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## **MASQUE SOUND AUDIO EQUIPMENT PACKAGE POWERS UP NEW VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

**DANBURY, CT, JANUARY 15, 2014** — When Norwalk-based Jaffe Holden Acoustics was tasked with designing the AV systems for the brand new Visual and Performing Arts Center at Western Connecticut State University, it worked with **Masque Sound**, a leading theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design company, to put together a custom audio equipment package to install in the upgraded facility.

The \$97 million, 130,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility is home to approximately 450 undergraduate and graduate students, and more than 80 faculty members. A center that took 12 years to conceive, finance, design and build, the new space melds the three departments that were once housed in Higgins, Berkshire and White Halls on the midtown campus. Boasting a unique design, today's building is divided into three distinct wings: Theatre Arts, Music and Visual Arts, all of which are adjoined via a stunning lobby that is equipped with a ramp bridge that appears to hover high above the room. The center also features a 350-seat concert hall, with flexibility for a range of instructional uses, a 350-seat theater with the technical assets of a Broadway stage, as well as art studios, music and theatre rehearsal studios, 29 music practice rooms, an art gallery and a recording studio.

"We worked with Masque Sound on the Claire Tow Theatre at Lincoln Center and had a wonderful experience with them, so we knew that the team would be a great fit to work with on this large-scale project," says Ben Bausher, senior consultant at Jaffe Holden Acoustics. "Even though Masque Sound is a big shop, the crew was incredibly attentive, so much so that I know and have interacted with everyone on the team, and relied on them to offer constant support and guidance throughout the construction process."

In preparation for the Visual and Performing Arts Center system installation, Jaffe Holden Acoustics partnered with Holzman Moss Bottino Architecture and Amenta Emma Architects and, together, the companies embarked on a design process that took a total of three years to complete, starting in 2008 and culminating in late 2011 when actual on-site construction began. From there, Ferguson Electrical Contractors hired Masque Sound as the AV integrator, which worked directly with LiveWire Sound and Image to implement the design. Throughout the endeavor, multiple companies worked together under the guise of Dimeo Construction, the construction management company hired by the state of Connecticut to act on behalf of the University.

"We were fortunate enough to have Masque Sound not only provide us with a custom audio equipment package for the base infrastructure, but also assist us with the integration of both the recording studio console, as well as all of the loose and fixed equipment in the AV package," says Peter Visentin, director of facilities, engineering and planning at Western Connecticut State University. "The equipment package provided by Masque Sound was based on exact specifications from Jaffe Holden to fit our complex needs. We were working within a short timeframe, with only about 11 weeks to get all of the equipment moved into the facility. Matt Peskie and Arno Miller from Masque Sound both did a fabulous job in working with Ben Bausher to make sure everything was completed in time."

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While Masque Sound provided the overall audio equipment on the project, each room also consisted of its own custom package, which required precise planning and design. This coordinated multi-room approach ensured that the audio equipment adequately met the specific requirements of that space and also the overall soundscape.

Two key challenges that Masque Sound faced when discussing the installation process with Western Connecticut State University were in regards to the engineering and installation timing. “We know how important the pre-installation engineering phase is to resolve issues before they happen in the field, and we spent a solid two months preparing the 14 AV racks at our shop before shipping the racks to WCSU,” says Matt Peskie, installation department manager, Masque Sound.

Additionally, working on a large-scale project such as this, in which multiple rooms are involved, the completion status of each individual room is often staggered. “Our site crew, as well as the team from LiveWire Sound and Image, needed to remain flexible on a daily basis, completing tasks based on which rooms were ready to receive AV equipment,” Peskie adds. “The timing as to when to bring all of the control surfaces and sensitive equipment to the construction site is a huge decision, but there is always a deadline looming and our crew worked hard to stay on schedule, so that the team could efficiently move onto the next phase of commissioning.”

The Visual and Performing Arts Center’s main theater utilizes a DiGiCo SD10 Live Digital Console with both an SD rack and a mini-rack, which drive multiple Symetrix Edge units for processing. Lab.gruppen amplifiers then, in turn, are connected to a Fulcrum speaker system consisting of 20 discreet speakers. The concert hall relies on a DiGiCo SD9 Live Digital Console with the same SD rack and mini-rack setup as the theater, as well as the Symetrix Edge units for processing. Also similar to the theater, Lab.gruppen amplifiers drive a Fulcrum Acoustic 34-speaker system. A Crestron® control system can be utilized for non-skilled operator events, as well as control of the Servoreeler microphone system.

Once the equipment was installed, one of the main challenges that Jaffe Holden Acoustics faced was tuning the concert hall. “The venue has two tiers of wraparound seats,” adds Bausher. “Getting all of those delay times and EQ’s dialed in took a fair amount of work, and my colleague Phillip Peglow did an amazing job tuning all the systems. In addition, Matt Nichols and Russ Cooper did an incredible job on the architectural design. The building looks gorgeous and, thanks to the hard work of many people, including those at Masque Sound, it sounds fantastic.”

For more information on Western Connecticut State University and its new Visual and Performing Arts Center, visit <http://www.wcsu.edu/svpa/svpa-center.asp>.

### **About Masque Sound**

Founded in 1936 by a trio of Broadway stagehands, Masque Sound evolved into one of NYC’s most successful theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design companies specializing in theatrical, house of worship, sporting, corporate, TV broadcast and live concert events. Celebrating more than 75 years in the industry, the company is led by President Stephanie Hansen and the firm’s third generation owner, Geoff Shearing. The company also operates Florida-based Professional Wireless Systems, a leader in the development and implementation of wireless technology. Credits range from major Broadway shows and tours including “Phantom of the Opera,” “Mamma Mia!,” “Lion King,” “Jersey Boys,” “Memphis,” “The Book of Mormon,” “Newsies,” “Once” and “Kinky Boots” to yearly Super Bowl broadcasts and installations of varying sizes, including New York’s New Victory Theater and historic St.

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Bartholomew's Church. Masque Sound's 70,000 sq. ft. corporate headquarters and main assembly facility is located at 21 East Union Ave., East Rutherford, NJ, 20 minutes from midtown Manhattan. For more information, call (201) 939-8666 or visit [www.MasqueSound.com](http://www.MasqueSound.com).

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**For further information contact:**

Nicole Rosen

D. Pagan Communications, Inc.

631-659-2309

[nicoler@dpagan.com](mailto:nicoler@dpagan.com)

[www.dpagan.com](http://www.dpagan.com)

Stephanie Hansen

President

Masque Sound & Recording

201-939-8666

[StephanieHansen@masquesound.com](mailto:StephanieHansen@masquesound.com)

[www.masquesound.com](http://www.masquesound.com)