Martin Audio TORUS T820 for San Luis Rey



One of 21 missions originally built by the Spanish in California, Mission San Luis Rey church, known as the ‘King of Missions’, was founded in Oceanside in 1798. Today it stands as one of the finest examples of Spanish Colonial architecture, a national historic landmark that Franciscan Friars call home. San Diego-based AV company Sound Image Integration, now part of Clair Global Integration, have been servicing the Mission’s audio, camera, and video distribution requirements for the past 20 years. Business Development Manager, Scott Coyle, explained that to keep the Serra Center worship space fully operable as it carries out vital community work, previously sympathetic budget decisions were undertaken.

That was until a decision was made to reorientate the interior, from its traditional long rectangular shape, through 90°, to bring the congregation - which can reach 1200 - closer to the altar. Coyle recognised that “While it made more sense that way, the sound was compromised due to a succession of ceiling speakers.” When administrators recognised that a more serious and permanent approach to their sound was required, it was the Martin Audio TORUS T820 constant curvature solution that Coyle proposed, bearing in mind that with the reconfiguration, the

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church now had extraordinary width but little depth.

“We knew the focus needed to be principally the spoken word,” he said. “However, at the same time they have large congregations attending their weekend masses when a full choir and band perform.” They looked at the space, and reviewed the types of speakers that would serve best for clarity, coverage and budget. “Having undertaken several projects with Martin Audio over the years in the house of worship space TORUS was our recommendation. Based on our long-standing relationship I knew we would have their trust,” he added.

An approach was made to Martin Audio Product Support Engineer, Will Harris, who duly set to work on a design. “When [the church] saw the visualisation and coverage map of how the speakers would react within the room, they were truly wowed,” said Coyle. Harris himself recalled, “With such a beautiful and historic building I knew that the minimal visual footprint would be needed to get this done right and the TORUS T820 really fit the bill. We were able to get them well tucked away within the architecture of the building.”

Delivering high output from an 8” speaker within a compact footprint, it is the 100° horizontal and 20° vertical dispersion pattern that make it so ideal for the short throw requirement within this space. Left/Right flown pairs flank a central cluster of four T820 elements, while out wide on each wing wall-mounted Martin Audio CDD10’s provide optional outfill reinforcement, generally depending on whether the choir is in session. SX112 subwoofers warm up the sound and fit snugly into the existing cut-outs in the ceiling, while the entire rig is powered by a pair of matched iKON iK81 eight-channel amplifiers.

Finally, working in such historic buildings—this unique space enjoys classical and baroque architecture - as the integration experts at Sound Image often do, this installation was undertaken with great sensitivity. “Once our engineering team had purpose manufactured good rigging points, the system went up easily.”

When it came to fine-tuning the system, Coyle said they were fortunate in that the room was not as ‘live’ as is typical in what he terms as “an A-frame type of scenario.” Will Harris undertook final commissioning. “When he fired the system up, he looked at his screen, smiled and said, ‘This is why I love these boxes!’” reminisced Coyle. “Testament not only to the box but to our installation craftsmanship.

“This was a perfect project for the TORUS 8. The constant curvature systems just work so well together delivering even and seamless coverage across the entire room, while handling the entire frequency spectrum with very little effort.” Kerey Quaid, The Mission’s Music Director, agreed wholeheartedly. “The new speakers and amplification system are a great improvement for both music and spoken word in our worship space. We have both clarity and bass (for the first time), and equally good sound for the whole congregation. Great equipment!”

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