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PRESS RELEASE

**WSDG acoustic treatment ensures zero sound leakage from impressive new venue for Liestal, Switzerland**

*From panel discussions and gala dinners to live events, EBL Elefantehuus has been acoustically transformed to the highest standards by WSDG and partners*

**Liestal, Switzerland, November, 2024 – The EBL Elefantehuus (Elephant House) is a one-of-a-kind, 300-capacity venue, hosting extraordinary events, from jazz performances to comedy evenings. It was originally designed to house two huge, grey, elephant-shaped generators in the early 1900s, from which the building inherited its name. By the mid 1930s, the diesel-generators were usurped, and the building became an under-utilised storage space. It remained over-looked and under-appreciated until owners EBL (Genossenschaft Elektra Baselland, the main local electricity provider) decided that the storage space should be included in scheduled upgrades, happening across the entire EBL campus. In 2021, after initial discussions with the operator of the venue, Eric Rütsche of Kulturhotel Guggenheim, and Architect Pascal Epple of Otto Partner Architekten, WSDG were entrusted with the acoustic treatment of all internal spaces. The primary objective was to ensure zero audio disturbance for the hospital, less than 20m away. Through proper engineering and the application of advanced techniques, they succeeded in creating a multi-purpose venue that will be a valuable asset not only for EBL but also for the broader Liestal community.**

EBL Managing Director, Tobias Andrist oversaw the project, right up to the opening night celebrations, part of the company’s 125th anniversary events.

"The space was just not being used optimally before," says Andrist. “The location will now be available to the public and can be rented. It offers an atmospheric setting for events organised by creative artists, clubs and companies."

After years of neglect, the space was in need of a complete redesign, but strict values were in place for the renovations. The primary concerns were firstly noise disturbance and secondly a clear benefit to the local community. In addition, the outside of the building is subject to historical protections and could not be altered.

The WSDG team designed the acoustic treatment, ensuring that the new extension was completed to the highest acoustic standards and fulfilled its obligation to be extremely acoustically controlled. The main venue space incorporates smart design features to optimize acoustics, effectively eliminating low-frequency noise transfer throughout the building and beyond.

The former storage room has transformed into an epicentre for corporate activities and events for EBL and other businesses. It is also capable of hosting performances and events for the local community. On the West side of the building, the new extension includes new, fully functioning dressing rooms and provides access to all levels, where previously there were no internal stairs.

Dirk Noy, Partner, Director of Applied Science and Engineering at WSDG, and his team studied the existing acoustics of the main auditorium to discover any issues. Originally the central hall was highly reflective with sharp corners. By adding wall and ceiling treatments to these surfaces, WSDG was able to vastly reduce sound reflections, improving intelligibility for the space. A Helmholtz resonator was utilised in the ceiling to offer maximum low-frequency sound absorption.

“We began studying the acoustics of the space,” Noy explains “We fitted the walls with white single-layer magnesite, bonded wool-wood acoustic panels. These provide further mid-frequency absorption in the sharp edges of the ceiling. The entire space is finished in white, enabling the client to light it in any color, with the geometric features seamlessly supporting any chosen lighting design.”

To ensure the walls were suitable for multi-purpose use, WSDG worked closely with Lighting Planner Huebscher Gestaltet GmbH, Kilchenmann AG, AV integrators, and the client, EBL. The team designed a solution that is based on a theatrical lighting system.

“The technical staff appreciates that the chosen lights are individually controllable in terms of colour and dimming, “Noy comments. “They've had events that need flexible lighting, with quick changes, and this has been a helpful solution.”

The balcony seating area was adapted for excellent sight lines, acoustic control, and minimal sound reflections. The edge of the balcony is finished at an angle to ensure the furnishings do not reflect sound back onto the stage. Instead, sound is reflected up towards the ceiling, which has been designed to supply maximum low-frequency absorption and minimise reflections back into the audience area. Perforated gypsum panels that provide low-mid frequency absorption were applied to the underside of the balcony, further reducing reflections. The result is highly intelligible sound transmission, even SPL coverage, and the absence of artefacts.

The EBL Elefantehuus project was designed by architects Otto Partner Architekten. Pascal Epple, a member of the extended management team, was the venue architect. The design provided a free-flow aesthetic by keeping all facilities in a central block within the existing building and allowing the rest of the space to remain flexible and open. These design elements have ensured that the venue is perfect to host any event, such as panel debates, gala dinners or concerts.

“It was a challenge to combine all requirements in the existing building. Due to proximity to the hospital, a room-in-room system was developed by WSDG, and the hall was completely decoupled from the existing shell,” Epple explains. “The building structure is worthy of protection, but this gave us a tight range of possibilities for the project. We developed a simple extension encompassing the new entrance, with foyer, staircase and elevator. All other functions are located in the existing building: the catering area, with a small kitchen and bar, is organised behind the hall.”

WSDG also assisted in the AV systems integration, alongside the installers for the project, Kilchenmann AG. WSDG specified a microphone system built on Shure ULX-D series, a DiGiCo mixing console and two separate sound reinforcement systems for show use (L-Acoustics) and speech / presentation use (Fohhn) . This combination is fitting for a multi-purpose venue, delivering a secure, scalable, and durable sound system, perfect both for spoken word or musical applications.

EBL Managing Director, Tobias Andrist was impressed with the end result and excited for the future of the venue. “The EBL Elefantehuus is to become a comprehensive event location, in which everything from business events to concerts is conceivable,” he says. “An innovative room-in-room construction offers the best acoustics and at the same time soundproofing for the nearby cantonal hospital. As a result, the historical substance can still be felt today.”

For more information about WSDG, visit [www.wsdg.com](http://www.wsdg.com)

Hi res images are available for download from <https://bit.ly/WSDG_TheEBLElefantehuus>

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