

Weathervane Playhouse Gets Clean and Green with Audio-Technica



Since beginning its run in 1935, Weathervane Community Playhouse in Akron, Ohio, has presented a wide spectrum of plays, from classics to new works, spanning dramas, comedies, musicals and more. Working first out of an empty carriage house (and named after the rooster on the barn's cupola), Weathervane moved first in 1951 to a more substantial building with a seating capacity of 150, then in the early 70s to its current 240-seat bespoke facility. Three major renovations followed, along with technology updates along the way, recently including a wireless microphone system centered on the fourth-generation 3000 Series from Audio-Technica, a leading innovator in transducer technology for over 50 years.

"Throughout Weathervane's history, we upgraded technology whenever we could," shared Melanie YC Pepe, Weathervane's Chief Executive Artistic Director. Those upgrades have included a mainstage fly system, monitoring for the orchestra and lobby, new audio consoles, modern lighting including LED and moving fixtures, and a new house PA. "We continue to look at ways to 'up our game' every season."

Weathervane has developed a trust of Audio-Technica gear, including go-to's like AT4033a and AT2020 wired mics, based on product satisfaction and enriched by proximity, as Weathervane's Akron location is a short drive from the Audio-Technica

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U.S. headquarters in Stow, Ohio. “We love that A-T is right down the street from us and is always willing to answer questions and assist with suggestions,” said Christopher Pepe, President of Clear Gold Audio and Lighting. Akron’s Clear Gold Audio & Lighting, an event production support company that is a major sponsor of the playhouse, helped Weathervane decide on a 16-channel A-T 3000 Series wireless system based on their own experience with A-T and with the 3000 Series systems in their rental pool.

At Weathervane, an RF Venue Diversity Fin cross-polarized wireless microphone antenna feeds four cascaded RF Venue DISTRO4 distribution amplifiers that each feed four A-T 3000 Series wireless microphone receivers. The fourth generation A-T 3000 series wireless systems feature a 300-foot operating range and a class-leading 60 MHz tuning range. Frequencies can be easily scanned and selected on the 3000 Series receivers and then IR-sync’ed with the transmitters. Further, the 3000 Series lets users set backup frequencies that can be quickly swapped from the transmitters in the event of unexpected interference.



“The A-T 3000 series gave us everything we were looking for, and more,” Christopher Pepe enthused. “The backup channels have completely eliminated the signal drop issues we have dealt with in the past – we have not experienced a single drop out. The mics sound fantastic even before they are EQ’ed. Rechargeable battery pack technology was a huge plus – in years past Weathervane recycled about 3,000 batteries a year.” Eight A-T dual-charging bays let the playhouse

volunteers easily manage battery readiness. “We have been able to run two productions with two rechargeable batteries for each pack,” shares Fred Gloor, Weathervane’s Associate Artistic Director. “The life of the battery is estimated at least two years, which will save us thousands of dollars and have a much smaller footprint on our environment.”

“Our audio has been clearer, more balanced, easier to mix, and much more consistent,” Gloor concludes. Though live performances are on hiatus due to pandemic mass gathering restrictions, Weathervane is continuing the education element of its mission online and producing cabaret performances and short film projects for virtual distribution.

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