

CASE STUDY

# Tallinn City Theatre

TALLINN, ESTONIA

Genelec Smart IP transforms historic Tallinn City Theatre with audio innovation



GENELEC®

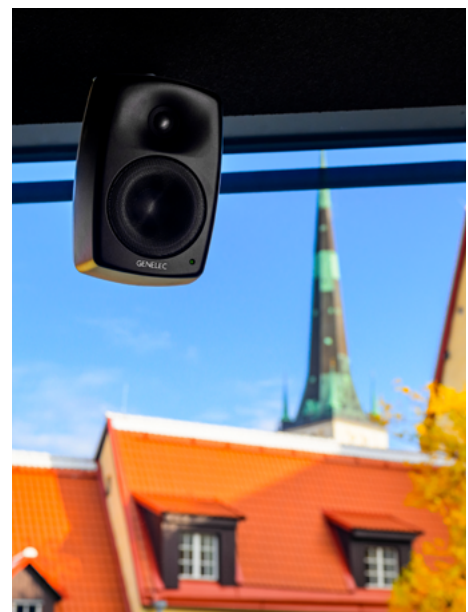


## LEGACY AND TRANSFORMATION

Sixty years ago, the Estonian Youth Theatre was granted a single house on Tallinn's historic Lai Street to use as a private rehearsal and office space. In over half a century since, Lai Street has undergone a series of restoration and construction projects, resulting in the unification of sixteen district buildings – each dating back to the 13th century – into one holistic theatre complex.

Now recognised as [Tallinn City Theatre](#), the production house employs thirty-six resident actors and stages over twenty shows each year. It is celebrated for its high production values and creative storytelling, as well as for the cultural heritage of the venue.

In 2020, the latest architectural renovation began, causing the theatre to temporarily relocate. Once complete, the company moved back into an expansive building, resulting in the need for a modern and cohesive audio upgrade to complement the professional atmosphere. The theatre required a sound system that would provide all public



spaces with ambient soundscapes and even coverage, without disrupting the theatre's bold visual appeal. For this, the theatre selected a [Genelec Smart IP](#) solution to deliver the necessary combination of exceptional sound quality at low levels and sleek aesthetic design.

## HERITAGE VENUE CHALLENGES

Tallinn's Old Town – Vanalinn – is a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognised for its well-preserved medieval landscape and cultural relevance, therefore making the Lai Street restoration project one of the rarest and most historically significant theatre upgrades in all of Europe. “While this is excellent for the theatre, it placed certain limitations on the audio system,” says Karl Erik Laas, Tallinn City Theatre's Senior Sound Technician. “We needed a high-fidelity, full-bodied loudspeaker solution that evenly covers the public spaces and would allow us to digitally adjust the matrix. Due to the historic nature of the venue, we also had the challenge of coordinating the appearance of the loudspeakers with the interior architecture.”

Gentle background music, as well as voice announcements, needed to fill public spaces such as the lobby, dining and bar areas, common rooms, and some smaller theatre auditoriums. “It has already been decided that the sound system for the theatre halls would run on a [Dante](#) network, so it made sense for the common areas to follow the same protocol,” Laas explains. “The result was a high-quality solution consisting of over 100 [Genelec](#) loudspeakers.”



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Karl Erik Laas,  
Tallinn City Theatre



## THEATRICAL SOUND INNOVATION

The theatre's technical team already had a pair of Genelec loudspeakers installed in their studio so they were familiar with the high-performance sound and vocal intelligibility of Genelec equipment. Regional distributor, [msonic Baltic OÜ](#), supplied a total of 120 Genelec Smart IP loudspeakers to be deployed throughout the theatre complex. "Genelec's Smart IP series is known for its exceptional audio quality, attractive form factor, and installation flexibility," Laas continues. "We knew Smart IP would be the right fit to meet all of the theatre's requirements."

A system was designed in collaboration with theatre, maintenance and design specialists [Optimus Systems AS](#), and the Genelec factory to guarantee the most suitable solution for the multi-venue complex. "A combination of forty-four [4430](#) and seventy-six [4420](#) loudspeakers was installed by Optimus Systems AS throughout the audience areas, making up twenty-four distinct zones of audio," Laas reveals. "The new system was expertly planned, with the positioning of the loudspeakers ensuring wide directivity and even coverage, with absolutely no dead spots."



Mounted on walls or flown from the ceiling, the standard RAL black loudspeakers stand out from the wood-panelled, brickwork, and white painted walls, while the elegant oval form factor and discreet single-CAT-cable installation of the Smart IP series ensures they blend harmoniously with the theatre's historic setting.

“Using Genelec’s [Smart IP Manager](#) software, we were able to route, tune, and manage the loudspeakers with ease, eliminating many common setup difficulties,” adds Laas. “For networking and power in the common areas, we used [Netgear M-4250](#) switches, while the entire system was run over Dante. Currently, a temporary system is in place to take care of processing and control as we wait for a permanent system to be chosen and implemented.”



## EXCELLENCE BEYOND THE STAGE

“The City Theatre is renowned for its outstanding production value, so it’s important to us that this professional quality continues throughout the venue, not just during performances,” he states. “We intend to elevate the overall theatre-going experience for our guests from the minute they walk through the door.”

Thanks to Genelec, the theatre now possesses a sound system that lives up to its reputation. “We’ve received high praise from audiences and production crew since installing the Genelec system,” confesses Laas. “The Smart IP loudspeakers deliver superior quality, intelligibility, and optimal coverage – everything that we were looking for from a new audio solution.”

“Bringing a futureproof audio environment to a historically protected venue like Tallinn City Theatre is really about understanding the building, respecting its history and finding solutions that integrate naturally without drawing too much attention,” adds Jürgen Urbanik,



Marketing and Business Development Manager at msonic Baltic OÜ. “The Genelec Smart IP solution makes a lot of sense in spaces where architecture and cultural identity need to coexist and enhance the visitor experience by combining sonic precision, networked flexibility and a discrete visual presence. It supports the overall atmosphere rather than competing with it.”

Since the Lai Street venue reopened at the end of 2025, Tallinn City Theatre has captured audiences’ imaginations through its artistic performances and innovative storytelling, but it is thanks to the Genelec Smart IP system that the immersive theatre experience begins off-stage.

“At this level, the audio becomes a part of how the venue communicated with its audience. When background music, announcements, and ambient sound are reproduced clearly and consistently across multiple areas, guests immediately feel a sense of quality and care,” Urbanik expresses. “The theatre experience doesn’t begin when the performance starts, it begins the moment

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you walk through the door. Projects like Tallinn City Theatre show how thoughtfully implemented audio can quietly enhance historic spaces, helping them function in a modern, connected production environment while preserving everything that makes them special.”

## THE DETAILS

### Client

Tallinn City Theatre

### Audio Design

Tallinn City Theatre  
Optimus Systems AS  
Genelec Oy

### Integrator

Optimus Systems AS

### Genelec Distributor

msonic Baltic OÜ

### Loudspeakers

- 44 x 4430A
- 76 x 4420A

### Network & Control

NETGEAR Switches  
Dante  
Genelec Smart IP Manager