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Alobar's sets the stage for excellence at prestigious St. Louis school with Obsidian and Elation

NX1 lighting console and NETRON data management provide uncomplicated control of new Elation lighting rig in school theatre

Alobar's Lighting and Sound has installed a state-of-the-art lighting and lighting control solution at the prestigious Villa Duchesne school in St. Louis, Missouri. The new system, which features an NX1™ lighting console from Obsidian Control Systems along with NETRON™ signal distribution, includes an array of Elation KL™ series and Seven Batten™ lights, providing the school's Pavich Theatre with an exceptional level of control and creativity in their lighting design.



Alobar's

Alobar's Lighting and Sound (www.alobars.net), based in St. Louis, has been a long-standing partner of Villa Duchesne, having provided audio and lighting services for the school for over 20 years, including support for graduation ceremonies, Maypole celebrations, and various school events. When the school sought to revamp its theatre lighting system, they entrusted Alobar's with the task.

Ted Kretschmar of Alobar's was instrumental in the project, having designed and installed the new system. The space, originally a gymnasium transformed into a makeshift theatre two decades ago, underwent a comprehensive renovation, including a new raked floor. According to Kretschmar, a



building that originates from the early 1900s posed its own challenges, as did the fact that the ceiling had already been drywalled when they came in, but the company overcame the obstacles and delivered a comprehensive lighting solution that helped revitalize the space. The rigging aspect of the project was overseen by Scott Johnson from Alobar's.

Useful training

Kretschmar has been using Obsidian's ONYX lighting control platform ever since the company took over the M-Series in 2018 and has particular praise for the Obsidian online training videos moderated by David Henry, noting that they are highly effective. "I think David's the brightest educator in this industry and communicates really well with the common user," he says. "I can send the videos to end users so they have another source of support, which means the training doesn't fall 100% on my shoulders. They really like that, especially schools, because students can watch a video that talks to them in their language."

NX1

The choice of the Obsidian NX1 lighting console for the Pavich Theatre was instrumental in achieving the project's objectives. Kretschmar comments, "It's got the computer built in and doesn't take up a lot of desk space. The platform is easy to use, with motorized faders, and is an ideal solution for tech training. It's also easy to back up. The console is really user-friendly, which is ideal for a school environment, and it provides them with ample capabilities." He adds that he also likes the add-on NXX™ keyboard for education, also because it can magnetically fit on either side of the NX1 console depending if the operator is right or left-handed, which he calls a great selling point.



Control system flexibility

Kretschmar runs the data through a NETRON EN12™ etherDMX node which requires only one Cat cable off the back of the NX1. Each of four batten pipes plus four floor pockets on the stage run back to the EN12 with a DMX wall station getting an input and an output from the EN12. "The EN12 is super simple to program and it's easy for students to understand," Kretschmar notes, stating that he looks on it as a patch bay so they can change things around really easily and repatch in different ways. "With that many outputs it works great that way."

The control system's flexibility is a standout feature, with Kretschmar stating, "There's so much room for growth depending on what you want to do. You can add the NXP™ wing if you want more faders, for example. For a school, there is plenty there, and what you can do on the backside, dropping nodes, is so easy."

Elation lighting upgrade

Prior to the transformation, the theatre relied on conventional Par lighting, color bricks, and Lekos. The new Elation lighting system includes full color-spectrum KL Fresnel 8 FC™, KL Profile FC™, and KL Par FC™ lights, as well as Seven Batten 72™ fixtures. The transition to modern lighting solutions was met with excitement as Alobar's offered a better way to achieve color and lighting effects while eliminating the need for gels. "They were blown away when we started putting colors up on stage and when they saw the gobos from the KL Profile for the first time, they were very excited," Kretschmar said.

The KL Fresnel 8 FC fixtures serve as effective downlights and thanks to the accommodating low ceiling, they can be easily repositioned to function as key lights when needed. Additionally, two ladders were placed on either side of the stage to enable flexible side lighting arrangements or to bring the lights downstage to face out to the crowd. These ladders currently host KL Pars. For key lighting, KL Profiles are employed. The system's versatility enables it to serve a wide range of purposes, including the school's theatre department, morning assemblies, teacher education, and other events.

"Daisy Pulls it Off"

Kretschmar and the Alobar's team turned the new system over to the school just prior to their theatre department's first show, a production of "Daisy Pulls it Off," which ran in the Pavich Theatre October 19-21. Kretschmar had programmed a number of lighting scenes into the NX1 prior to delivery, which proved extremely useful and beneficial for the play. Students operated the show themselves and going forward will handle all lighting tasks on the new system.

About Obsidian Control Systems

Obsidian Control Systems is an accessible line of advanced yet intuitive lighting control products for professionals. Refined by passion, Obsidian Control Systems combines over 30 years of experience developing professional entertainment lighting control solutions for automated and theatrical lighting fixtures. Obsidian lighting control software and hardware is easy to use and accessible to every level of user, whether a novice programmer or a designer at the highest level. All Obsidian lighting control systems run innovative ONYX™ lighting control software, a powerful yet easy-to-learn lighting control platform designed for both hardware consoles and PC systems. Obsidian Control Systems also offers a complete line of NETRON™ data distribution products. Obsidian products are distributed exclusively by Elation worldwide and are available in various sizes to accommodate any scale and budget. Visit the Obsidian Control Systems website at www.obsidiancontrol.com to learn more.

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