

## **A seamless act for Watermill Theatre's installation**

The Watermill Theatre is a 'small but mighty' 200-seat theatre, set in idyllic gardens on the banks of the river Lambourn in Berkshire, southeast England.

Enabling access for everyone is in the Watermill's mission and as part of that, we were asked to install assistive listening systems in several areas within the building.

Our planning began in 2023, assessing the rehearsal space, studio, restaurant, box office and bar. Our engineers designed hearing loops systems for each area to give theatre-goers, actors and staff with hearing loss access to clear sound.

### **The rehearsal room**

Originally a corn mill, the theatre dates back to 1830 and the installation had to be sympathetic to the fabric of the building. A perimeter hearing loop was installed here with a brown cable to blend into the dark wood and steel beams of the space. The V15+ driver to power the loop was neatly installed in a wall cabinet tucked away in a corner of the room. Two shotgun microphones pick up audio from either side of the room and a wireless lapel microphone gives speakers the ability to move freely.

### **The restaurant**

The restaurant doubles as an events and performance space so it needed a perimeter hearing loop, powered by our V15+ driver. Our engineers again used a brown loop cable to blend in with the wooden beams and two shotgun microphones were positioned for the room's dual use - one to pick up audio from the audience during Q & A sessions and another for the performers or spokespeople.

To create even greater flexibility, the system was designed to allow the shotgun microphones to be turned down and a wireless lapel microphone to be used when only one person's voice needs to be heard.

Two portable hearing loops were also supplied for when the restaurant is used for dining.

### **The studio**

This room was more challenging as the hearing loop cable had to be installed at the top of the walls where they meet the ceiling. Our team used a hot glue gun and cable tacks to keep it in place and the white cable they selected blends in seamlessly.

Although it was the smallest of the rooms to be looped, it needed a more powerful driver, the Contacta V22, due to higher levels of metal loss.

A single boundary microphone was positioned in the middle of the room to pick up audio across the space.

### **A sound welcome**

The installation also included a hearing loop at the box office and one at the bar area.

While some last-minute changes had to be made once the engineers were on site, the end result was just as the client requested.

Operations Manager at Watermill Theatre, Charley Hart, said; “It’s great to have the hearing loops installed. They will benefit many people.”