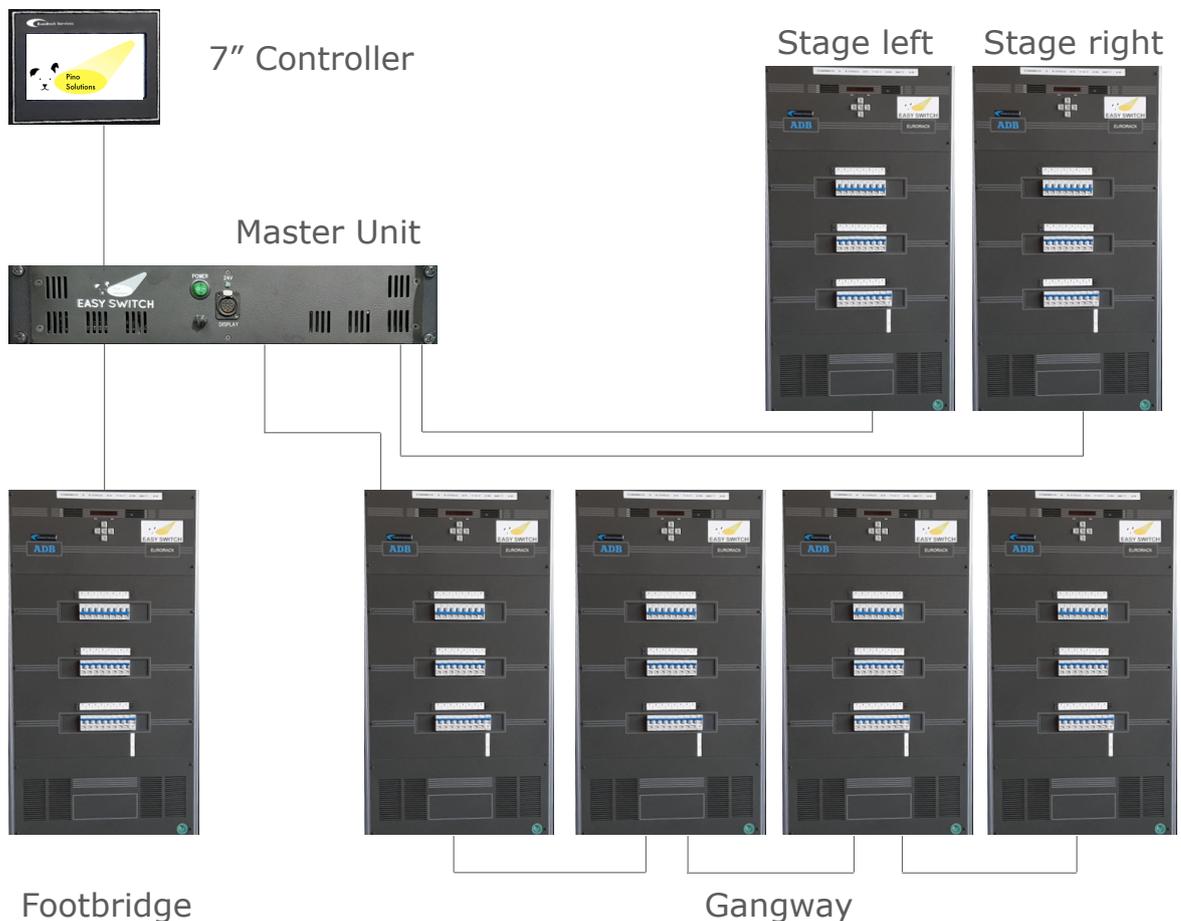
I would recommend everyone to think about their dimmers if they have not yet been fitted with real relays. We are sure that everything is hooked up safely. Nor can you imagine how much faster everyone finishes setting up thanks to the Pino Solutions Easy Switch.”



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Location	CC MUZE	Heusden-Zolder, Belgium (2019)
ADB configuration	Theatre 7 x Eurorack 60	168 channels
	Black Hall 4 x Eurorack 60	96 channels
EASY SWITCH CONFIGURATION		
Black Hall	1 x PS 192001B/7"	7" Master Controller Wall mount
	4 x PS 192001/24	Easy Switch Upgrade Kit
Theatre	1 x PS 192001B/7"	7" Master Controller Wall mount
	6 x PS 192001/24	Easy Switch Upgrade Kit
	4 x PS 192002/24	Easy Switch Upgrade Kit
	1 x PS 192001/T10	Terminal

CONFIGURATION THEATRE



CONFIGURATIE BLACK HALL



7" Controller hall



4 x ADB Eurorack 60
Technical Room



The options presented above as installed in CC MUZE are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to possible configurations and options. Custom and site-specific solutions are of course also available.

Easy Switch is also available for portable dimmers (touring or mobile racks). Other dimmer brands are also suitable to accommodate the Easy Switch system.

www.pinosolutions.be

Feel free to contact the Pino Solutions team for more information or make an appointment and try out the Pino Solutions Easy Switch system in Roadtech Services' workshop.

Roadtech Services
Oude Mechelsebaan 150
3200 Aarschot
Belgium
+32 16 90 40 66
support@roadtechservices.com

For each purchase of an Easy Switch system a donation is made to the animal shelter of Sint-Truiden (B) to help dogs like Pino find their forever home.

