Photo Credits: Ben Rose Photography, Atlanta

Crestron Control and QuickMedia® Help Turn Former Southern Movie Palace Into a 21st Century Multi-Purpose Venue

"There are very few venues in the country that have the type of AV system we have. There's a high definition projector with a 23-foot rear screen. We have THX sound, a Yamaha soundboard, Crestron control and video distribution. The video distribution system can show whatever is going on in any part of the facility on projectors and flat screens throughout, including a dual-screen video marquee at the front of the theater."

That's how Chip Pottinger, Construction and Redevelopment Manager for the restored Buckhead Theatre in Atlanta, describes its new video and sound systems. This extremely flexible venue, according to Pottinger, is ideal for concerts,

corporate events, fund raising dinners, off-Broadway shows, product presentations, seminars – even weddings and bar mitzvahs.

Owner Charles Loudermilk brought in Novare Events of Atlanta, who in turn was able to bring the legendary Atlanta musical promoter Alex Cooley out of retirement to help manage the venue, so they are ready to book an impressive roster of performers and corporate clients. Technology consulting and integration were provided by TSAV of Atlanta, who designed the control and video distribution systems using Crestron multimedia products.

The Renovation

The Buckhead Theatre originally opened in 1931 as a movie palace and was used in that capacity for over 50 years. In the mid '80s it was renamed the Roxy and became a concert venue but fell into disrepair.

CRESTRON.

Loudermilk purchased the building in early 2008 and closed it for renovation, a two-year process that has completely restored and rebuilt the facility. "Mr. Loudermilk and I both went to movies here as kids, Charlie in the 30's and me in the 50's," Pottinger says. "It was our neighborhood theater."

The restoration was a labor of love, with Pottinger falling back on his background as a general contractor. A collaborative effort brought in master craftsmen to repair and recreate hundreds of linear feet of millwork and plaster moldings, as well as plaster arches, ceiling medallions, stonework and other details.

Loudermilk decided to pull out all the fixed seating in the main auditorium and leveled the sloped floor to accommodate 28 dining tables for up to 224 people. They can also set up theater-style seating for audiences up to 850 or accommodate up to 2100 standing for concerts or dances.

The renovation also included the conversion of second floor office space into a 5500-square foot divisible ballroom that can used as one room or separated into two, three or four meeting spaces. In addition, there is a new catering kitchen, new restrooms, dressing rooms, and a greenroom for performers.

The AV systems are first-rate. "This is a super flexible space," says Keith Reardigan, the project engineer for TSAV. "It was very hard for the client to know exactly what kinds of programs they will bring into the facility, but, due to our experience in similar renovations, we knew there would be a need for movies, corporate presentations, theater and live sound."

To control these systems, Reardigan used a Crestron AV2 processor installed in the theater's main rack, with a production-level interface using XPanel running on an HP workstation. He also included more limited and automated controls accessed from Crestron C2N-FT-TPS4 3.6" FlipTop touchpanels built into lecterns that can be set up in the theater and each of the meeting spaces.

"If there's a production manager in charge of a concert or stage show, we can give him full control over the installed

Photo Credits: Ben Rose Photography, Atlanta

" If there's a production manager in charge of a concert or stage show, we can give him full control over the installed projection, sound and video distribution systems from XPanel. But for a meeting or corporate presentation, with a little setup the presenter can have the basic controls he needs on the touchpanel."

projection, sound and video distribution systems from XPanel. But for a meeting or corporate presentation, with a little setup the presenter can have the basic controls he needs on the touchpanel."

" The restoration is superb. We've got cutting edge technology in a very intimate venue. Everyone has been very impressed with its sound and video quality"

Chip Pottinger, Buckhead Theatre

Systems Design At a Glance

The spaces within the Buckhead Theatre and their AV systems can be used separately or combined for a large event.

The ground floor theater includes a 16 x 23' rear screen served by two Digital Projection Titan SX+500 projectors with wide-angle lenses, projecting side by side and edge-blended using a video processor. "We used two projectors mainly because of the real estate we had to work with and the brightness we needed," Reardigan explains. "It's a massive screen, and we just didn't have the throw distance for a single projector."

The sound system includes a 7.1 surround processor for feature films as well as a 48-channel Yamaha digital mixer for meetings, theater and concerts, each feeding audio into a series of Crown amplifiers and JBL THX-certified loudspeakers. For the concert and main PA rig, TSAV used a Nexo GEOS line array system powered by 4x4 power amplifiers supplemented with the JBL THX certified surround for 5.1 movie viewing purposes.

Reardigan also designed the video distribution system to transmit video and sound from any of the sources in the theater to the six flat panels in the lobby and bar, to two 15' H x 11' W screens on the marquee outside, and on each projection screen in the four meeting rooms upstairs. For these systems, he used a mix of QuickMedia with Blonder Tounge RF distribution products.

CRESTRON

crestron.com

"We used Crestron QuickMedia transmitters, switchers and cable to move the signals around the facility for a number of reasons," Reardigan says. "First, we wanted an all-digital signal path, and QuickMedia provided an economical solution. We had a cable-length issue going from the equipment rack in the theater to the marquee, which QuickMedia solved."

Crestron QM-RMCRX-BA room controllers were installed in each room along with a QM-MD8X8 switcher to provide input at the presentation positions. "QuickMedia also provided a nice solution for room combining in the meeting rooms upstairs," Reardigan added.

These meeting rooms are an important part of the mission of the theater. Combined, they offer seating for up to 250 guests, and they can be used either as overflow space for the theater or independently for luncheons, dinners or conferences. "They really lend themselves to more intimate events at the Buckhead Theatre," he explains.

The meeting center offers large-screen display via Sanyo WXGA projectors, wireless microphones, installed house sound and podiums equipped with Shure gooseneck microphones and Crestron 3.6" FlipTop touchpanels.

"The finished venue is a jewel box," Pottinger says. "The restoration is superb. We've got cutting-edge technology in a very intimate venue. Everyone has been very impressed with its sound and video quality, its versatility and its ability to accommodate any group from 12 for lunch to 2100 for a concert."

Photo Credits: Ben Rose Photography, Atlanta