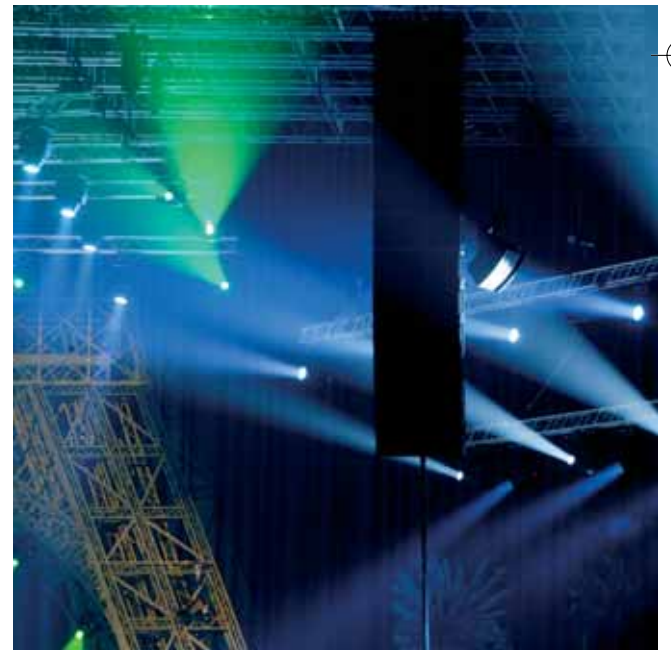




The dm-arena [this page and opposite] has played host to a varied programme of events including orchestral and rock concerts



# Tour de force

The versatile dm-arena in Germany proved a worthy host to a night of rock, pop and opera stars, staged to help celebrate the German leg of the 2005 Tour de France  
 Matthias Kreiner, [werkPlan], Germany



The dm-arena was being put to the test as a host for major events even before its official opening at the end of 2003, with the Men's Volleyball World Championships. Since then, the Karlsruhe Trade Fair multi-functional arena has proven itself as a venue with unlimited possibilities through a truly varied programme of events.

Regina Halmich, the Women's Boxing Champion in the flyweight division, who remains undefeated in 10 years, has had two matches there. Her anniversary match will take place at the arena on 10 September 2005.

Competitive dance has also found a home here. The president of the German Dance Association commented enthusiastically that the arena's features alone were "fantastic". In October 2004, the usually bare arena was transformed into a gala ballroom for the international dance competition, the ARD-Masters Gala.

The dm-arena continually proves itself to be a highly flexible chameleon. The live German TV show *Wetten, dass..?*, broadcast at the end of 2003, is another example of a celebrated success.

The arena's 12,500m<sup>3</sup> of space offers seating for 10,000 spectators, and standing room for 14,000,

so rock and pop concerts have provided new opportunities and challenges for the arena since the beginning of 2004. Peter Maffay performed his celebrated musical *Tabaluga* for three days to an audience of 20,000 on five stages with a 360° sound system.

"This show can be executed on only very few stages," says the producer, Fritz Rau. The same applies to Peter Gabriel's multimedia musical spectacle. The English artist performed for 8,500 spectators in the arena from a central stage, for which the arena ceiling was loaded with 42 tons of technical equipment.



Artists in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* show performed before a backdrop of the base of the Eiffel Tower and could also be seen on large screens behind both stages

The dm-arena proved that it can meet the necessary acoustic requirements for a true rock concert when Udo Lindenberg played there, at his only Baden-Württemberg concert in December 2004, including a guest performance by Lionel Ritchie.

One of the more recent highlights has been the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music gala on 25 June 2005, one of a series of special events in the run-up to the Karlsruhe leg of the Tour De France



More than 280 performers, including opera and pop stars, appeared on stage

on 8 July. Events of such a size and extravagance are only possible with the appropriate professional partners. The entire technical planning and realisation of the event was managed by Karlsruhe-based technical planning and management specialists [werkPlan].

The dm-arena in Karlsruhe was transformed into a palace of music and culinary delight for almost five hours. Manfred Groh, the mayor of Karlsruhe, referred to this unique event as "a kind of VIP evening". The Karlsruhe Trade Fair and Congress GmbH and the State Theatre of Baden collaborated on *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which thrilled highbrow music lovers and pop and rock fans alike.

The Baden State Orchestra, together with renowned solo artists such as Milva, Juliette Gréco

and Wolfgang Niedecken entertained the audience along with another 280 performers on stage. An additional 250 people worked behind the scenes.

Among the entertainers were three of opera's rising stars: Caroline Whisnant, who will be playing all Brünnhilde roles in the new Karlsruhe production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*; Ambrogio Maestri and the acclaimed tenor Fabio. The singers were accompanied by the Baden State Orchestra, under the management of the musical director Anthony Bramall, and the State Opera Choir.

Juliette Gréco, the grande dame of French chanson, presented a passionate and

eloquent set, while Ute Lemper, famous in Germany for her performance in the musical *Cats*, and singer Milva thrilled the audience with their exceptional performances.

### Top of the pops

Pop star Virginie Schaeffer was on stage to represent the new voice of France. She is one of the voices embedded in The Spirit of the Greedy Bunch, an institution in the Karlsruhe pop music scene, and the closing act of the largest open-air event in southern Germany, Das Fest, from 2002 to 2004. Also among the performers was Wolfgang Niedecken, the singer for the Cologne band BAP, which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2006. Last but not least was Galileo, a vocal

phenomenon from Karlsruhe, who has become a national and international artist. Media personality Reinhold Beckmann hosted this gala event.

All of these well-known artists were matched by an equally impressive stage and set. The backdrop of the stage was an Eiffel Tower, with a 15.88m-wide base, a height of 13m and a depth of 2m. This extravagant piece of scenery alone weighed three tons and obviously required the appropriate lighting. The light design was also produced by [werkPlan]. The realisation of this design was made possible by Jerry Appelt, who has worked successfully with the [werkPlan] team on numerous occasions. Appelt had access to more than 200 multi-functional spotlights that Marc Metz, the [werkPlan] partner responsible for light design, had planned for. The technical team, under the direction of [werkPlan], began construction 10 days prior to the event.

The sound system was equally complex: more than 127 channels were accessible for sound control and regulation. Each artist arrived with their own sound technician, but had access to the experienced and comprehensive service of the entire technical team and equipment. About 100 speakers and three mixing boards were on duty.

The *Midsummer Night's Dream* event was also televised. An hour-long TV show – with SWR TV serving as the interface – was televised, and was also managed by [werkPlan]. Light and sound tracks had to be distributed and camera positioning and tracking shots needed to be co-ordinated and monitored. These images were simultaneously seen on the 7.5m by 10m screens behind both stages. Next year's event is already being planned. ■