Historic Stifel Theatre adds d&b KSL loudspeaker system



Picture: Spectrum Sound and Scott Rovak for Stifel Theatre

Stifel Theatre is a historic, 3,100 seat theatre in the heart of downtown St. Louis, Missouri. Originally opened in 1934, the theatre has played host to a variety of events including opera, Broadway, the symphony, comedy acts and some of the greatest musical performers in history. And just recently, the theatre has made significant improvements to the guest experience, by including a d&b audiotechnik KSL loudspeaker system, installed by Spectrum Sound, Nashville.

KSL was introduced to the world as the ‘younger sibling’ to the flagship GSL system, which set the stage for the evolutionary path that KSL would inherit as part of the SL-Series, just in a smaller package. The family shares broadband directivity and extended low frequency response throughout the lineup. Technologies like d&b ArrayProcessing have also provided an option for sonic consistency, delivering tonal balance and even level distribution over the entire coverage area front to back.

“All venues have their own set of unique challenges when it comes to designing and implementing house PA,” states Ken DeBelius, System Integration Sales Manager for Spectrum. “Stifel Theatre, while beautiful aesthetically, had some typical

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acoustical challenges with some significant hard reflections that could be exacerbated by amplified PA. This was one of the reasons why we chose the d&b audiotechnik KSL-Series for this space; the very controlled polar directivity of KSL minimized the amount of wasted energy that typically excites the room in bad ways with ordinary loudspeaker systems. During the initial deployment of the rig, everyone was instantly amazed at how well it sounded right out of the gate without even doing much system tuning. It simply sounded great from the start."

DeBelius said that the Stifel Theatre staff were familiar with other d&b systems, mostly V-Series, as they regularly come through the space with various touring productions, making them well-acquainted with the d&b sonic footprint. "They had not actually heard KSL but based on Spectrum's recommendation, they went with this premium solution that will serve their needs for decades."

"Our number priority as a company is to provide the best experience possible for both performers and guests who visit our theatre," said Adrian Silverstein, Assistant General Manager of Stifel Theatre. "Spectrum, along with Tim Kostal, the head of our audio department, understood those needs and through both of their expertise, made it easy to invest in a state-of-the-art d&b PA that addresses our need to adapt to the varied productions we host. Spectrum's willingness to provide their touring amp rack during a chip shortage due to supply issues is just an example of how they will go above and beyond for their clients."

The staff at Stifel Theatre expressed the desire to have an auxiliary center full-range cluster that could be used both with the main Left/Right KSL arrays, or alone for simpler talking heads shows. "For this, DeBelius says, "we elected to use the d&b A-Series Augmented Array product. These are suspended directly below the center flown subwoofer array using a custom designed/fabricated adaptor from the d&b custom shop. Despite their small footprint, they keep up with the main KSL arrays remarkably well."

d&b A-Series combines the ease of point source clusters with the level and frequency distribution of line arrays, delivering signature d&b sonic quality in an augmented format. It can be deployed vertically or horizontally, and its coverage is adjustable to meet its requirements.

d&b ArrayProcessing was implemented in this project, and DeBelius said he rarely installs any d&b systems without ArrayProcessing. "The benefits in smoothing the tonal response across the seating planes are totally worth the extra amplifier channels needed. It also greatly assisted providing good coverage into the balcony without excessive level loss, right up to the very top of the high balcony seating without having to resort to separate upper balcony delay fills."

The KSL configuration consists of 8 x KSL8, 16 x KSL12, 4 x KSL-SUBs (center, flown SUB array), 4 x SL-GSUBs (portable floor SUBs for the deck), 18 x 40D amplifiers, 2 x D80 amplifiers, 8 x 44S loudspeakers for front fills, 3 x DS10 Dante network bridge, 4 x Yi7P point source loudspeakers for under balcony delay fills, 1 x AL60

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and 3 x AL90 A-Series loudspeakers, and 2 x M6 wedge monitors.

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