

Grand Re-Opening of Cinéma Bellevaux Introduces New Music and Lawo mc²36 Mixing Console



Picture: Gwenael Grossfeld

Cinéma Bellevaux, an independent, experimental cinema house in Lausanne, Switzerland, re-opened on 12 October 2021, the first time in a year-and-a-half that lovers of cinema, music and the performing arts could enjoy a live event there. The evening was headlined by the Ensemble Contrechamps, a renowned New Music

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ensemble based in Geneva; it also marked the debut of Bellevaux's new Lawo mc²36 mixing console, installed by Lawo's Swiss systems integrator SLG Broadcast.

An 80-seat venue opened in 1959, Cinéma Bellevaux presents movies in a unique way, with live music accompaniment, to provide viewers with unique artistic experiences. Gwenaël Grossfeld, Bellevaux's owner, used the downtime caused by COVID to perform technical upgrades which include a 16-fader mc²36 console and two Lawo A__mic8 I/O units.

"I want to preserve the cinema as a public and social place that delivers a rich experience from the combination of motion pictures, events and the venue itself," explains Grossfeld. "We mix live music to complement the movies, which I record and replay during subsequent showings of the film. Theater lighting is synchronized to the audio via automation, creating a holistic viewing experience."

In choosing Lawo to upgrade Cinéma Bellevaux, Grossfeld explains "I knew that I needed a digital audio console that could drive the cinema's 22-speaker audio system, and also accommodate a lot of audio sources. But I had never used a digital console before; only analog." References pointed him to Lawo, who provided an mc²36 console for evaluation. What followed was love at first mix: "The Lawo mc²36 is very intuitive to operate," says Grossfeld. "It was easy for me and a sound engineer friend of mine to dive right into working with the mc²." Also important was the ability to integrate with d&b Soundscape, which can be controlled directly from the Lawo mc²36.

mc²36 is ideal for FOH applications thanks to its small physical footprint and high performance; it has an I/O capacity of 864 channels and accommodates up to 256 audio processing channels, plus native support for ST2110, AES67, RAVENNA, and Ember+.

Grossfeld sees a bright future for his new cinema concept. "Our objective is to transform movies from being on-screen art with musical support into an immersive experience of film, lighting, sounds and music in a unique venue. Lawo and SLG understood our goals and found the right solutions."

"Ironically," notes Grossfeld, "we had to postpone our re-opening until October, but not due to sound issues - the delivery of the screen, of all things, was delayed!"

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