



Speaking of EV...

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Top Midwest Clubs Boast X-Array Sound Systems

As proving grounds for acts on their way up, and as favorite haunts of established names, three Midwestern clubs are known for the stellar performances found there night after night, year after year. And at all three—**Metro** in Chicago, **Mississippi Nights** in St. Louis, and **First Avenue** in Minneapolis—those performances are powered by X-Array equipment.

Metro in Chicago is a world-renowned rock club that has seen everyone from Moby to Alanis Morissette on its stage, hosting talent an average of four nights per week. Crowd capacity is 1100; the room is shallow but tall, with balconies providing extra seating. **Tommy Gawenda** of JT Audio Systems Inc. and Harry Witz of db Sound designed the X-Array sound system with space and spectrum in mind. Because of the balcony seating, they wanted something that didn't take up much space and would be out of the sightlines of listeners. They also needed equipment that would cover the sides and corners of the room, coverage that Metro's previous system had lacked. The size and shape of the X-Array speakers made them the perfect solution. Each side of the stage holds two Xds subs, four Xcn enclosures, and four Xcb enclosures, plus two Xcn tilted for balcony fill. Because of the way the cabinets were set side by side, X-Array formed a natural array, covering a broader spectrum. The sound clarity and quality made X-Array the perfect choice.

Mississippi Nights in St. Louis has drawn crowds to its live shows four to five nights a week for over twenty years. Some of its early shows featured then-unknowns Stevie Ray Vaughn, The Police, and Michael Bolton. Mississippi Nights carries an excellent reputation and is a favorite of many established acts who return to play there, even though they are capable of selling out much larger venues. Therefore, when the 1200-capacity club decided to

revamp its sound system, great sound and a great reputation were both on the line... and X-Array delivered. Rectangular in shape, Mississippi Nights has brick walls, a concrete floor, and a metal roof. Chip Self of Logic Systems Sound took on the job of designing a sound system for the club. Knowing the room had a low trim height and almost no acoustical properties, he designed a rigging system to maximize trim height, thus bringing clarity and fullness to the sound. To do the job, he employed four Xf enclosures, two Xb enclosures, four Xds subs, five P3000 amplifiers, two DN8000 processors, and a DN360. The result has been spectacular.

First Avenue is the grand dame of the Minneapolis music scene with thirty years of making musical history. The first artist to play there was Joe Cocker in 1970. In the years since then, countless established artists have connected with audiences at First Avenue, while local talent such as Prince, The Replacements, and Hüsker Dü got their start there. During the late '70s and early '80s, the club evolved into the hottest discotheque in the city. Today it is host to both live talent and premier DJs on varying nights. In 1999, First Avenue decided to upgrade its sound system using X-Array equipment. Bill Batson from Metro Sound & Lighting designed the system for the club. His main challenge was to maintain even coverage in the 1200-capacity room—which includes balconies—while achieving enough level for the DJs and talent. Six Xds subs, six Xi2153/64 enclosures in tri-pole configuration, two Xi1122/85 enclosures, ten P3000 amplifiers, four P2000 amplifiers, and two DN8000 processors were used to reach this goal. The new system provides clean sound beyond 122db without any breakup or distortion. X-Array proved the perfect gear to push First Avenue's sound into the twenty-first century. **EV**

Tommy Gawenda: Chicago Sound Designer

Tommy Gawenda of JT Audio Systems Inc. (known to friends as "Tommy G.") has earned a reputation as an innovative, consistent sound system designer throughout his hometown of Chicago. A musician first, Tommy G. started in the music business as guitarist with a local Chicago band popular in local clubs during the mid- to late '70s, playing music six nights a week for five years. "I learned a lot about sound equipment during that time because our sound engineer was very good," Tommy says. "He turned me on to great equipment." When the legal drinking age in Chicago changed to 21 in 1980, many clubs folded, and along with them went many local bands. Tommy knew the members of Cheap Trick from having shared the Chicago music scene with them, and in 1981 they asked him to go on tour as their sound engineer. The band was in its heyday, and the next four years were invaluable to Tommy as he set up sound for the band in a variety of venue styles and sizes all over the world.

He returned to Chicago in 1985, tired of constant travel and wanting to play more music himself. Soon after, the owner of Metro asked Tommy to redesign the club's sound system to accommodate talent with more stringent sound requirements. Tommy agreed to put together a system and rent it to the club. "It was a real sound system and expensive for any club at the time," he explains. "Fortunately for me, Metro took off and did very well. So, the more successful the club became the more business I got, because they wanted to keep upgrading equipment. From that account, I got into other

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accounts—more clubs opened. Metro revived the music scene in Chicago.”

Tommy’s design and installation work in local clubs soon garnered him work in a different kind of venue: restaurants. In 1992, one of the dance clubs he had worked with opened a restaurant and asked him to help with the sound system. “At that time, restaurants usually had awful ceiling speakers playing Frank Sinatra through them. The restaurants I worked with wanted to be more modern, with upbeat music through a more intense sound system, installing better boxes with bigger power amps. Eventually, in ’95 or ’96, restaurants started to have DJs on weekends. Then they began to have a restaurant downstairs and a little club upstairs. So, I became involved in all that scene: restaurants, small dance clubs, big dance clubs.”

Tommy is a longtime EV user and was one of the first to install X-Array equipment in clubs. “I use EV for many reasons. Obviously it’s got to sound great, plus they have a great support system. X-Array is a great-sounding cabinet—very crisp, very clean, very powerful. Are there other cabinets that sound as good? Possibly. But I have a business, and a large part of my business is support. I think people want me to do their install because if they call me up with a question or need, I’m there. And if I’m going to support my customer, I need to feel my manufacturer supports me. EV has a great support policy. There is a support mechanism in place with EV that I haven’t found with any other company.”

Tommy G. has built a successful business and a sterling reputation as a sound system designer in the Chicago area. He is still involved with creative musicians, writing and playing music, and says he would like to be involved with music forever. This goes without saying for this gifted man who has enhanced Chicago’s music experience for so many others. **EV**

Premier Concert Club in St. Louis Opens with X-Array

The Midwest’s newest concert club, **The Pageant**, opened in St. Louis recently with a twenty-one guitar salute outside the club, followed by a raise-the-roof performance inside by Chuck Berry. The Pageant is a newly-built, six-million-dollar building boasting a 33,000-square-foot concert club, which was designed specifically for musical performances by national acts as well as local talent. The acts already scheduled include Hanson, Foo Fighters, Hootie & the Blowfish, Sheryl Crow, Don Henley, and The Bacon Brothers. The lower level of the club features a dance floor just in front of the stage. Behind the dance floor is tiered cabaret seating and drink rails with stools and chairs. The lower level’s capacity is about 1,200. The upper level consists of a wrap-around balcony with theatre seats that accommodate about 600.

Chip Self of Logic Systems Sound in St. Louis took on the challenge of designing and installing the sound system for this amazing new facility. Because of the caliber and frequency of performers playing The Pageant, design criteria for the sound system included several specific points. For instance, the sound system had to be easily removable to allow space for touring production as necessary. Logic Systems handled this by locating all of the amps and processing in a remote amp room, making it necessary to move only a small amount of equipment to accommodate touring productions and minimizing the required storage space for the dislocated equipment.

The Pageant owners also called for continuity in equipment quality to ensure a well-balanced, within-budget package that would satisfy users up to a specific level. Beyond that level, the existing equipment package needed enough universality to work well with any rented-in supplemental equipment. Using the X-Array system made it possible to hire in rentals from any number of regional X-Array users while guaranteeing interoperability.

Finally, the sound system had to be configured in a manner standard enough to allow different technicians to feel comfortable working with it. The heavy schedule at the Pageant makes it impossible for one set of technical staff to work every event. Using industry-standard equipment and configurations and clearly labeling everything solved the problem. And once again, X-Array was the clear choice.

While designing the sound system, one of the first things Chip noticed was that The Pageant effectively includes two separate acoustic rooms: the balcony and the main floor. In order for the sound to reach the balcony as well as under the balcony, Chip had to fly the loudspeakers in a very creative way. Each side’s rigging has one Xcb and two Xcn speakers across the top; then nine feet of vertical cable with an Xcb and two Xcn speakers at the bottom. The under-balcony speakers are seven Fri 2082 speakers hung under the lip of the balcony.

The equipment manifest for the system at The Pageant includes four Xcb LF speakers, eight Xcn MF/HF speakers, four Xds subs, five XW15 monitors, six T221m monitors, three T252+ side/drum fills, seven FRi 2082 under-balcony fills, and six Sx300a enclosures. Five P3000 amplifiers and two DN8000 processors power the main system, while a Midas XL200 covers FOH mixing duties. The subwoofers are hidden in a concrete pit below the stage. To ensure optimum performance from their sound design, Logic Systems will acoustically treat the high-gloss wood of the balcony front and place acoustic banners throughout the facility.

The Pageant’s complex needs were fulfilled by Logic System’s innovative design and installation coupled with X-Array’s versatility and consistent sound quality. The result provides a superlative experience for music fans: a premier concert nightclub that looks amazing and sounds even better. **EV**

Actor/Comedian Billy Connolly: Down Under with X-Array

Scottish actor/comedian **Billy Connolly**, star of the movies *Mrs. Brown* and *Still Crazy*, used two X-Array systems while recently touring Australasia. In New Zealand, he toured with support from Barton’s Sound System of Auckland with eight Xf, eight Xn,

and eight Xb speakers. The system was run off EV P3000 power amplifiers controlled by Klark Teknik DN 8000 processors.

Connolly used a second X-Array system for the Queensland leg of the tour, with support from Townsville sound company Wild

Gravity. The tour crew was very happy with the X-Array systems, especially after their experiences using some blue boxes elsewhere. The X-Array system sounded great and proved definitively that Glaswegian accents are hard to understand. **EV**