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**Wharfedale star on *Alma Mahler* tour**

**USA** - Wharfedale loudspeakers are featuring in Andreas Buechele's successful sound design for the touring theatre show, *Alma Mahler*. First performed in 1996 at the Vienna Festival Week (and made into a film in 1999), the cult film - about the wife of the celebrated composer, known for her many high-profile relationships - moved to Venice/Italy in 2002 and to Lisbon/Portugal in 2003.



After three months in Portugal, the production now arrives in Los Angeles, and will perform at the famous Los Angeles Theatre between 30 September and 5 December. ATEC Audio Technology, Wharfedale's Austrian distributors, originally equipped the show with 14 x EVP12P (powered 200W trapezoidal enclosures, with 12" woofer and 44mm compression driver) which worked so well that Andreas Buechele decided to take them around the world with him.

However, the sound designer's first task on taking over responsibility for *Alma* in 2002 had been to develop a sound concept based on Mahler symphonies. This enabled his production company sounddesign.info to decide what system to use, how to adapt the selected system to the specific needs of each location and to design the sound effects used in various scenes like war, train stations, a journey to Palestine and so on. "I paid special attention to the emotional components of the sound design," he says.

Looking for a highly portable system that represented best value for natural sound, he had to decide on the best rental source. "Cost estimates from various firms seemed mostly overpriced," he recalls. "I tested a lot of systems, and ATEC Austria lent me a Wharfedale EVP 12P system, which was tested against a classic powered system. I was astonished ... so much sound at this price! I realized that for the cost of a two month rental I could buy the whole loudspeaker equipment!"

And so he selected a mixture of six EVP12's for speech and the classical Mahler Symphonies; four EVP12M's for background music and monitoring and four EVP15P's - especially for the 'war' sound effects. "The boxes are portable and compact, can be carried by one person and they have no 'plastic' sound," praises Andreas. "And with the HF and LF potentiometer the sound can be trimmed easily to fit the special application." Even with the very unconventional equalization, he says, the amplifier works very well - "and the cost/performance ratio is excellent." The theatrical spectacle *Alma*, is actually a journey through Alma Mahler's life. There is no central stage ... the whole house becomes the stage and the actors are playing within this, the garden and street. In every room there is a self-powered Wharfedale speaker for the classical music, sometimes used as background music, sometimes reproducing a full symphony orchestra, and sometimes very loud sound effects. A

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central point of the show is the funeral scene: The whole house trembles while playing Mahler's funeral symphony.

Andreas Buechele has worked for some 15 years with proprietary processor-controlled loudspeaker systems and has 13 years experience as sound engineer with design for musicals and as head of the sound department of the Burgtheater in Vienna. For the last two years he has operated as an independent sound designer and engineer - and during that time familiarized himself with the Wharfedale powered products before making the decision to buy. He ran the Wharfedale tops with EVP-15PSB subwoofer extensions in several concerts in Vienna and the EVP12M monitoring system for the band Childer in the old Falco rehearsal room in Vienna.

He says that even hard rock concerts in clubs - with Gothic or Metal bands - represented few problems for the EVP's. "This speaker system is very portable and universal," Andreas continues. "It's the Swiss army knife of speakers for me - especially for short range applications."

When the production finishes in Los Angeles it crosses the East Coast and will reach New York in summer 2005.

(Sarah Rushton-Read)



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