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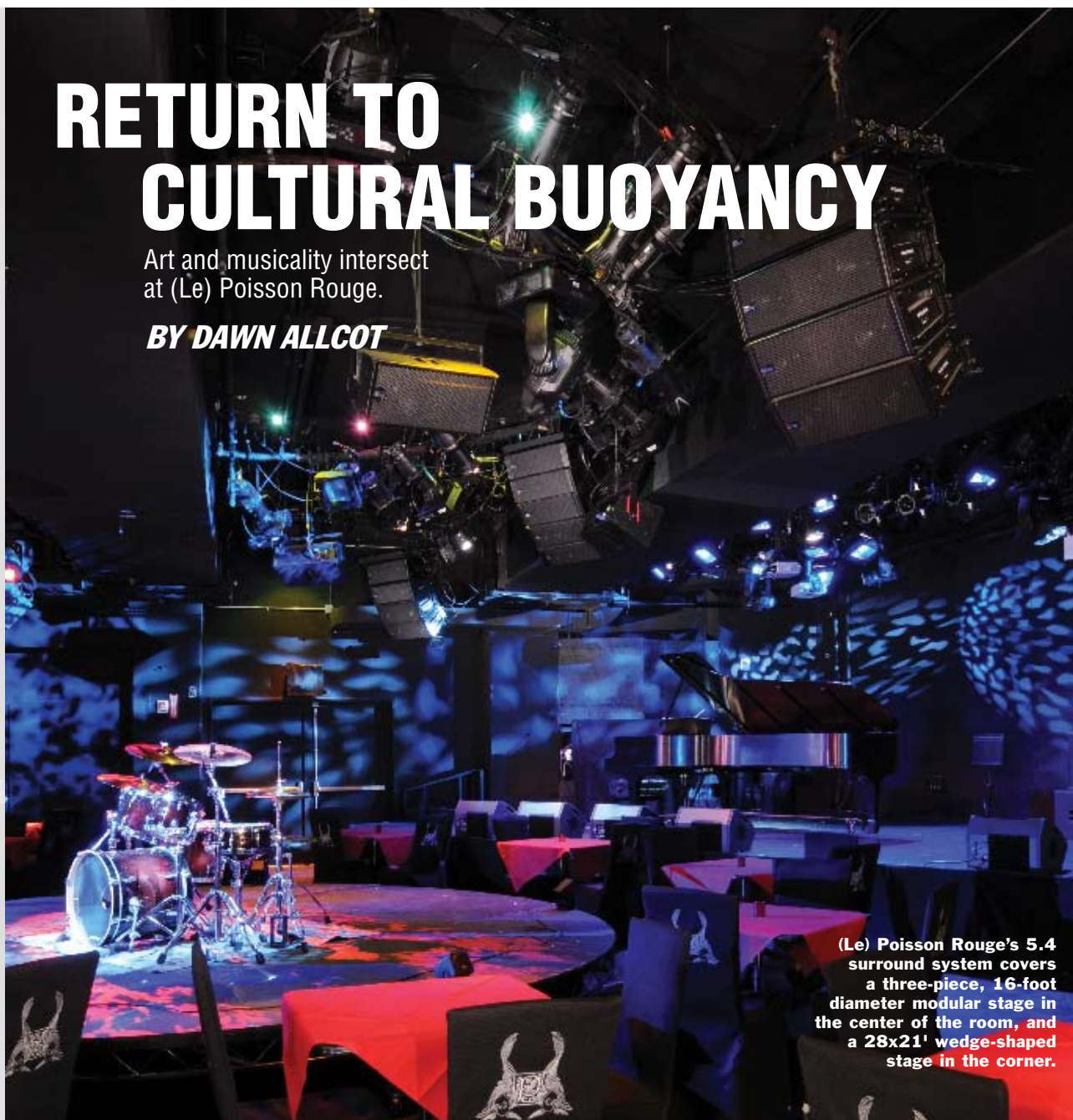


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RETURN TO CULTURAL BUOYANCY

Art and musicality intersect
at (Le) Poisson Rouge.

BY DAWN ALLCOT



(Le) Poisson Rouge's 5.4 surround system covers a three-piece, 16-foot diameter modular stage in the center of the room, and a 28x21' wedge-shaped stage in the corner.

Paul Klimson of Masque Sound, the East Rutherford NJ-based systems integrator that installed the audiovisual systems in (Le) Poisson Rouge, called the Greenwich Village NY venue “the Lamborghini of clubs.”

Damon Krukowski of the duet Damon & Naomi offered praise after playing in the Bleecker Street club on the first night of its “soft opening” in June. In an email to club co-owner David Handler, he wrote: “Great room, great sound...all in all, one of the nic-

est places we've ever played in the US. I think you could make use of that room for just about any kind of music, too.”

Primary Goal

These statements highlight one of the primary goals of (Le) Poisson Rouge (LPR) owners Handler and Justin Kantor: to create an eclectic venue capable of hosting a broad range of performance styles, from punk rock to contemporary classical music,

along with film screenings and private events. “We want (Le) Poisson Rouge to be an audiophile's haven, not just a nightclub,” said Handler.

An extensive 5.4 surround system from Meyer Sound (the first ever to be installed in a nightclub), multiple stages and performance configurations, two Meyer Sound Galileo processors, six Yamaha DMEs and a Digidesign D-Show Profile Venue Console Mix Rack, among other AV equipment, combined with the expertise of Masque Sound

Dawn Allcot is a freelance writer specializing in the audiovisual and health and fitness industries



As with many venues in New York City, the entrance (on the far right) to (Le) Poisson Rouge is low key. Above is the historic Village Gate marquee.



Howard Sherman

and Walters-Storyk Design Group, helped make it possible.

"I'm glad the owners were able to take the risks they did and put the money into the right gear," Klimson stated.

The owners also deemed it important that the space pay tribute to the club's prior glory as Art D'Lugoff's Village Gate that, for more than 40 years, hosted such acts as Peter, Paul and Mary, Bob Dylan, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and Miles Davis. "With the opening of (Le) Poisson Rouge," Handler said, "we want to bring back the cultural buoyancy that the Village is starting to lose. The area is getting homogenized. Kantor and I are both classically trained musicians, and we want to bring the arts back to this mecca. Having Art D'Lugoff's blessing for the project made it so much richer of an experience."

Premier Teams For A Premier Venue

With D'Lugoff's support and a clear plan for the club's aesthetic, programming and purpose, the owners called in a team of the area's top designers and installers to execute their vision. Highland NY's Walters-Storyk Design Group

(WSDG) completed the acoustical and architectural design in the club. The WSDG team included co-principal/architect/acoustician John Storyk, co-principal and interior designer Beth Walters, designer and project manager Joshua Morris, HVAC engineer Marcy Ramos, system integration specialist Judy Elliot-Brown and associate David Kotch.

"We knew we needed a superior acoustical engineer for the space," Handler said. "We liked WSDG's close-knit team, the integrated effort and John Storyk's personal devotion to the craft."

The venue held personal significance to Storyk, which further enhanced his passion for the project. Village Gate was the first club Storyk ever visited as a teenager and, ironically, LPR sits just 10 minutes away from Electric Lady Studios, the recording studio Storyk designed for Jimi Hendrix in 1969. "It's exciting to be back in this neighborhood, 40 years later, designing this club," Storyk told *Sound & Communications*.

Kotch, as an associate for WSDG and a project engineer for Masque Sound, wore two hats during the project. He acted as the primary liaison between the designer and the Masque Sound

team, which included Paul and Courtney Klimson and Kevin Mochel.

Kotch said his dual roles helped the project go smoothly under tight time constraints; the entire installation was completed in eight weeks. As the designer and installer, Kotch could make changes onsite and re-issue drawings without delays. It eliminated any chance of miscommunication or misunderstanding and expedited the process.

In spite of this, the tight timeline created challenges, especially in the two weeks toward the end of the construction phase, when Masque Sound and all the other trades were onsite at the same time. "There was a lot of interaction with the construction crew," Klimson said. "We all had to play nice, but we made some good friends as a result."

The contractor saved time by designing custom cable pulls and terminating connections, programming and checking the controls, and building the boxes in the shop.

Incongruous Form Meets Multi-Function

As in many high-end nightclubs and lounges, the interior design and the musical programming, along with such

Masque Sound

The team of Masque Sound and Walters-Storyk Design Group brought a unique blend of talents and expertise to the audiovisual installation at (Le) Poisson Rouge.

Masque Sound, an East Rutherford NJ-based full-service dealer and installer of audiovisual products, was launched in 1936. Founded by three Broadway stagehands, the company specialized in audio systems for Broadway productions. Over the company's illustrious 70-plus-year history, Masque Sound's production list has included *Oklahoma*, *Grease*, *Cats* and, more recently, *Rent*, *The Lion King*, *Mamma Mia!*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Spring Awakening*.

Masque Sound also provides complete sound reinforcement solutions for television productions, sporting event shows, corporate events, special events, live concerts and conventions. In 2002, the company acquired Professional Wireless Systems to offer direct, secure solutions for performance and technical RF communications.

Although the company's slogan, "We're Live," exemplifies Masque's commitment to ensuring customers flawless sound for their live performances, and effective wireless and intercom systems during shows, live sound reinforcement is by no means the company's only field of expertise.

Masque Sound recently made its foray into the fixed-install market, completing projects in the fields of education, entertainment and corporate facilities. As part of its expansion into fixed installs, Masque launched a House of Worship Division, recently completing a sound system upgrade at Arcadia (California) Presbyterian Church.

The company's experience in Broadway productions and fast turn-around live sound applications helped the integrator complete the installation at (Le) Poisson Rouge in record time.

In the 1950s, the company became the first to adopt tape technology for the theater. It is now run by Geoff and Jim Shearing, grandsons of one of the original founders.

For more information, go to www.masquesound.com.

considerations as the drink menu, work together with the technology to create the desired ambience. Even the club's cryptic name, French for "red fish," reflects the venue's eclectic nature. "Other than the musicality of the name, it's referential to a different time and place, where there was a symbiotic relationship between art and musicality," Handler explained.

Two concrete bars, exposed HVAC units and construction foam tables share space with custom-designed, red and black "fish arm" chairs, fine silver trays and rich, warm colors to create what Handler called "a juxtaposition of seemingly incongruous elements of style." "We were very clear on what we wanted the space to look like," he said, "so we didn't need someone to design an aesthetic... we needed someone who would work with us." WSDG's Beth Walters, along with interior design project manager Kathlyn Boland and furniture/graphic designer Carlos Andrade, fit the bill.

Storyk commented on his company's

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role in the process: “David Handler had definite design ideas. Our role was to shepherd them. It was up to us to work out the technology and the hard architecture.”

One Of The Challenges

One of the challenges in this regard was fitting all the requirements into 12,300 square feet, with only 3882 square feet of performance area available. The club’s capacity totals more than 1000, including standing room, with cabaret seating for about 250. The space includes two bars, two VIP seating areas, dressing rooms, a green room, a kitchen, bathrooms, executive office space and a coat check area.

Dressing rooms sit to the north side of the lounge, with a corridor connecting the dressing rooms to a vestibule that leads to the main stage. The corridor doubles as a green room. Elevated VIP sections in the back of the venue create storage space beneath their floors for a Steinway Grand Piano, extra chairs and the AV racks.

Walters-Storyk Design Group (WSDG)

In selecting an acoustical and interior designer to execute his vision for (Le) Poisson Rouge, co-owner David Handler sought “the best of the best,” a renowned name in the field of sound reinforcement and architectural and acoustical design. He found his needs met by the Highland NY office of Walters-Storyk Design Group, located just 90 minutes north of New York City.

The international architectural and acoustic design consultant provides services worldwide, with offices in San Francisco, New York, Miami, Mexico City, Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Buenos Aires (Latin America), Basel (Europe) and Beijing (Asia). The company has designed more than 3000 media production facilities worldwide, including historic venues such as the Jimi Hendrix Electric Lady Studio in Greenwich Village NY, and the Jazz at Lincoln Center performance complex.

WSDG’s background in professional studio design helped with the extensive sound masking and sound isolation required in (Le) Poisson Rouge. The company also recently completed private studio projects for the Goo Goo Dolls, Tracy Chapman, Aerosmith, Green Day and Alicia Keys.

In addition to sound isolation, and acoustic and interior design and consulting, WSDG specializes in acoustic testing and measurement, HVAC noise/lighting/vibration control, and AV systems design and integration. Corporate, educational and house of worship clients include New York City’s Hunter College; Peavey Electronics’ Meridian MS headquarters; the Dazzler Hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Crossroads Tabernacle & Boden Center for the Performing Arts in the Bronx NY.

WSDG, founded in 1969 by John Storyk, is operated by co-principals John Storyk, Beth Walters and Dirk Noy.

For more information, go to www.wsdg.com.



Equipment

- 2 AKG Acoustics C414 B-XLS 5-pattern condenser mics
- 2 AKG Acoustics C451 B cardioid condenser mics
- 4 APC 1500 Smart UPS
- 1 beyerdynamic M88 hypercardioid dynamic mic
- 1 Canon VC-C50iR 1/4" CCD reverse-mount communication camera
- 1 Canon PTZ security camera
- 8 Clear-Com CC95 single muff headsets
- 4 Clear-Com HS-6 handsets
- 4 Clear-Com KB-702 2-channel wall panels w/program
- 1 Clear-Com MS-702 2-channel main station
- 2 Clear-Com RM-702 2-channel remote stations
- 6 Clear-Com RS-602 2-channel beltpacks
- 1 Denon CDR632 CD recorder
- 1 Denon DN-631 CD player
- 1 Denon DN-631 CD player
- 2 Denon DN-631 CD players
- 1 Digidesign D-Show Profile w/mix rack (48 inputs x 16 outputs), I/O expansion card
- 1 Electro-Voice RE20 dynamic cardioid broadcast mic
- 1 Extron composite video transmitter
- 2 Extron MTP R SV A RCA transmitters
- 1 Extron MTPX1616+ video switching matrix 8x16
- 6 Extron RGB video w/audio transmitters
- 6 Extron universal receivers
- 1 EZ Tilt lightweight console table
- 3 KVM Ethernet switches
- 8 L-Acoustics 112XP self-powered coaxial range 12' speakers
- 1 L-Acoustics SB15P compact high-power subwoofer
- 1 Macintosh MacPro computer
- 2 Meyer Sound 600 HP compact high-power subwoofers w/remote monitoring system cards
- 2 Meyer Sound 700HP ultra high-power subwoofers w/remote monitoring system cards
- 2 Meyer Sound Galileo 616 system processors
- 8 Meyer Sound M1D UltraCompact curvilinear array speakers
- 2 Meyer Sound M1D ultra-compact subwoofers
- 4 Meyer Sound M'elodie Bumper (MG-M'elodie) multipurpose grids
- 16 Meyer Sound M'elodie UltraCompact high-power curvilinear array speakers
- 5 Meyer Sound MM4XP self-powered miniature speakers w/yokes, mounts
- 3 Meyer Sound UMS1P ultra-compact subwoofers
- 7 Meyer Sound UPJ-1P compact VariO speakers w/yokes
- 6 Meyer Sound UPJunior ultra-compact VariO speakers w/yokes, mounts
- 5 Middle Atlantic SLIM5 16-space, 26" deep KD rack frames w/accessories
- 1 Neumann KMS105 supercardioid condenser mic
- 2 Radial JDI duplex stereo DI boxes
- 4 Radial JDI passive DI boxes
- 4 Radial JPC computer DI boxes
- 1 Rane MLM82S mic line mixer
- 2 Sennheiser E609 supercardioid dynamic mics
- 4 Sennheiser MD421 cardioid dynamic mics
- 2 Sennheiser ME-66 supercardioid short shotgun condensers
- 4 Sennheiser MKE2 sub-miniature clip-on lavalier mics
- 2 Sennheiser MKH40 cardioid condenser mics



Four 14-space equipment racks can be rolled out from the enclosed area beneath the VIP section for maintenance, or moved to the FOH position for mixing.

- 1 Shure Beta 52A dynamic kick drum mic w/high-output neodymium element
- 2 Shure Beta 57A supercardioid dynamic mics w/high-output neodymium element
- 2 Shure Beta 58A supercardioid dynamic mics w/high-output neodymium element
- 2 Shure Beta 87A supercardioid condenser mics
- 1 Shure Beta 91 cardioid condenser kick drum mic
- 4 Shure Beta 98/S w/A98D miniature supercardioid condenser mics
- 2 Shure paddle antennas
- 4 Shure SM57 cardioid dynamic mics
- 8 Shure SM58 cardioid dynamic mics
- 2 Shure SM81 cardioid condenser mics w/10dB attenuator and 3-position low-cut filter
- 1 Shure UA845 US wideband antenna splitter
- 2 Shure UHF-R UR4D (H4 Series) wireless receivers
- 4 Shure UR1 wireless bodypack transmitters
- 4 Shure UR2/KSM9 wireless handheld transmitters w/KSM9 heads
- 1 Stealth SR-2500P tower computer
- 1 Toshiba Portege M700-S7001X Windows XP tablet PC
- 8 Whirlwind W1 25'
- 4 Whirlwind W1 50'
- 8 Whirlwind W1 fanouts to 8 male XLR
- 2 Whirlwind W4 fanouts to 48 male XLR w/8 female XLR
- 200 Whirlwind XLR adapters
- 3 Yamaha CP4SF passive control panels for DME
- 1 Yamaha DME4ioES programmable DSP engine satellite
- 1 Yamaha DME64 programmable DSP engine
- 2 Yamaha DME8iES programmable DSP engine satellites
- 1 Yamaha DME8oES programmable DSP engine satellite
- 1 Yamaha M7CL-48 digital console
- 1 Yamaha meter bridge for M7CL
- 1 Yamaha MY16AE 16-channel AES/EBU I/O card
- 1 Yamaha MY16-ES64 EtherSound card
- 1 Yamaha MY16-EX EtherSound expansion card
- 1 Yamaha MY8ADDA96-CA 8 analog inputs and 8 analog outputs card
- 1 Yamaha MY8-AE-CA 8-channel AES/EBU I/O card

List is edited from information supplied by Masque Sound.

The idea of dual stages evolved over time, Storyk noted. The corner of the main room features a fixed stage, measuring 28 feet across by 21 feet deep, in a wedge shape. A modular stage, manufactured from three separate pieces, forms a 200-square-foot circle in the center of the room. One piece can be used as a runway or apron off the main stage. The three-part stage measures 16 feet in diameter and sits 1'6" above the floor.

Handler underscored the importance of a design team that was able to not

only execute his and Kantor's vision for the club, but was able to take his ideas to the next level. "John empowered us, letting us know that nothing is out of bounds, and we embraced that philosophy."

First-Ever Club Surround Sound

Handler knew that many contemporary classical orchestral music compositions are written to be performed in surround sound, but he didn't know

it would be possible, and within budget, to implement the technology in the nightclub. The venue features a multi-channel surround sound system for live performance, the first-ever application of such technology in a nightclub. The capabilities permit the venue to premiere pieces that could not be performed in other venues to the same effect as the composers intended them to be heard. The system was also designed for movie screenings. "We want to premiere works that can't be premiered in other places," he said. "It was important that both the venue and the sound system were versatile."

The system permits surround sound configurations ranging from 5.1 up to 7.4, through a collection of 51 Meyer Sound self-powered speakers that hang on a custom i-beam rack system. The sound system offers great flexibility for multiple stage configurations and performances in a variety of musical genres, including jazz, indie rock, punk, blues and contemporary classical. Klimson noted that Masque Sound's long-standing relationship with Meyer Sound made the speaker selection a logical choice.

Four Meyer M'elodie arrays of four boxes each hang near the front of the main stage along with two M1D arrays, also with four speakers each. A ring of additional M'elodie boxes hangs over the center room stage for performances in the round, with additional audience seating available on the main stage in this configuration.

Two 700-HP subs hang under stage left and stage right, with two 600-HP sub boxes in the rear of the room, beneath each VIP riser, for additional bass when the venue is being used as a dance club.

Five Mix Locations

The DJ can mix from any of five locations: behind the bar, on either VIP riser, on the main corner stage or on the center stage. To save space, the DJ can be mixed directly from a tablet PC, creating more usable floor space for patrons.

Meyer Sound UPJ-1P delay fills can be used as DJ booth monitors or fills for the VIP area. The UPJ-1P fills and

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NOISE FILTRATION SURGE PROTECTION NINE TOTAL OUTLETS 15 AMP RATING "PROTECTION ON" INDICATOR WALL WART SPACING DUAL PULL-OUT FRONT PANEL LIGHTS DIGITAL VOLTMETER

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MM-4XP compact speakers also provide sound reinforcement during acoustic performances. The MM-4XPs are used as front fills for the center stage.

The versatile UPJs are also used in surround sound applications for rear surround and to mix the band during live performances. "That's more of a Broadway application for those speakers," Klimson explained. "You can return reverb sends to the back. It gives the engineers more flexibility."

By reconfiguring the speakers in any number of ways, the club's sound engineer has endless options for sound reinforcement.

Additional UPJ-1Ps placed in the bar area help overcome acoustical buildup caused by inconveniently placed structural columns and low-lying ducts. "We overcame the buildup from the architectural features by adding the fills, programmed with the appropriate EQ, time delay and level," Kotch explained.

LAcoustics 112XPs and an LAcoustics



The mixing position is on a raised platform at the rear of the room.

SB15P are used as stage monitors.

Processing is accomplished through two Meyer Sound Galileo 616 system processors and six Yamaha DME digital mixing engines. The DME 64 provides EtherSound routing capabilities for inputs and outputs through the other DME processors. Two DME8iES processors handle the two main bars, while a DME4ioES handles the main stage and sub processing for the annex

bar. A DME8oES provides loudspeaker processing in the annex bar.

Flexibility

Klimson said he liked the flexibility provided by the DME systems. Four fader banks in the two main bars allow the bartender to control mute and volume, without worrying about accidentally bumping into additional buttons or inadvertently changing settings. "It's

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Even in acoustically challenging venues like ice rinks, natatoriums and gymnasiums, Community's iBOX loudspeaker systems provide clear voice announcements and commentary, and great sounding music playback.

Proven in venues around the world, from local education facilities to the Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, iBOX offers modern, clean styling and a wide range of versatile mounting brackets with all models offered in white, black and unfinished to match any décor.



Arrington Ice Arena
Adrian College, Adrian, Michigan

iBOX is now offered in a portable version

Community
communitypro.com

very user friendly,” Klimson said.

Sources include a Denon CD player, iPod, cable box or programming through the house system.

FOH features a Digidesign Profile Venue Console Mix Rack with 48-in by 16-out. The self-contained desk, with no external rack, helped save precious space in the venue, as did the self-powered speakers and subs. Any of four 14-space equipment racks can be rolled out from the enclosed area beneath the VIP section for maintenance, or rolled to the FOH position for mixing. The DME64 serves as an AES/EBU matrix and self-contained mixing platform through a wireless tablet PC when the console is not being used.

An entire complement of microphones from Shure and Sennheiser, with a few models from AKG, Electro-Voice, beyerdynamic and Neumann, are provided to meet the needs of performers.

Acoustical Challenges

Predictably, placing a high-energy nightclub in the center of Greenwich Village required superior sound isolation. WSDG’s experience as a professional audio studio designer came into play, and the company employed several pro studio sound isolation techniques to ensure that the activities inside (Le) Poisson Rouge would not disturb the neighbors.

WSDG specified de-coupled wall systems and Kinetics Noise Isomax clips, with extra layers of gypsum placed over the clips, to contain the sound within the room. Noise-Lock doors from IAC were also installed to ensure STC values in excess of 51.

In addition, the club’s shape (asymmetrical with 12-foot ceilings and immovable beams) and textures, including many hard surfaces such as concrete bars and exposed steel, created acoustical challenges, including highly

reflective surfaces and areas where the sound would become “trapped.” Forty-four one-inch-thick, six-pound, density fabric-wrapped acoustic panels were strategically placed after the arrays were finalized. WSDG engineered the panel placement scheme before instal-



Elevated VIP sections in the back of the venue create storage space beneath their floors for a piano, extra chairs and the AV racks.

lation and again during final system commissioning.

Flexible Video Systems

An Extron MTPX1616+ 8x16 matrix is the backbone of the video system. Two client-provided LG plasma screens hang in the annex bar. A Canon PTZ security camera designed for low-light applications captures images from the main stage and routes the video through the Extron switcher, which sends the signal to the monitors in the annex bar and the green room. Two client-supplied Canon 7365 projectors display images on dual dropdown screens located behind the main stage, for graphics to add atmosphere during avant-garde musical performances.

A Draper motorized 161-inch premier video screen hangs permanently at the edge of the stage. Infrastructure and rigging was provided for a high-end projector for movie premieres, and the club rents a Christie projector as needed. During video recording, the Galileo handles video switching, routing the signal to a Mac Quad Core tower computer loaded with ProTools.

Intercom

The audiovisual systems also include a Clear-Com intercom system, composed of an MS-702 two-channel main station, two RM-702 two-channel remote stations, six RS-602 belt packs, four KB-702 wall panels, four HS-6 handsets and eight CC95 headsets.

The system is used for show production and communication throughout key areas of the venue. The KB-702 wall panels are located in the ticket booth, dressing room and in the executive offices, offering program feed for audio in addition to communication. The KB-702s provide program interrupt capabilities for use during show calls.

‘A Showcase’

Klimson called the club a “showcase” for all involved, and that’s been proven true in just a handful of performances during the venue’s soft opening this past Summer. A list of performers ranging from Rickie Lee Jones to Mos Def has already lauded the (Le) Poisson Rouge’s atmosphere and high-end technical systems.

This initial positive response makes Handler even more confident that the club is providing something unique to music lovers in the New York metropolitan area. “People always have a need to have a good time, camaraderie, interaction and revelry. That need is even greater in times of [economic] difficulty,” he offered.

“In terms of the music scene, there is no better time to open a mid-size venue that can provide something different. We are proud of the fact that we are as inclusive as possible. We want to attract people who are receptive to different musical styles...people who are seeking a quality experience. Our hope is that people will come looking for a high aesthetic with the goal of being challenged by art. The systems in place help us to accomplish that.” ■