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Pen Workers
seating company
is India's oldest seat
manufacturer and is
ready to take on global com-
petition. The company has just
introduced advanced "retractable
seating" technology for the Indian
market and beyond through Audience
Systems, UK. ”

The Magic of RETRACTABLE SEATING

In urban areas, where space is at a premium, providing areas for people to meet, play sport, learn or be entertained can seem like an expensive luxury.

Around the world, more and more schools, universities, theatres and sports venues are choosing retractable seating systems to help them to use spaces in truly multipurpose ways. The systems consist of rows of tiered seating which can be closed away, rather like a chest of drawers, into a very small space. Suddenly, a tiered auditorium can be transformed into a large open space perfect for a party or marriage, or the seating around a basketball court can pull back to make room for a hockey pitch.

*Anmol Kashmiri:
the eternal optimist
has big plans for
Pen Workers*

Anmol Kashmiri - Partner, Pen Workers



RETRACTABLE SYSTEM CLOSED

1

the entire rake of tiered seating is folded away into a space the depth of one row.

To open the seating, the operator simply presses another button – and the platforms open in reverse. The chairs can then be picked up in small groups, latching automatically into place, and a 200 seat auditorium can be created from an empty hall in as little as ten minutes.

There is also a very simple,

THE MECHANISM

So how does it work? Imagine tiers of empty seats with the seats already tipped up. The operator simply presses and holds a button on a wireless controller. A motor beneath the seating starts to roll. The first row of tipped up chairs fold down onto the deck, and the front row of tiering then slides under the second. As it does so, the second row of chairs fold down and soon the second tier is sliding under the third.... and so on until

2



RETRACTABLE SEATING OPENING

3

manual alternative to the powered, push button system. The chairs are folded down onto the platforms using a detachable lever, in groups of three or four. Handles are then slotted into the front row of the system and the tiers are pushed back by hand. For small areas of retractable seating, this straightforward method of operation is perfect.



RETRACTABLE SEATING OPEN



THE EXPLORER

At the forefront of this technology is UK designer and manufacturer Audience Systems, who first introduced retractable seating to the UK from Japan over 30 years ago and have been refining the product ever since. Audience Systems currently exports the product to over 50 countries worldwide and is currently introducing it to India in collaboration with local partner Penworkers.

Retractable seating systems from Audience Systems can be found in some of the world's most prestigious multipurpose venues including Singapore Sports Hub, Aspire Dome, Qatar, ORA Arena in Istanbul and O2 World in Germany. Such major venues choose Audience Systems' seating because of its proven heavy duty structure, its reliability and the speed at which systems can be retracted or moved. These factors alone deliver substantial operational cost savings over the lifetime of the seating compared to lower-grade retractable systems.

However Audience Systems' retractable seating is not just functional, it can also be beautiful. Attractive finishes can be specified, enhancing even the most refined venues. The company's theatrical clients include the Royal Opera House in the UK, Canada's National Ballet School, the Singapore National Museum, and Copenhagen Opera House in Denmark. Their seating systems can also be found in thousands of schools and universities worldwide.

Each seating system is individually designed by Audience Systems' UK engineering team to suit each space. The company works hand-in-hand with architects, owners and specifiers to ensure that the very best comfort, sightlines, capacity and aesthetics are achieved. Clients have a vast range of operational choices to suit their venue and budget. For example, "mobile" systems can be loaded onto special hydraulic trucks or forklifts once closed up and transported to a storage area.





THE ACHIEVEMENTS

A few examples illustrate the flexibility of the system. At the Fashion Retail Academy in London, Audience Systems provided a retractable system with two rows of chairs per retractable platform to maximise seating capacity in a space with a low ceiling. The Espace 628 chairs were fitted with individual fold-away writing tablets to allow the space to be used for both lectures and shows.

At Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay in Singapore, Audience Systems helped the theatre create a completely flexible studio space with a motorised retractable seating system that can be opened or closed at the touch of a button. The front row is elevated 1400mm above the ground, so three small mobile retractable units can be placed in front of it when needed to create one large continuous bank of seating. Three additional mobile retractable units were provided to provide extra seating when required – these can be moved around the space on hydraulic trucks, allowing the theatre to create a wide variety of configurations.

At London's Sky TV studios, the client wanted to be able to use 14 rows of seating on some occasions, and just 7 rows on others. The seating needed to be used in 2 different studios, and occasionally transported to a separate building for storage. Audience Systems' engineers designed a system that could be split into four parts to allow flexible capacity and ease transportation. The system can be moved around within the building using hydraulic and power trucks, but can also be forklifted if movement to another building is required.



THE OFFERINGS

For all clients, there is a wide range of chairs and to choose from, including

timber, plastic and upholstered options. Audience Systems' best-selling chair is the Espace 628, a classic space-saving upholstered chair which provides ergonomically designed comfort when open, but when closed occupies minimal space, giving spectators ample room to move along the aisle. The chair can be enhanced according to the venue's needs, with an extra thick seat, a high back, decorative timber arms or even a folding writing tablet. But the chair is not just practical, it's also tough – together with Audience Systems' popular Accolade chair and the blow-moulded polyethylene Zenith chair, it passes the toughest of British standard strength tests, achieving certification for BS EN 12727 at grade 4.

For prestigious auditoria, Audience Systems' Recital chair is unique in its class. It offers all the comfort and style of a traditional auditorium chair, but can still be folded onto a retractable platform. The chair marries a show-wood outer back with sculpted upholstery and a contemporary design. Because of a clever concertina design, it even includes auditorium-style timber side panels giving a truly theatrical finish.

Other seating options for Audience Systems' retractable platforms include a folding lecture theatre with continuous writing tablets, and a range of timber, upholstered and plastic benches. All seats have matching fixed and removable versions allowing venues to match chairs across retractable tiering, flat floors and balconies.

To finish the system, clients can choose from a range of rails and fascias, add trims and aisle lights and even specify special finishes to blend the retractable seating with the rest of the room.

Audience Systems also offers clients peace of mind by designing and building its retractable systems to meet or exceed the latest British standard BS EN 13200-5. The sturdy steel alignment system provides reliable opening and closing, while heavy duty spring and gravity row locks ensure the open system is locked securely in place, providing safety even in earthquake zones. The under structure is guaranteed for ten years and comprehensive training, after-sales back up, servicing and parts are available. ■

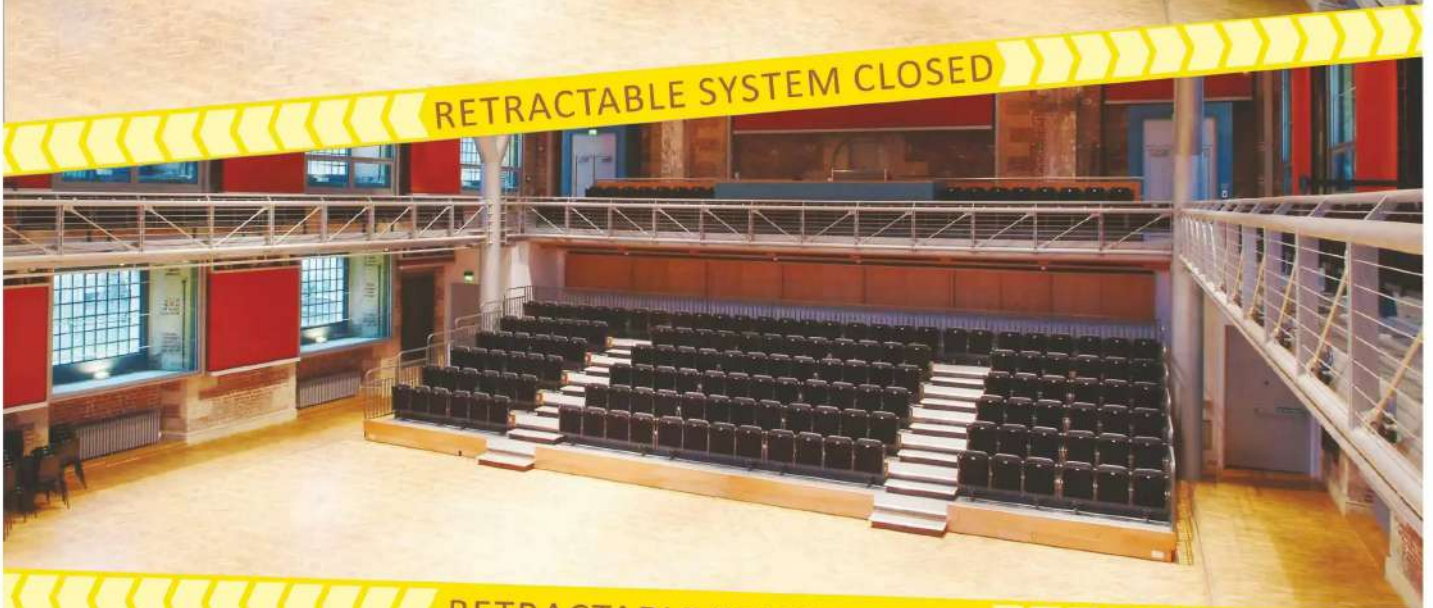


Presenting The Magic of Retractable Seating

AUDIENCE SYSTEMS IN INDIA IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEN WORKERS SEATING COMPANY



RETRACTABLE SYSTEM CLOSED



RETRACTABLE SEATING OPEN

The systems consist of rows of tiered seating which can be closed away, into a very small space. Suddenly, a tiered auditorium can be transformed into a large open space perfect for a party or marriage, or the seating around a basketball court can pull back to make room for a hockey pitch. Renowned for their stringent quality standards, Audience Systems manufacture retractable platforms in the UK for venues worldwide.



PEN WORKERS

Certified: ISO 9001 : 2008 • OHSAS 18001 : 2007 • ISO 14001 : 2004



AUDIENCE
SYSTEMS

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