



RECREATING HISTORY FOR A SON ET LUMIÈRE

Tricolor India Schauspiel delivers pioneering audiovisual upgrade for the Cellular Jail in Andaman Islands

The Cellular Jail in Port Blair is a testament to the cruelty inflicted on the freedom fighters in India's colonial past. But the jail has been a witness to India's freedom struggle and victory since its existence, and now, the structure's façade, which bears the memories of the country's fight for Independence, is set to reflect India's colonial narrative, but in a new light – this time, with state-of-the-art 3D projection mapping, executed by Tricolor India Schauspiel. AV-ICN Magazine explores the story in greater detail

Known as *Kaala Pani* to the local residents, the Cellular Jail in Port Blair, Andaman Islands, is a surviving memory of the gruesome atrocity inflicted by the British colonizers on the Indian freedom fighters imprisoned within the four walls of the bleak prisons. But the union territory's government took the task of shifting the narrative of the oppressive site into a monument of tribute to the martyrs in order to attract increased tourist footfall into the Island. **Tricolor India Schauspiel** was handed over the responsibility to install modern, sophisticated, and hassle-free audiovisual equipment at the venue and deliver breathtaking immersive viewing experience to the visitors.

Himanshu Singh Sabharwal, Chief Creative Officer, **Tricolor India Schauspiel** and **Garima Mishra**, Managing Director, **Tricolor India Schauspiel** joins **AV-ICN** in an in-depth conversation, where they lay bare the concept, the challenges, the championing, and other minute factors involved in deploying a memorable 3D projection mapping at the Cellular Jail.



The Concept:

Every remarkable project has a remarkable beginning. Himanshu Singh Sabharwal shares how Tricolor India Schauspiel was approached for the Cellular Jail Project, “The Andaman and Nicobar State Government was seeking a turnkey solution which included artistic and hardware works which included all related E&M works as well as the successful installation and handing over of an upgraded show. Operation and maintenance of the show for a five-year period was also part of the package. A tender was invited for the same, where multiple bidders had applied for this project. After multiple stages of bid selection, Tricolor India Schauspiel was awarded the project on merit and experience in the field.”

But this was, as mentioned above, just the beginning. Garima Mishra further elaborates on the brief given to the company for the Cellular Jail Project, “The specific objective of the project was to give a major facelift to the existing show, while maintaining the previous script which was duly approved by the government authorities. Also, we had to bring out the history, the turmoil, and the gruesome story of the Cellular Jail. This show was to be created in such a manner that would put Cellular Jail on the world map and further enhance the tourism in this archipelago.”

Himanshu Singh Sabharwal, Chief Creative Officer, Tricolor India Schauspiel, remarks, “This immensely popular site in Andaman, with over 1,500 visitors every day, was to be given a facelift to enhance the tourist experience. Given our history of making spectaculars for more than a decade, we were entrusted to upgrade the existing conventional sound and light show to a multimedia son et lumière of international standards using the latest technology available, which would further enhance the tourist experience and support the local industry as well.”

The Challenges:

The next step in any audiovisual installation project is a site recce. Sabharwal recalls the significant observations that the team at Tricolor made at the site, “As a mandate for each project, site recce is done to create a detailed plan and tackle shortcomings. With regards to this site, a strategy was created to utilize the given infrastructure for the most feasible solution. Existing old audio-visual equipment was to be enhanced and new technology had to be incorporated. A detailed site survey was done to identify the possible cable routes, placement of major hardware, features offered by the site which can be incorporated in the show to add more dynamics to the overall experience.”

He adds, “Major findings were the ‘V’ shaped projection surface, limited existing lighting and audio setup which was only suitable for conventional Light and Sound shows and not as per international standard of Projection mapping, Sound and Light shows. Wide open space for seating with conventional audio equipment



With a rich sound system from JBL, MOTU, BSS Audio, vivid projection systems from Barco and Dataton, and innovative lighting technology from LBTPro, Tricolor India Schauspiel revamped the Light and Sound Show into a spectacular AV extravaganza



The art of projection over Cellular Jail's 'V' shaped projection surface was difficult to master, but Tricolor India Schauspiel overcame the complex issue with projectors featuring dynamic lighting

which was inadequate for large numbers of attendees. Also, no availability of provisions for projection-based hardware and cabling."

This 'V' shaped projection surface posed a serious challenge with regards to the audiovisual installation. Sabharwal elucidates how the Tricolor team overcame the challenges to deliver a best-in-class audiovisual experience, "Every site is unique in its own way and always comes with its own set of peculiarities and constraints. One of the challenges we faced was the 'viewing angle'. The structure of the jail building is such that there are 'spokes' protruding outwards from a central point. This gives us a V-shaped enclosed space to project on. This was overcome by strategically placing the projectors along with the dynamic lighting, giving a seamless view from left to right of the structure."

He further states, "The lighting placement in itself was another challenge, as we had to keep the imagery seamless, wherein these dynamic lights were to complement the projections and add to the drama and theatrics of the show."

Equipment Used For Audiovisual Installation:

The decision regarding which audiovisual equipment needed to be installed at the Cellular Jail relied heavily on the site's infrastructure. Garima Mishra, while enlisting the audiovisual inventory for the Cellular Jail, commented, The audiovisual equipment was planned according to the detailed recce. Detailed layout plan was made for the upgradation of the hardware for the show. Placements and strategy for major hardware was created, which not only involved the existing structure but also additional fabrication on site to enhance the visitor experience."

She goes on to illustrate the above-mentioned statement, "For instance, apart from the usage of the physical civil structure available at the site, we also made use of the elements from the landscape itself. One such example is the use of the tree in front of the facade as part of the show by projecting abstract audio equalisation visuals on it. These visuals are in sync with the narration, giving an illusion of a 'Speaking Tree'. Also, to add more dynamism and seamlessness to the show, we offered 'holographic projection' on the ground, thus creating multiple layers of projection surfaces to enhance the viewing experience of the visitor."

Words of Praise:

The Cellular Jail Project was truly a labor of love for Tricolor India Schauspiel. Filled with praise about how the end result of all the hard work turned out to be, Sabharwal concludes, "The revamped show at the Cellular Jail is a massive upgrade to the existing conventional sound and light show format. The old show comprised of basic lighting effects on the walls of the jail structure accompanied with a voice over on a conventional sound system. The upgraded show is a true visual delight with large scale bright projectors on the jail façade, catering to modern audio and video technologies while carefully remaining within the precincts of the existing old script and the theme around the history of the Jail."

The following products were included in the inventory for the Cellular Jail Project:

Audio

- 1 nos. of BSS Audio Soundweb London BLU-100 12x8 Signal Processor
- Multiple nos. of Crown Audio DriveCore Install Series Amplifiers
- 5 nos. of JBL AWC 595 Speakers
- 12 nos. JBL AWC129 Full-Range Loudspeaker System
- 2 nos. of JBL PD566 Horn-Loaded Full-Range Loudspeaker System
- 1 nos. of MOTU (Mark Of The Unicorn) 24Ao multi-channel Audio Interface

Video

- 3 nos. of Barco UDX-W32 DLP Laser Projectors
- 2 nos. of Barco G60-W8 DLP Laser Projectors
- 3 nos. of Dataton WATCHOUT

Lighting

- LBT Hulk 311 Beam
- LBT Laser Lights

He continues, "The new show is a visual extravaganza with an amalgamation of various unique ways of projection mapping never before experienced in one place. **Ross Ashton**, Tricolor's Projection Designer, really pulled through on a very crucial song on our freedom fighters, creating beautiful visuals for this show. These were brought to life creating an extremely aesthetic and emotionally moving experience for the visitors. It is not only the visual appeal that sets this show apart but also the incorporation of a modern surround sound system, pinpointing audio references from all around and bringing action from each surface alive. This is new age storytelling at its best. We feel truly privileged to be selected as the custodians who bring out the history of these places alive for the current generation. As James Baldwin has rightly said, "History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history."

Tricolor India Schauspiel is on a mission to leave no stone unturned when it comes to delivering AV extravaganzas to one and all, with projects such as SEL at Agra Fort, SEL at Chanderi Fort, and SEL at Gwalior Fort in the pipeline.

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