

AVON OLD FARMS SCHOOL, AVON, CONNECTICUT

PROJECT CASE STUDY



DIVA® ACOUSTICAL SHELL SYSTEM



MUSIC LIBRARY SYSTEM



INSTRUMENT STORAGE CABINETS

“Wenger’s ability to match our existing finishes and offer equipment with a unified appearance was also very appealing to us.”

*- Robert Palmer
Chairman of Performing Arts*

CHALLENGE

Plan and outfit new performing arts facility including auditorium, rehearsal rooms, classrooms, teaching studios, practice rooms, instrument storage rooms and music library.

WENGER SOLUTION

Serving music faculty, architect and acoustical consultant with planning assistance and resources. Developing an efficient arrangement of instrument cabinets. Complementing the new building’s architectural details and existing campus construction with unified product appearance and cabinet finishes.



TOURMASTER® CHORAL RISERS



VERSALITE® SEATED RISERS



TOURMASTER® CHORAL RISERS

BENEFITS

- Unified aesthetics coordinate with existing campus construction.
- Improved sheet music storage speeds logistics and inventory.
- Auditorium environment acoustically transformed and beautified.
- Mobile, flexible risers maximize versatility for rehearsal and performance.
- Efficient instrument storage provides better access and control.

HIGHLIGHTS

“With our school’s architecture and history, we knew our new performing arts facility would have a significant wood component,” says Robert Palmer, chairman of performing arts at Avon Old Farms School in Avon, Conn. Founded in 1927, the campus is modeled after a 16th century Cotswold village. “Wenger’s ability to match our existing finishes and offer equipment with a unified appearance was also very appealing to us,” he recalls. Although the architectural plan was finalized before Palmer arrived at Avon in the fall of 2005, he wanted to get up to speed quickly about building a music suite. “Wenger’s Planning Guide was very helpful – it was almost a bible for me,” he recalls, adding that the glossary and sections about room designs and sound isolation were especially useful.

The two-story performing arts center opened in March 2007, featuring a 500-seat auditorium upstairs; the rehearsal and teaching rooms are downstairs. Avon’s instrumental program includes classical, jazz, and strings; three choirs comprise the vocal program. Enrollment at this boys’ school is 400 students, grades 9-12, with half the students involved in music. “I’ve been in music education for over 20 years and I was mainly familiar with Wenger’s choir equipment like Tourmaster risers and Legacy acoustical shells,” notes Palmer. “They have always been useful and dependable.” Avon has several sets of Tourmaster risers, which are used around campus and off-campus. “Their flexibility and mobility makes them perfect for us,” Palmer says. After evaluating different manufacturers’ systems, Versalite seated risers were selected for the choir room. Key factors were flexibility and configuration options that create ideal sight lines for students, both for rehearsing and viewing instructional technology like Smartboards. For onstage use, Avon also has a taller set of Versalite legs. For storing sheet music, Palmer wanted a high-density Music Library System like his previous school. “I was delighted by the system’s flexibility when we recently reorganized our performance collection,” he declares. “It’s very easy to reorder titles and adjust the shelf height.” He says Wenger did a wonderful job designing an efficient arrangement of instrument cabinets. “It’s a great system – students now have better access and control through their own combination locks,” notes Palmer. He adds that the beautiful finishes Wenger offered for all cabinets complemented the new building’s architectural details.

The Diva full-stage acoustical shell in the new 500-seat auditorium is the facility’s showpiece. The shell’s veneer matches the hall’s cherry interior, unifying and finishing its appearance very handsomely. “The shell’s big advantage is the acoustic environment it creates, helping students become critical listeners,” explains Palmer. “The students are learning to respond to what they’re hearing and to use the room’s acoustics as a part of their performance. And the audience overwhelmingly hears the difference too.” For setup and take down, Palmer says the Diva shell works exactly as promised. “With the Air Transporter and a little help, our building supervisor can do the job in about 30 minutes.” The acoustician on this project was Lincoln Berry, principal consultant with Cavanaugh Tocci Associates of Sudbury, Mass. “For acoustical products, we look to Wenger first because of the quality and scope of the products available as well as the quality of the representation,” comments Berry.

The project architect concurs. “I tend to choose Wenger because I know it’s a predictable result,” says Richard Connell, AIA, principal architect with The S/L/A/M Collaborative in Glastonbury, Conn. “The products are well-made, serve their function well and the factory provides good support. “The Diva shell helps create a beautiful finished appearance for the whole auditorium space,” remarks Connell. “The Diva functions well and has the exact fit and finish we wanted. People just walk in and say ‘Wow!’ It’s that dramatic.”

PRODUCT LIST

Planning Guide for Secondary School Music Facilities; Tourmaster® Choral Risers, Versalite® Seated Risers, Instrument Storage Cabinets, Diva® Acoustical Shell System, Music Library System and Folio Cabinets.