

Zenith

Paris, Montpellier, Orléans, La Réunion, Saint Etienne, Nantes, Dijon



Client Municipality of Paris, Montpellier, Orléans, La Réunion, Saint Etienne, Nantes, Dijon
Architect Chaix et Morel, Foster & Partners (Saint Etienne)
Completed 1984-present
Volume 40,000 to 60,000 m³
Seats 4,000 to 7,200
Reverberation time 1.4 to 1.7 s

In the mid 1970s, the Ministry of Culture in France decided it was time to develop specialised facilities for modern popular music and rock music.

For this purpose the first Zenith was built in the suburbs of Paris and opened in January 1984 with the famed rock star Renaud as inaugurating performer. The 5,830 seat construction (or even 6,400 including standing audience) featured a large metal framework covered by canvas. The aim with this pioneering facility was to achieve room an acoustic compatible with amplified music, but it was also necessary to develop solutions to achieve a sufficient sound insulation of the envelope of the facility. Numerous computer simulations and laboratory measurements were carried out with respect to various compositions initially based on several layers of mineral wool between layers of canvas.

Following the success of the Paris Zénith, a number of similar facilities were erected.

The Zenith in Saint Etienne (5,500 seats, 7,200 including standing audience) was designed by architects Foster & Partners and Berger, and includes solutions like sound absorbing baffles on the walls.