

# LIGHTING in design

08/11

**Beautifully  
exposed**

**Fusing light and  
architecture**

**LED's for 'corporate light'**



## Transformation of a performance centre

*This year is the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Place des Arts, a cultural complex for the dissemination of arts situated in the Quartier des Spectacles, an entertainment district in the eastern section of Montreal, Canada. In honour of Georges-Émile Lapalme, the Minister of Cultural Affairs who supported the launch of the project fifty years ago, a space within the complex has been revamped and named Espace culturel Georges-Émile-Lapalme.*

**L**ightemotion, a Canadian lighting company, has been a key player in the revamp of the *Place des Arts*, working closely with consortium architects Menkès Shooner Dagenais LeTourneau and Provencher Roy + Associés, under the artistic direction of Luc Plamondon, project manager for the complex.

The revamping project, begun in May 2009, included the renovation of all entrances and marquees for the five theatres in the *Place des Arts* complex. In addition, a box-office area, a multifunctional exhibit space, and a central theatre space under a series of immense skylights were created. These changes made

it possible to highlight the artwork of Pierre Granche; create a modern wine bar, *Place Deschamps*, equipped with a small stage; and set up a multimedia zone located in the renovated central corridor. The project also included changes to the outdoor facade of the main entrance and the esplanade. The revamp has changed the look and feel of *Place des Arts*. A large marquee embraces the main entrance, and the esplanade has been equipped with signature custom-made lamp posts designed by Lightemotion specifically for the project.

A leading destination in the heart of the *Quartier des Spectacles*, the cultural space Georges-Émile



Photographs: Martine Doyon.

Lapalme is a crossroads for millions of spectators, subway riders and pedestrians each year. To cater for different clientele and activities, the key deliverables for the project focused on the creation of a flexible lighting system that would change at different times of day. The main objective was to create a fusion between light and architecture, with lighting emanating from different elements to create a fuller and more integrated experience. While delicate shades of light from various sources permeate the space, dynamic signature wall showcases modulate the visual environment throughout the day.

People passing through the *Espace culturel* in the morning hours experience a soothing, warm pulsing light. Later in the day, people passing through the space have a different sensory experience as the lighting creates more dynamic movements in vibrant hues. During the evening hours, the entire space is transformed into a contemporary performance centre reflecting the cultural activities in the five performance halls through various interactions of lighting dynamics that create subtle changes in the space.

Custom fixtures were designed for all areas of the *Espace culturel*. A signature downlight that



*Lightemotion's origins are in the field of the performing arts and multimedia, and the company has expanded into other fields of expertise, such as architectural and museum lighting. Lightemotion's signature work has given it an international reputation through its major projects in Canada, Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Middle East.*



incorporates a luminous LED disk serves as general lighting and also creates visual sightlines that define the space's different areas. The luminous disks are individually controlled via DMX and create different movements and patterns, adding to the space's visual signature.

Special crackled-glass hanging fixtures were created for the wine bar; the fixtures are equipped with long bulbs with a 'dancing' filament, once again generating subtle lighting movements that establish an intimate environment for all occasions.

These fixtures are scattered around the area, and a cluster of them is placed over the lightest parts of the bar.

*Place des Arts*, a leading centre for all art disciplines and the featured cultural space in the heart of the *Quartier des Spectacles*, is also a daily hub for thousands of spectators, tourists, and users of the Montreal subway system. The *Espace culturel Georges-Émile-Lapalme*, with its vibrant décor and art programme, is a welcoming place for all members of the public.