


 EDINBURGH
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL

THE HARMONIUM PROJECT

Case Study

Edinburgh International Festival

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Background

The Edinburgh International Festival transforms one of the world's most beautiful cities, presenting three exhilarating weeks of the finest creators and performers from the worlds of the arts for everyone to enjoy.

In August, Edinburgh's iconic Usher Hall theatre was the venue for the Festival's opening event, The Harmonium Project and the scene for Turner Access to provide an events access package.

Using the Turner OCTO® Scaffolding System, Turner Access provided five structures for viewing, control, projection and sound that allowed animations to be projected onto the walls of the Usher Hall for a spectacular visual performance that was accompanied by a recording of John Adams' choral work, Harmonium, made by the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

The animated projections were made by 59 Productions who combined technology and art to make a brand new work that celebrated the science of singing. Scientific data from performers in the Edinburgh Festival Chorus informed the visual content of this spectacle. 59 Productions worked with experts from the Centre for Design Informatics at the University of Edinburgh to extract data from eye-tracking software, EEG machines which measured brain activity and accelerometers which captured body movement to gauge their physical and mental responses during the act of singing.

Challenges

The project itself presented several challenges for the Turner Access Contracts and Design Divisions that were overcome by using the Turner OCTO® Scaffolding System. It was of the utmost importance that the scaffolding structures be aesthetically pleasing so they did not detract from the visual impact of the performance.

It was also crucial that the structures offered complete peace of mind to the principal contractor with regards to safety and security due to the very close proximity of the audience and general public.

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Challenges

The sound and lighting structures had to be completely rigid to prevent any movement whatsoever and the integral strength of the structures had to be of such quality that they minimized any unwanted movements that could again affect the quality of the performance.

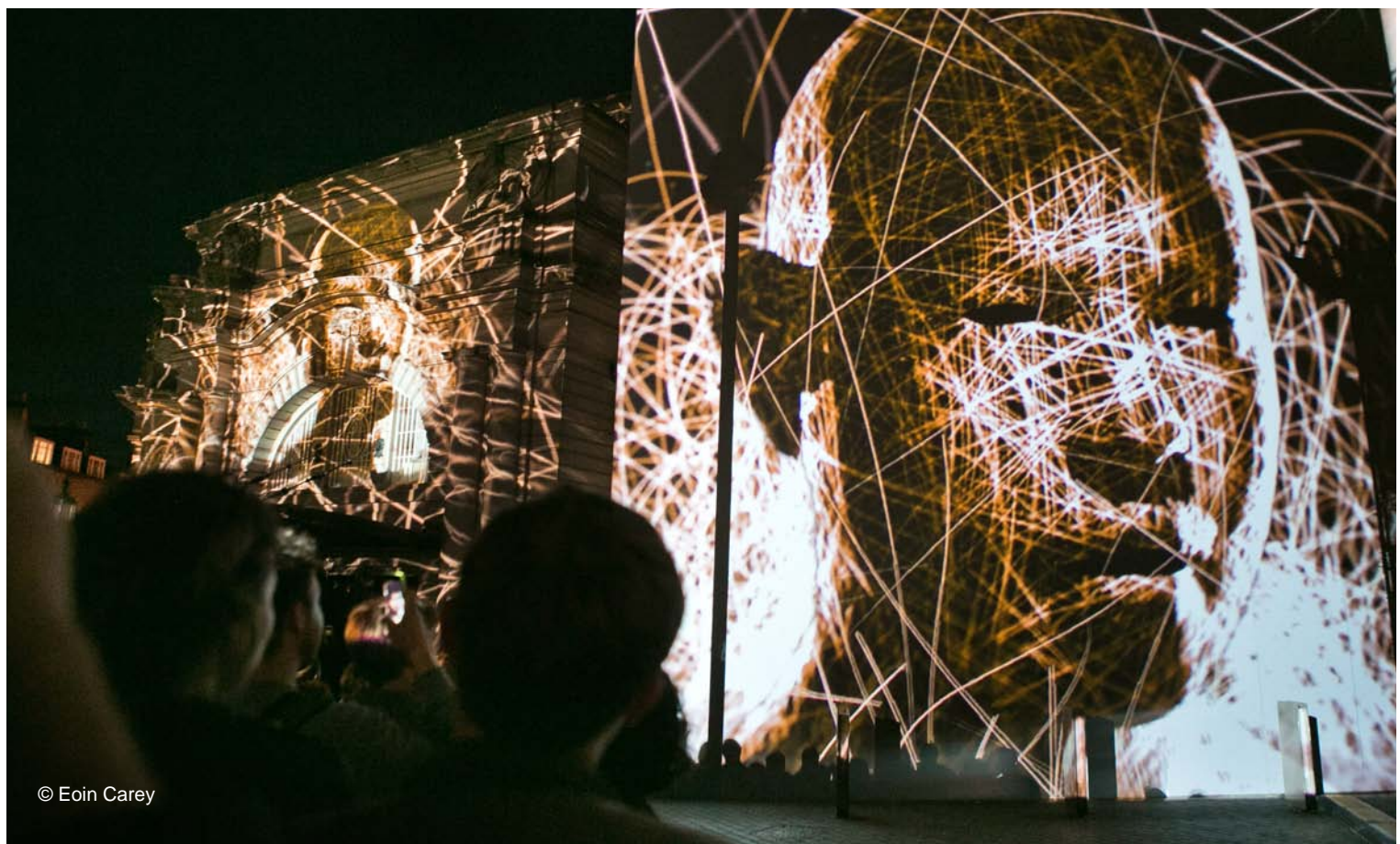
With the months of preparation from the sound and creative engineers, the directors and event planners, it was crucial that the structures be built quickly and to the exact time specification, in line with the programme timetable.

Solutions

The flush top standards and modular design of the Turner OCTO® Scaffolding System meant that each structure was extremely neat in appearance, with no protruding elements whatsoever.

The flush top of the Turner OCTO® joint meant visual safety checks were quick and easy when the pre-handover inspection of the scaffolds were carried out, ensuring complete peace of mind for the client.

Trip hazards were eliminated with flush decking throughout the viewing platform structure which was crucial with members of the public using the scaffold to view the performance on the night.



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Solutions

The OCTO® joint is also designed to be vibration resistant which meant the four sound and lighting structures were completely rigid. Concrete ballast blocks were added to the structures to further ensure their stability.

Maximising productivity through use of fewer components, the contract utilised 2.5m bay lengths, which reduced the volume of equipment on site. This was particularly important for this project as it meant less time unloading and physically moving scaffolding in such a densely populated area. Turner OCTO® components are lighter and easier to handle also which allowed the Turner Access scaffolding operatives to build all five structures within the two days allocated.

The Outcome

Covered by media outlets across the world, The Harmonium Project was a befitting opening to the 2015 Edinburgh International Festival, a much revered celebration of international culture and arts.

An audience of almost 20,000 people gathered on Edinburgh's Festival Square to view the spectacular transformation of the Usher Hall theatre and Turner Access was proud to play a part in bringing the project to fruition.

The project was completely unique in its visual and musical performance and in the scope of its creativity and imagination.

The enjoyment of the audience and the satisfaction of the client represented another job well done for Turner Access.



John Robb, Head of Technical at Edinburgh International Festival

"It is always a pleasure to work with Turner Access. Their professionalism and attention to detail is second to none. The finished structures were exactly what were desired."

