

WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

PROJECT CASE STUDY



VAE® REHEARSAL SYSTEM, STRINGED INSTRUMENT RACK, STUDENT CHAIR, CONDUCTOR'S PODIUM, BRAVO™ MUSIC STAND, ENSEMBLE STOOL AND FLEX® CONDUCTOR'S STAND

“I can change the environment at the touch of a button. I appreciate having the flexibility to choose from a variety of settings, including custom acoustics that emulate our auditorium.”

– Mark Gitch, Director of Orchestras



VAE® REHEARSAL CONTROL PANEL



VAE® REHEARSAL MICROPHONE

CHALLENGE

Improve acoustics of rehearsal room to accelerate students' musical development, enhance learning and improve performance readiness.

WENGER SOLUTION

Installing and testing system components to ensure optimal performance. Measuring acoustics of school auditorium to customize acoustical setting. Providing additional equipment and furnishings to outfit music suite.

BENEFITS

- Acoustical simulations aid rehearsal-to-performance transitions
- Custom auditorium setting reduces pressure on heavily used facilities
- Intelligent design provides simple, push-button operation
- Innovative, inspiring technology motivates additional practice
- Digital record/playback technology offers flexibility
- Durable, high-quality equipment withstands years of use

HIGHLIGHTS

“I had the good fortune of teaching in Owatonna, Minnesota, the home of the Wenger Corporation, when they first began working in virtual acoustics almost 20 years ago,” says Mark Gitch, Director of Orchestras at Wayzata High School (WHS) in Plymouth, Minnesota.

“I’ve watched as their technology and expertise have developed over the years. When this concept became available for the rehearsal room as the VAE Rehearsal System, I was honored to be invited into the development process,” he adds.

Gitch believes it’s difficult for musicians to make transitions between rehearsal and performance environments. Like most high schools, the WHS auditorium has many users with limited time available for rehearsals.

“We had a good rehearsal space, even before the VAE Rehearsal System was installed,” he comments. “Of course, the student’s first reactions following the installation were memorable ...there was the Wow! factor, the Ooohs and Aaahs. They wanted to try all the different settings.”

However, Gitch appreciated how rapidly his students moved beyond enchantment with the technology to listening to themselves, and to each other, differently.

“While the technology is fun and inspiring, students quickly found they also worked more intelligently during the rehearsal process,” he notes.

The four string orchestras that rehearse in the room daily represent a wide skill range including audition groups and non-audition groups comprised of students in grades 9-12.

“Regardless of their skill level, my students notice very similar effects of the VAE Rehearsal System on their rehearsal process,” says Gitch. The system also works effectively with the full symphony orchestra, readily handling the increased sound energy from additional winds and percussion.

The VAE Rehearsal System is also proving popular after school with many students and an occasional faculty member using the room for individual practice.

“Any time we can inspire more practice, that’s a good thing,” Gitch comments. “Students are inspired when playing in a cathedral setting, for example, but they also learn to listen differently. In a resonant environment, they’re listening to that last note a little longer and asking themselves:

‘Is that really the tone I wanted? Is that really the pitch I wanted? Maybe I should do that again...’”

From his earliest discussions with Wenger about the VAE Rehearsal System, Gitch was intrigued with the idea of having a custom setting to simulate the auditorium where his orchestras typically perform. Wenger engineers measured the acoustic properties of the WHS auditorium and simulated that with a custom setting in the VAE Rehearsal System.

Gitch describes the beauty of the VAE Rehearsal System as threefold. First, its simplicity makes the system very easy to use. The environment can be changed at the touch of a button, even from the podium when the control panel is positioned next to him. Students can also be allowed to operate the system.

Second, the system’s different acoustic environments offer flexibility; because they are preset, he doesn’t have to worry about them. “We can just play,” he notes.

Finally, the digital record and playback capability works with any of the nine acoustical settings – for immediate listening in rehearsal, to save for future use or to create an audition recording. If desired, the VAE technology can also be muted for recording.

“The VAE Rehearsal System enables a smooth transition between rehearsal and performance for our musicians,” Gitch concludes. “Now when we’re physically rehearsing in our orchestra room, we can feel like we’re really rehearsing on our stage or we can choose an acoustically drier environment if we like. The system gives us many options.”



VAE® PROCESSOR



WALL SPEAKERS



CEILING SPEAKERS

PRODUCT LIST

VAE® Rehearsal System, Stringed Instrument Rack, Student Chair, Bravo™ Music Stand, Conductor’s Podium, Ensemble Stool and Flex® Conductor’s Stand.