

DILLARD CENTER FOR THE ARTS, FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

PROJECT CASE STUDY



REHEARSAL RESOURCE CENTER



STUDENT MUSIC POSTURE CHAIRS



RACK 'N ROLL® GARMENT RACKS

“I was impressed with the scope and diversity of products available from Wenger – they offer a complete package.”

*– Bruce F. Brown
Dillard Center for the Arts*

CHALLENGE

Outfit music suite and theatre in performing arts magnet high school.

WENGER SOLUTION

Partnering with planning team to create proper equipment specifications. Providing convenient, one-stop source for broad range of music and theatre products. Offering flexible, versatile equipment to suit various events and needs. Professionally installing an acoustical shell system, modular practice rooms and storage cabinets.

BENEFITS

- Professional input validates programming/facility recommendations
- Extensive product selection simplifies ordering process
- Wenger Planning Guide educates planning team, improves specifications
- Products' coordinated design and appearance enhance aesthetics

HIGHLIGHTS

"The education specifications for our new facility were developed by a committee that included local professionals involved in music, dance, theatre and visual art," says Bruce F. Brown, Artistic Director with the Dillard Center for the Arts in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. "Their involvement lent credibility to our programming decisions and facility recommendations."

Brown says Wenger's Planning Guide for Secondary Music Facilities' was also very beneficial. The team quoted it extensively in the specifications to ensure they were doing what was needed with acoustics, HVAC systems and other topics covered in the Guide. "None of us were experts in these areas, so the Guide was very helpful," he recalls.

After the specifications were written, the next step was ordering equipment and finishes. Once the project manager discovered that Wenger was a stand-alone vendor, already approved in Broward County, the team ordered extensively from the Wenger catalog.

"I was impressed with the scope and diversity of products available from Wenger – they offer a complete package," declares Brown. He was also pleased to see products for the theatre and equipment they could use in their dance studios, like Stereo Workstations and audio systems.

The 125,000-square-foot magnet high school opened in the fall of 2003, designed to serve 650 students. A staff of six music educators teaches band, orchestra, choir, marching band, piano, music theory, music history and commercial music.

Current enrollment is 400 students, grades 9-12, plus Brown says they also serve the arts programming needs of their host school, Dillard High School. With such a busy facility, the numerous Wenger products are heavily used.

"We have 18 Wenger sound-isolating practice rooms located through our building," says Brown. "Even in the acting and musical theatre classrooms so students can rehearse monologues or duet acting scenes."

He says the instrumental music teachers love their Rehearsal Resource Centers and use them all the time – including holding their computers and sound equipment.

For storing sheet music, Brown says the Music Library System is a big improvement over the filing cabinets and shelves used in their old

facility. "Because our music was stored in various locations, it was difficult for us to estimate our total storage needs," recalls Brown. "Unfortunately, we underestimated and our 10 units are completely full!"

Brown wanted the black-box theatre to be a completely flexible space, so Versalite platforms and Portable Audience Chairs were ordered. He says they can seat 180 people proscenium-style or in the round or remove everything to create an open space for banquets. "We use Versalite for jazz band concerts, theatre performances and when we travel – we use it everywhere," Brown states.

"The Backstage makeup stations are also great!" he says, adding that they come in handy on the road when dressing-room space is limited. They are also used around the Dillard facility, including as a quick change dressing area set up on stage.

Brown praises the Rack 'N Roll garment racks – used mainly by the theatre and dance departments – for being much more stable and functional than anything else out there. When traveling, he says they fit right on the truck and don't tip over in transit.

As a centerpiece of their 650-seat proscenium theatre, which opened in the fall of 2005, Brown describes the Diva acoustical shell as amazing and beautiful. "Acoustically, this shell makes a vast difference for the audience," he says. "The sound is pushed forward and it's crystal clear. I'm able to hear individual instruments and parts that I never knew existed. I know the students love performing with it because they can hear each other so well."

The 11 towers have a cherrywood veneer that complements the theatre's interior. Logistically, the shell is easy to handle – Dillard's technical staff can strike the shell and store it offstage within an hour.

Brown advises any educator involved in a project like this to plan ahead and build for the future. "If you build for your current needs, you'll limit yourself and the facility will likely be too small by the time it's built." He also recommends investing in quality equipment that will stand the test of time. "I'm very pleased to say that all of our Wenger products are holding up extremely well."

PRODUCT LIST

Sound-Isolating Music Practice Rooms, Instrument and Garment Storage Cabinets, Tourmaster® Choral Risers, Music Library System, Versalite® Platforms, Portable Audience Chairs, Diva® Acoustical Shell System, Backstage® Makeup Stations, Rack 'N Roll® Garment Racks.