



Hotel Sound System Rocks the House

Competitive Advantages are Loud and Clear

Los ANGELES (April 21, 2009) — As a frequent venue for world-class entertainers from nearby Hollywood who demand top-shelf production values, the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza approached the replacement of its ballroom sound system as a mission-critical objective and, therefore, recruited their trusted authority on the subject: PSAV® Presentation Services.



The hotel's 25,000-square-foot Los Angeles Ballroom — considered the city's largest — can accommodate 2,100 guests in a theater-style set up or 1,800 for a banquet. It has hosted international dignitaries, royalty, celebrities and every U.S. president since Lyndon Johnson.

While an existing, seven-year-old amplification and speaker system produced acoustically acceptable sound, the hotel's management determined the cost of replacing it would be justified by benefits accruing to numerous advancements in technology, notably smaller speaker arrays that would improve staging aesthetics and control automation that would speed setup and ensure consistency.

PSAV engineers evaluated every existing component and specified replacement equipment that, unit for unit, offered improved functionality and a meaningful return on investment to justify the cost. They designed a sound system featuring JBL VerTec® 4887A line arrays and JBL VRX® side-fill speakers rigged from the ceiling to the left and right of the ballroom stage.

The new VerTec arrays, which measure 6 feet tall by 2½ feet wide, improve audience sight lines because they are 8 feet narrower than their EAW 750/755 predecessors, according to Bob Cohen, PSAV vice president of sales. The VRX speakers, measuring 4 feet tall by 2 feet wide, also are smaller than their predecessors.

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"We have been able to harness technology in a small, versatile box versus a big monster box, giving our clients a better-looking stage set and the hotel a better-looking ballroom without compromising sound quality," Cohen said.

The speaker arrays are powered by Crown Audio® I-Tech amplifiers and regulated by a DBX® DriveRack® 4800 equalization and speaker management unit. Production crew members control the sound system using a wireless tablet-sized personal computer that can be programmed in advance with all show parameters, eliminating the traditional method of setting hundreds of adjustments manually.

"We program presets that can be recalled with the tablet PC for any number of applications, from a talking head to a panel of six to the entire ballroom for concert sound," on-site Director of Event Technology Nathan Box said. "Before, you used to turn knobs to crank up the amps or make the highs hotter on one side or the other. Now you program your settings, save the presets and the next time you don't have to worry about it."

"We save all settings on disk for repeat clients," he added. "All they need to do is show up, pop in their disk, hit 'recall' and we're ready to go; every equalization, every input is instantaneously restored. This saves an enormous amount of time for us and them."

Up to 130 microphone and electronic instrument inputs can be mixed by a new Yamaha PM5D digital sound console, which can be programmed to remember up to 500 scenes, enabling production staff to instantly key to the desired mix, simplifying management of multiple acts in the same day.

Inputs are made directly into a Roland Systems Group digital snake, which interfaces with the PM5D through Category 5 enhanced Ethernet cables. The digital snake can accommodate 16 audio channels while eliminating malfunctions and length restrictions associated with the analog cabling, Cohen said.

Competitive Advantage

While the installation of such sophisticated sound equipment rarely is found in a hotel environment, the PSAV system gives the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza an "overwhelming competitive advantage" when soliciting meeting planners who wish to invite top-name entertainers, according to Duane Mah, hotel director of catering and convention services.

"Numerous awards dinners and corporate meetings choose our hotel because of our proximity to Hollywood and Beverly Hills," Mah said. "Those events bring in A-list acts that come with technical riders requiring this type of technology. The nature of our business required us to install a system that could accommodate a wide range of needs, from a talking head to a top singer."

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“By investing in this new equipment and offering state-of-the-art technology, we are able to book groups that we otherwise would not be able to land,” he added.



Another enhancement allowing the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza to go after the large events was PSAV's installation of 102 rigging points into the ballroom ceiling. By hoisting equipment, such as projectors, lights, cameras, screens and staging elements, PSAV effectively expanded the space to accommodate new layouts and more attendees. According to Cohen, the improved ballroom space possibilities go hand in hand with PSAV's commitment to overhead safety.

“PSAV's exacting standards are a reflection of the emphasis PSAV places not only on the quality of service and equipment, but also the safety of our installations. PSAV has had zero failures out of 5,000 rigging points installed over the last three years, and a total of 300,000 rigging points are in operation,” Cohen noted.

“PSAV is proud to transform and improve meetings spaces, as we have with the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza,” said Digby Davies, PSAV chief executive officer. “This creates a higher quality event that can give the meeting planner or producer better peace of mind. At the end of the day, a successful meeting is all about delivering a message and making sure the message lasts. Nobody does it better than PSAV.”

Next Century Associates, a joint venture with an entity in the D. E. SHAW GROUP, a global investment firm, acquired the 726-room, 19-story Hyatt Regency Century Plaza last year. Occupying 5.75 acres at 2025 Avenue of the Stars, the hotel features four outdoor swimming pools, landscaped gardens, a 20-room spa and several restaurants.

About PSAV® Presentation Services

PSAV is the world's largest supplier of event technology to meeting planners, producers and presenters of its kind. With onsite offices in nearly 1000 hotels, resorts, convention and conference centers, PSAV offers the peace of mind that comes with a continually replenished inventory of cutting-edge products and qualified technicians, which are always steps ahead and only steps away. PSAV supports long and short term relationships with customers who host meetings and events wherever expert event technology is needed. PSAV is committed to making every live event an unforgettable experience, so messages last. Learn more at www.psav.com.