

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA, NORTON AUDITORIUM FLORENCE ALABAMA

PROJECT PROFILE

Wenger® | J.R. CLANCY  
CREATIVITY OF ENGINEERING



DIVA® ACOUSTICAL FULL-STAGE SHELL with Lieto™ LED RGBW Light Fixtures

***“Everyone has been absolutely thrilled with the shell. We’re the largest space on our campus so a lot of events have been moved over to our auditorium.”***

*- Ethan Franks, Assistant Technical Director*



## CHALLENGE

An aging auditorium with outdated equipment required upgrading to serve the changing demands of the University of North Alabama band, orchestra, and choir students and continue to meet the needs for their performing arts programs.

## WENGER SOLUTION

Wenger Corporation provided a custom Wenger Diva® Acoustical Shell to vastly improve the sound for performers and the audience, all new J.R. Clancy counterweight rigging, and custom J.R. Clancy hoists for safe and easy lighting and scenery movement.

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FLORENCE, ALABAMA

## BENEFITS

- Updated performing arts center with a Diva® Acoustical Shell and Lieto™ RGBW Fixtures
- FrontLoader® — Front Loading Arbor and PowerAssist® Hoists to move stage equipment safely and efficiently
- Flexibility to support many kinds of performances in performing arts center
- Sturdy, safe, and ergonomic chairs, stands, risers, staging, and storage equipment to help musicians perform at their best



## HIGHLIGHTS

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A major renovation to Norton Auditorium at the University of North Alabama (UNA) in Florence, Alabama, has vastly improved the sound for performers and audiences alike. The addition of a custom acoustical shell, along with custom rigging and up-graded lighting, means the theatre can now accommodate the variety of performances hosted at the hall, including symphony, band, and choir performances.

### Diva® Acoustical Shell

The star of the acoustical upgrades is the custom Diva shell installed by Wenger Corporation. Previously, the stage had only curtains which absorbed much of the sound being produced by musicians. Ethan Franks, Assistant Technical Director at the theatre remembers playing there as a student.

“The tubas and horns had to blow extra hard because their sound went right up into the rafters,” Franks explains. “The space before was dead, but now, with the addition of the shell, the musicians can hear each other better and produce much better sound.”

Senior Regional Sales Manager Michael Duba says the purpose of adding the shell was to allow the music department to get better and broader use of the stage.

“Without a shell, it’s just curtains that soak up all of the energy,” Duba explains. “The shell makes it so the orchestra can hear themselves and the sound projects out to audience. The musicians perform better, the audience can hear better, and visually it’s beautiful.”

Part of Wenger’s process is to provide a large selection of veneer finishes to choose from that can be matched with almost any stain. Franks and his staff worked with a designer to choose the right combination to complement the rest of the room. Franks says it corresponded perfectly with the new paint and audience seating.

Franks also opted for Lieto™ RGBW lighting fixtures in the shell for multi-colored lighting options during concerts, as well as LED locking rail lighting to help ensure the safety of everyone backstage and to assist in running the rigging during performances. In addition to helping them see better, it helps control the amount of light bleeding onto the stage.

### Rigging Solutions

The rigging was another area that needed a major upgrade. Prior to the renovation, the theatre had 20 battens for all the scenery and lighting sets, which wasn’t enough to accommodate their needs. They installed multiple J.R. Clancy FrontLoader® — Front Loading Arbors, along with 42 truss battens. The FrontLoaders eliminate the need of rods and spreader plates as seen in conventional rod arbors, so the user doesn’t need to bend down or climb into the well to load counterweights. This greatly improves safety for the UNA staff.

The PowerAssist® Hoists automated several of the previously manual counterweight sets, making it easier and safer to move heavier lighting and scenery battens on stage. The hoist handles up to 1,000 lb of the out-of-balance load for the line set, eliminating the need to adjust the counterbalancing weights. The single axis units are compact and were easily installed under the locking rail. As an added safety bonus, all control stations are equipped with key operated switches to prevent unauthorized use.

“The rigging is much better and safer now,” Franks says. “We have a revolving student staff, so we really need something that is stable and easy to operate.”

### Instrument Storage Room

Finally, to help keep the band organized, a new instrument storage system with adjustable shelves was installed in the UNA Band Room.

The upgrades for sound, rigging and storage have met rave reviews.

“We opened up the auditorium to let people hear the band rehearse and 50 people showed up just to hear the new sound,” Franks says. “Everyone has been absolutely thrilled with the shell. We’re the largest space on our campus so a lot of events have been moved over to our auditorium.”

“I was so happy that we could do this for them,” Duba says. “Their system was in dire need of an upgrade and now that it is vastly improved UNA can use the space the way it was intended to be used.”



## PRODUCT LIST

Custom Diva® Shell with Lieto™ LED RGBW Light Fixtures, FrontLoader® — Front Loading Arbor, PowerAssist® Hoists Automated Rigging Systems, Counterweight Rigging System, Fire Curtain, Custom StageTek® Staging with ADA components, Musician Chairs, Cello Chairs, Student Chairs, Preface® Music Stands, Tourmaster® Choral Riser, UltraStor® Cabinets



## ABOUT WENGER | J.R. CLANCY

Wenger and J.R. Clancy provide the widest array of innovative, high-quality products and services for the performing arts industry. Their advanced products provide the highest levels of safety, reliability and aesthetics, helping transform performance venues and engineer unforgettable experiences.



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