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VARI-LITE AND STRAND DELIVER STATE-OF-THE-ART PERFORMANCE FOR HOUSTON'S NEW \$88M KINDER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

Houston, USA – Advanced performance lighting systems from Vari-Lite and Strand are meeting the demand for state-of-the-art technology at the new \$88m Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) in Houston, Texas. The flagship education and arts facility features control and networking technology, plus more than 600 lighting fixtures from renowned lighting equipment brands.

The work of Gensler Architects, the new building is designed with the themes of connectivity and transparency in mind: open areas and large expanses of windows showcase artists, musicians, dancers, and actors working inside. With its 800-seat main theater, plus a Black Box Theater, a Mini Theater, Recital Hall, Dance Studios, and Recording Studio, this impressive complex will also play a lead role in the cultural life of Houston's thriving downtown arts district.

"This is not your typical high school space," says Chris Purpura, who led the project on behalf of San Antonio-based theatre consultancy WJHW Inc. "This is a state-of-the-art performing arts facility with many different rooms and spaces. From the get-go, they wanted systems that were in the forefront of technology."

He adds, "They wanted to treat the spaces as a blank canvas. Maybe, in the main theatre they use the whole space, or half the space, or maybe a performance takes place across two or more spaces simultaneously. We designed the network so that the spaces can be connected, or divided, as required. It was a conscious choice, something the client really thought about. The client needed a network and VISION.NET in those spaces."

As such, the client called for the latest in state-of-the-art lighting technology. Working in close collaboration with the architects, building contractor McCarthy Construction, and entertainment systems integration specialists from Wenger Corporation, WJHW's team specified an integrated stage lighting and control solution from Vari-Lite and Strand.

At the core of the specification is a Strand Ethernet network infrastructure. This integrates Strand's VISION.NET architectural lighting management system, Strand NEO stage lighting control systems and Strand C21 dimming systems throughout the facility.

VISION.NET, the scalable, decentralized control system, with its programmable touchscreen interfaces, delivers proven reliability and endless configuration possibilities throughout the center's multiple spaces. It also allows for system configurations to evolve with use and experience, providing future-proof flexibility. Strand NEO control consoles provide advanced, hands-on stage lighting control, via Strand's ShowNet protocol. "The NEO is a nice console," says Purpura. "It's very simple and accessible, which is important for a learning environment, but it also has a lot of power and flexibility. The client envisioned that they would be using intelligent fixtures in those spaces, as well as a lot of LED. Having the control wheels, along with the touchscreen for color picking, is very useful."

The system also integrates seamlessly with the Strand C21 modular dimming system, allowing for control of dimmable and non-dimmable loads. Providing students with access to lighting fixtures, dimming, and control circuits that they would encounter



in the real world was an important aim for the client. As the project progressed, the specification evolved accordingly.

Befitting the facility's status, the investment in lighting technology extended to over 600 fixtures of various types from the Vari-Lite and Strand portfolios. Jim Crooks, lighting solutions manager for Wenger, says, "The goal was to produce a good teaching facility and energy management did factor into the decision making. This project had a long timeline. What started out as a quartz-halogen incandescent specification evolved as it became a predominantly LED project."

The final specification includes a broad array of the latest LED technology from the Vari-Lite SL Series and Strand product ranges. Fixtures include 221 PLPROFILE4 MKII fixed white light ellipsoidals, 68 PLCYC1 MKII LED cyclorama lights and over 150 RGBW units, including SL PAR 155 ZOOMs, with adjustable beam angle, and SL BAR 640 linear washlights. Moving head fixtures from the Showline range include the versatile SL HYDRUS 350 and the SL LEDSPOT 300, with its precision framing system.

Conventional fixtures also feature in the lighting options, to provide a wide spectrum of lighting capability and experience for students and other users of the venues. These include over 100 SPX PROFILES with a variety of beam angles, and 22 RAMA 175 HP FRESNELS.

The end result is a beautifully designed, fully equipped, and future-proofed creative facility, which will no doubt play its part in inspiring future generations of performers and technicians. ■

PRODUCTS FEATURED:

NEO CONSOLE
VISION.NET
C21
VARI-LITE SL SERIES
STRAND FIXTURES

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CONSULTANT: WJHW Inc.

LIGHTING APPLICATION: EDUCATION