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Katara gets off to a busy start



There are more than 40 rooms at Katara

QATAR: Katara Studios has had a busy few months hosting sessions from a variety of artists since opening its doors in Doha. The 6,000 sq-m recording and audio post facility was commissioned by The Katara Committee, after which in 2012 Walters Storyk Design Group (WSDG) was retained by Elie Wakim, head of the acoustical division of Imar Trading & Contracting.

'The new building, developed by London-based ADG, had just been completed in Doha's Middle Eastern Art Development Center,' recalled Sergio Molho principal/director of international relations for WSDG. 'Metropolis, a major London recording studio, had developed the extensive technology package, and was engaged to coordinate the system integration. The project required high-level studio and interior design, as well as a commensurate HVAC system and expert construction oversight to monitor the complex sound isolation issues essential to critical recording and listening environments. WSDG's international organisation was ideally positioned to deliver all of

these services.'

The complex features more than 40 rooms with the highlight being the 225 sq-m studio 1 live orchestral room. The space has a 9m high ceiling, three configurable iso booths, a 54 sq-m mezzanine and is capable of hosting more than 80 musicians. Pride of place in its 68 sq-m control room goes to the 96-fader Neve 88RS console while there is also a 5.1 PMC BB5 surround sound system and a large complement of Bryston equipment.

The scale of the project is also evident in the 50 sq-m studio 2 live rock and roll room. Here the 40 sq-m control room is equipped with an 80 channel API Vision Console as well as a PMC MB2S solution plus more Bryston gear. Each studio has a dedicated machine room to reduce cable lengths, and each is designed to accommodate an eclectic range of clients and recording styles.

'We were fortunate to have the opportunity to collaborate with Elie Wakim and Imar Trading & Contracting on this complex project,' said Mr Molho. 'They proved to be extremely proficient in all the critical



Overlooking the orchestral live room from the mezzanine



The control room for Katara's studio 1

technical fields, and our joint effort enabled the project to be completed well within its projected 10 month construction deadline.'

'This extraordinary facility required an extremely complex acoustic programme,' added WSDG project manager, Joshua Morris. 'The business plan was to provide Middle Eastern artists with a superb alternative to European studios and simultaneously establish Doha as an appealing destination for international recording artists. To achieve this mandate, every effort was made to insure that each Katara Studio component met the most stringent pro audio requirements.

'In addition to three recording studios, a sophisticated 54 sq-m mastering suite, a 64 sq-m Dolby Atmos postproduction suite (with VO Booth) for feature film mixing, two spacious composer rooms, three audio prep rooms, a 48 sq-m video grading suite and a 22 sq-m video edit suite all coalesce to provide clients with virtually every requirement for writing, tracking, mixing and mastering at the highest

group including project engineers, Gabriel Hauser and Thomas Wenger. Additionally, partner/art director Silvia Molho envisioned a series of 'Magic Ceiling Cubes' to serve as low frequency absorbers, and to provide mood lighting for studio 1. Ms Molho worked closely with WSDG/Spain, project engineer, Marc Viadu, to identify fabricators for these custom-built ceiling clouds. Their value for enhancing the live room's acoustics was reportedly apparent by the final commissioning tests.

'Elements of this complex are genuinely unique,' said WSDG founder/principal, John Storyk. 'In addition to the ingenious Magic Ceiling Cubes, the studio 1 live room's three oversized iso booths can be re-configured in a variety of permutations. They can serve as independent spaces, as one large and one small iso, as a single large iso or as an extension of the live room, as a variable acoustic element to increase its volume and reverberation time. Additionally, their large pocketing, acoustic sliding glass doors provide complete visual contact between all three iso Booths and the live room.

'Ultimately, the success of this massive project is a testament to the communication skills and consummate professionalism of Elie Wakim, Imar Trading & Contracting, and the entire global WSDG team. We are all extremely pleased to be associated with this significant addition to the Middle East's audio/video production/post-production landscape,' concluded Mr Storyk.

You will be able to read more about Katara in a future edition of *Pro Audio MEA*.

www.groupimar.com
www.wsdg.com



Studio 2 is equipped with an API vision console

level of performance,' surmised Mr Morris.

The fine-tuning of the control and live rooms was handled by WSDG Brazil partner/GM, Renato Cipriano, WSDG Europe partner/GM Dirk Noy, and the entire international

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