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TASCAM Helps DePauw University School of Music Address the Challenges of the Pandemic

DR-40X audio recorder proves ideal for virtual instruction



As a private university with a Methodist heritage, DePauw University houses a School of Music as part of its liberal arts focus. With the COVID-19 pandemic

creating a wide range of challenges for people of all walks of life, it comes as no surprise that fine arts programs have also had to make adjustments in the way they operate. For DePauw University's School of Music, a significant part of the solution resulted in the purchase of 155 pieces each of the DR-40X 4-track Digital Audio Recorder/USB Audio Interface and TH-MX2 headphones from TASCAM.

Steven Linville is the Director of Productions at DePauw University. As the person responsible for overseeing all events in the performing arts, including music and theatre, he is actively involved in everything from marketing/publicity and event planning to managing instrument and technology equipment distribution. He discussed the various factors that led to the University's purchase of the TASCAM equipment.

"Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our students have been learning remotely," Linville explained. "As a School of Music, we needed to provide high quality solutions for virtual lessons and virtual classes. Each faculty and staff member, as well as each student in the School of Music, received a TASCAM DR-40X to be used for recording or as an external microphone on their computer. Additionally, each person received a pair of TH-MX2 headphones and a separate Bluetooth speaker. This enabled our students to perform with tracks while sending high quality audio via Zoom or other similar platforms. We've also used these recording devices to create virtual productions, such as our recent opera productions *Sorry, Wrong Number* by Michael Remson as well as *The Old Maid* and *the Thief* by Gian Carlo Menotti.

With classes and rehearsals occurring both remotely and in hybrid formats, the TASCAM DR-40X recorders get used in a variety of ways. "We have mostly used these recorders to connect to computers - both MAC and PC," Linville notes. "As expected, they are also being used as stand-alone recorders, and therein lies one of the distinct advantages of the DR-40X. With its built-in 4-track record capability, the USB audio interface, plus its ability to use SD cards as its recording medium, there is a tremendous amount of flexibility that makes this recorder so well suited to a wide range of musical environments."

For their use among faculty and students, Linville pointed to some additional DR-40X attributes he admires. "First and foremost, audio quality is crucial and, in this regard, the TASCAM DR-40X delivers. The units produce broadcast quality audio, and this has had a very positive impact on everyone who comes in contact with the recorder. The DR-40X is also very versatile. The fact that it can operate as both a recording device and a microphone make this an excellent solution for a variety of music applications. Further, its compact form factor enables it to be carried around easily and conveniently, which are important considerations for student use."

Since their purchase in the Summer of 2020 for use when classes began that August, Linville reports the TASCAM equipment has exceeded expectations, "These devices were the right choice for us. They've allowed us to continue to provide

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quality education to our students during a very difficult time. There are many more uses that we look forward to incorporating into our programming once our current restrictions allow. This pandemic has forced everyone to re-evaluate how they address music instruction, and for us, TASCAM has been an important part of the solution.”

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