



Audio Equipment Enhances Performing Arts Rehearsals and Performances

Issue

Offering a rich arts curriculum, the Vonder Haar Center for the Performing Arts welcomes students of all ages, ranging from three years to adult. Located in La Cañada, CA, the Vonder Haar Center is home to nine resident companies, allowing students in different disciplines to develop their talents and to hone their performing skills. With professional and pre-professional classes in ballet, jazz, tap, hip-hop, acting, voice, musical theatre and Pilates, there are many opportunities for personal and artistic growth, as well as multiple student performances throughout the year.

With its active roster of approximately 280 students, the Vonder Haar Center relies on quality audio equipment to develop routines and enhance rehearsals. It also rents its rehearsal space and equipment to commercial enterprises. The Center has welcomed participants and crew members of "Dancing with the Stars," as well as film productions requiring studio space. Given the Center's high traffic, equipment durability and accessibility are important concerns.

Large sound systems are available throughout the Center, but Associate Director Grady Hutt prefers to use smaller equipment for planning and developing routines with the staff. "Our shows are constantly evolving to incorporate new ideas, and to make adjustments for new performers," said Hutt. "It's helpful to have a smaller boombox available to easily brainstorm ideas and edit music, rather than scheduling time in a large studio."

In addition, Hutt needs a product capable of playing multiple media, such as CDs, MP3s and tapes. "Since music samples come through so many different media, it's important that we're able to play all of them using one device," commented Hutt.

Implementation

To meet these criteria, Hutt uses the Performer Plus boombox, by Califone International, Inc. Designed to be a flexible multimedia player/recorder, the Performer Plus can read CD, CD-R, and CD-RW media formats, and supports variable speed playback for both its CD and cassette players. These features make it especially useful for music and/or dance instruction.

"The pitch control and adjustable speed playback is excellent. It's really helpful to have that functionality when we're developing a new idea or routine for the students, or during rehearsals," said Hutt.

The Performer Plus is made with rugged ABS plastic, increasing its durability for use in and out of the classroom. Its 14-watts provide enough power to project music clearly to a room of 100 dancers. The multimedia player has 3.5mm and ¼" mic inputs should instructors' voices require amplification when addressing large classes.

In addition, its built-in mic enables teachers to record instructions for individual development, and its connectivity with computers provides staff members with the ability to take music editing and/or production online.

Case Study: Vonder Haar Center for the Performing Arts
La Cañada, CA



Results

"The Performer Plus really proved to be invaluable to us," replied Hutt. "It's easy to use – simply plug and play, and the flexibility it provides our staff is pretty awesome." For this year's season, as the staff prepares upcoming performances, the Performer Plus has been used primarily for soundtrack sampling, particularly of classical and chamber music scores.

"We're also impressed by its power," Hutt commented. "Although it's fairly small in size, compared to our other equipment, it produces a substantial sound." In addition to the Performer Plus, Hutt and fellow staff members use the PresentationPro (PA300+) speaker in their Pilates studio.

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The staff found both the multimedia player and the speaker easy to use, and noted that the Presentation Pro's ability to connect to MP3 players especially helpful. "We really just needed something to play music for the Pilates and jazz classes that are held in the studio," said Hutt. "Most of the teachers keep their music on an iPod, so the ability to connect and amplify music from their media players was a big plus."

The Vonder Haar Center for the Performing Arts holds classes and performances year round. For more information, please visit www.vonderhaarcenter.com.