



The main theatre in l'Université de Sherbrooke's Centre Culturel, Salle Maurice-O'Bready, is a 1,500-seat theatre and a primary performance space in the southern Quebec city.

Part way through 2014, the venue closed its doors to undergo a complete aesthetic makeover, which also included an overhaul to its production technologies package, headlined by a new sound system that has piqued the curiosity of some of the venue's array of visiting productions.



Salle

A New Rig

"They were pretty much all analog before – I mean analog video, analog sound..." begins Simon Lemieux, a consultant with Montreal's GO Multimédia, about his initial involvement in the project. The previous system was based on JBL arrays that were first installed in 1998 and driven by an analog Midas desk. "So they wanted to come into the digital world, but didn't have a lot of experience with some of the gear that's out there."

The overhaul was virtually all encompassing and included the venue's entire sound and video systems, minus some audio patching in the equipment room, as well as a significant addition to its lighting rig. This went along with a number of aesthetic enhancements to the room itself, including new rigging, seating, flooring, and decor. "So when it came to the sound system – which is the most significant part, the heart of the venue – they wanted some help to find what they needed," Lemieux explains.

Because of that, GO arranged to have a number of models brought in and auditioned by SMOB's staff and administrators. "Since we had access to the venue because the interior layout didn't change much during the renovation," Lemieux

says, "We decided to do a shootout to see how the room reacted to those various systems and see what people thought would be the best fit."

One of the calls they made was to the team at GerrAudio, with whom SMOB had an existing relationship stemming from Gerr's handling of Meyer Sound during the lifespan of its second-to-last sound system, based on Meyer Sound's MSL3, they had from 1987 to 1998.

Following Meyer Sound's decision to sell directly into Canada in the fall of 2013, GerrAudio wasn't quick to take on a new loudspeaker line. After all, they'd been dealing with one of the industry's most reputable brands, and so the company wasn't interested in getting involved with another loudspeaker line unless it offered something legitimately different and compelling for the Canadian market.

In 2014, though, after some careful consideration, GerrAudio became the Canadian distributor for Italian loudspeaker manufacturer Outline. They had complete confidence in the product and

its performance; however, while it's a well-known brand in Europe and to many of the continent's top touring artists, from Andrea Bocelli to Peter Gabriel, its traction in North America is, at this point, limited.

But when bids came in on GO Multimédia's initial design and RFP, the one submitted by Montreal's XYZ Technologie Culturelle outlined an all-Outline rig for the theatre.

A few years prior to starting work with SMOB, Lemieux had met with one of Outline's design engineers at a trade event, so he was somewhat familiar with the product and fond of what he heard during the initial introduction.

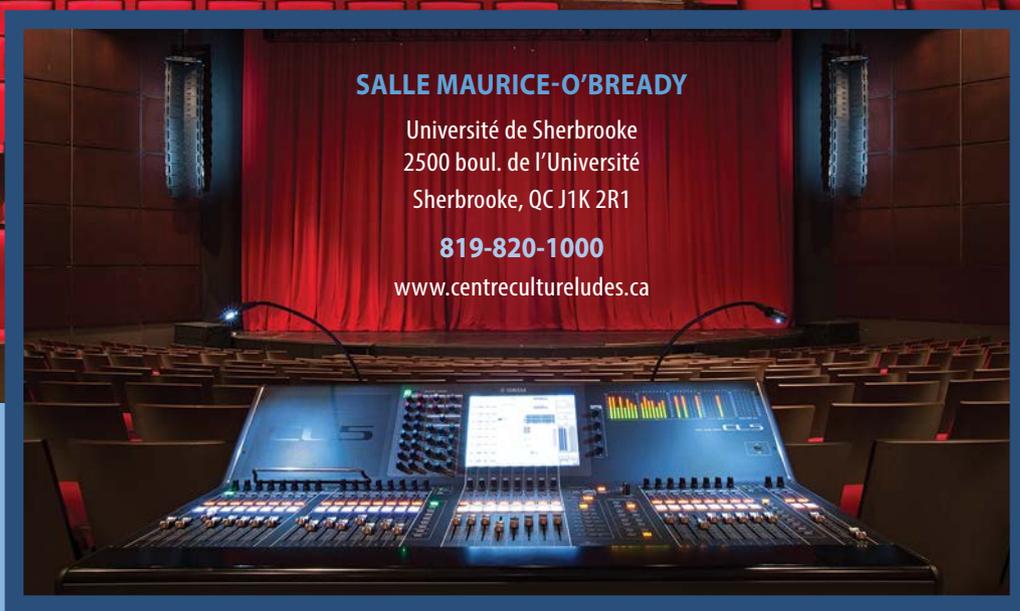
Subsequently, GerrAudio's Quebec rep, Andrew Hope, was invited to fly an Outline Mantas rig in the venue. Everyone liked what they heard, and as far as sound quality, coverage, and price, it was the top contender; however, that raised a concern about the brand's reputation – or, more accurately, lack of one – in the North American market.

"People aren't necessarily keen to try something they're not familiar with, and sometimes, larger acts might even obligate the venue to rent a different system, so one of our concerns was about

Maurice-O'Bready

For The Venue & Its Visitors Alike

By Andrew King



SALLE MAURICE-O'BREADY

Université de Sherbrooke
2500 boul. de l'Université
Sherbrooke, QC J1K 2R1

819-820-1000

www.centrecultureludes.ca

the response we might get from our touring productions," Lemieux says.

Michel Lapointe, account manager with XYZ, says that leading up to the job, he had heard some talk about the brand but never experienced it in action. "But I know Andrew Hope really well, from when he was representing Meyer, and I really trust his input. Once I had a chance to hear [the Mantas], I knew we'd found something that would work really well in the room."

Lapointe and his team knew their client had some reservations pertaining to the rig's rider friendliness. "But everything else made it a really good fit here," he says. And ultimately, on the merits of its performance and price, the Outline rig and XYZ's bid won out.

SMOB's new house system is anchored by a pair of arrays, each comprised of 12 Mantas boxes powered by eight of the company's T Nine amps. As for low end, that comes courtesy of four DVS 18-2 subs, two on the ground at the far wings of each side of the stage.

With its capacity of 1,500, SMOB is a big room, and its fan shape is wider than

it is long. Subsequently, so is its sizeable balcony, which extends deep into the house. Lemieux says that was their biggest concern as far as coverage. "It's like a huge cap, really," the consultant says, and so the system would have to cover the balcony itself and the seating below it, extending to the back of the hall.

Also owing to SMOB's size, the front row seats required supplemental coverage; however, because the front seats are so close to the stage, the concern was that fills on the front lip – which extends 40 ft. – could be too loud and obscure sightlines. "So the best way to achieve that was to put speakers at the wings to cover the front seats," Lemieux says about the pair of Outline DVS 12 Ps, one mounted on each side and each one powered by a T Five amp.

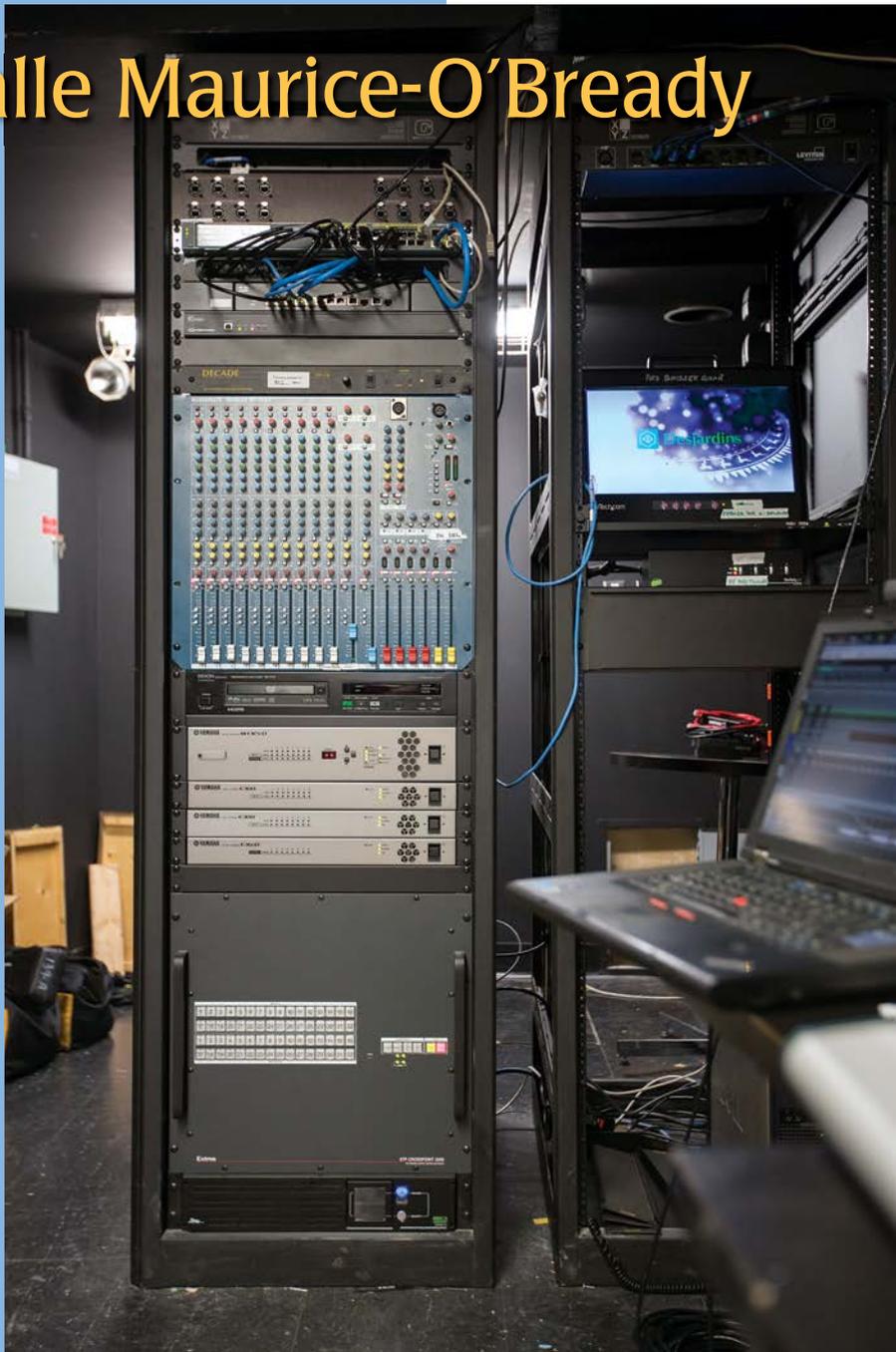
"The vocals come through very clear and defined with this system, which is really nice; it's always a shame when a vocal can't cut through in a mix," says Mario Haché, SMOB's technical director, about the rig. "And all

of the small percussion instruments and smaller instruments are nice and detailed." He also mentions his fondness for the low end reproduction, which he says "packs a great punch."

A Yamaha CL5 console, part of the company's relatively recent CL series, drives both the house and monitor rigs from the FOH mix position via a Dante network, as each side of the stage has one of the company's RIO3224-D stage boxes. "Despite [the CL5] being fairly new, Yamaha is an industry standard, and [the console] had all the features we needed for this system," Lapointe says. A Yamaha MTX5-D handles DSP for the relay.

"It was new for everybody in the house," Haché says about the board, reiterating the venue's jump from analog to digital. "But we have a lot of visiting productions, so our main objective with this upgrade was to have something versatile that visiting technicians can easily work with. And so far, anyone used to digital

Salle Maurice-O'Bready



boards has done just fine with.”

On stage are eight Outline DVS 10 P wedges and two DVS 115 SW subs, all fed by two Powersoft X4+Dante amps, which Lemieux says were chosen for their power efficiency and the way they played with the Outline product.

“We’ve worked together several times and had successful results. We work quite well together,” Lapointe says about his company’s previous interactions with GO Multimedia. “We know how they work, and they’re very thorough with their projects, so it was quite easy.”

With that, both Lapointe and Lemieux attest that the most significant challenge their respective teams faced was the project’s timeline. While the

production technologies packages wouldn’t have presented a significant problem in light of that on their own, they were one of the last components of a much larger job.

“It was definitely the fastest project I’ve ever been involved with,” Lemieux says, explaining that the timeline for the whole revamp, top to bottom, design to completion, ran from December 2013 to October 2014. Partway through the year, tickets went on sale for the opening production and others from the late 2014 schedule, so the deadline was firm. “It was so compressed; everyone needed to be very efficient and quick on their end to make sure we could hit that opening date.”

DANS LA SALLE

FOH

- 1 x Yamaha CL5 FOH Console
- 1 x Yamaha MY16AE AES/EBU Expansion Card
- 2 x Yamaha RIO3224-D Stage Box
- 1 x Yamaha MTX5-D DSP
- 2 x Yamaha EXi8 DSP Input Modules
- 1 x Yamaha EXo8 DSP Output Module
- 1 x Cisco SG-300-10 Dedicated Switch for Dante

MAIN PA

- 24 x Outline Mantas Line Array Loudspeakers
- 4 x Outline DVS 18-2 Subwoofers
- 2 x Outline DVS 12P Front Fill Loudspeakers
- 8 x Outline T Nine Amplifiers for Line Arrays
- 2 x Outline T Eleven Amplifiers for Subwoofers
- 1 x Outline T Five Amplifier for Front Fill

MONITORING

- 8 x Outline DVS 10P 10-in. Stage Monitors
- 2 x Outline DVS 115SW Subwoofers
- 2 x Powersoft X4+Dante Amplifiers

MICS & DIS

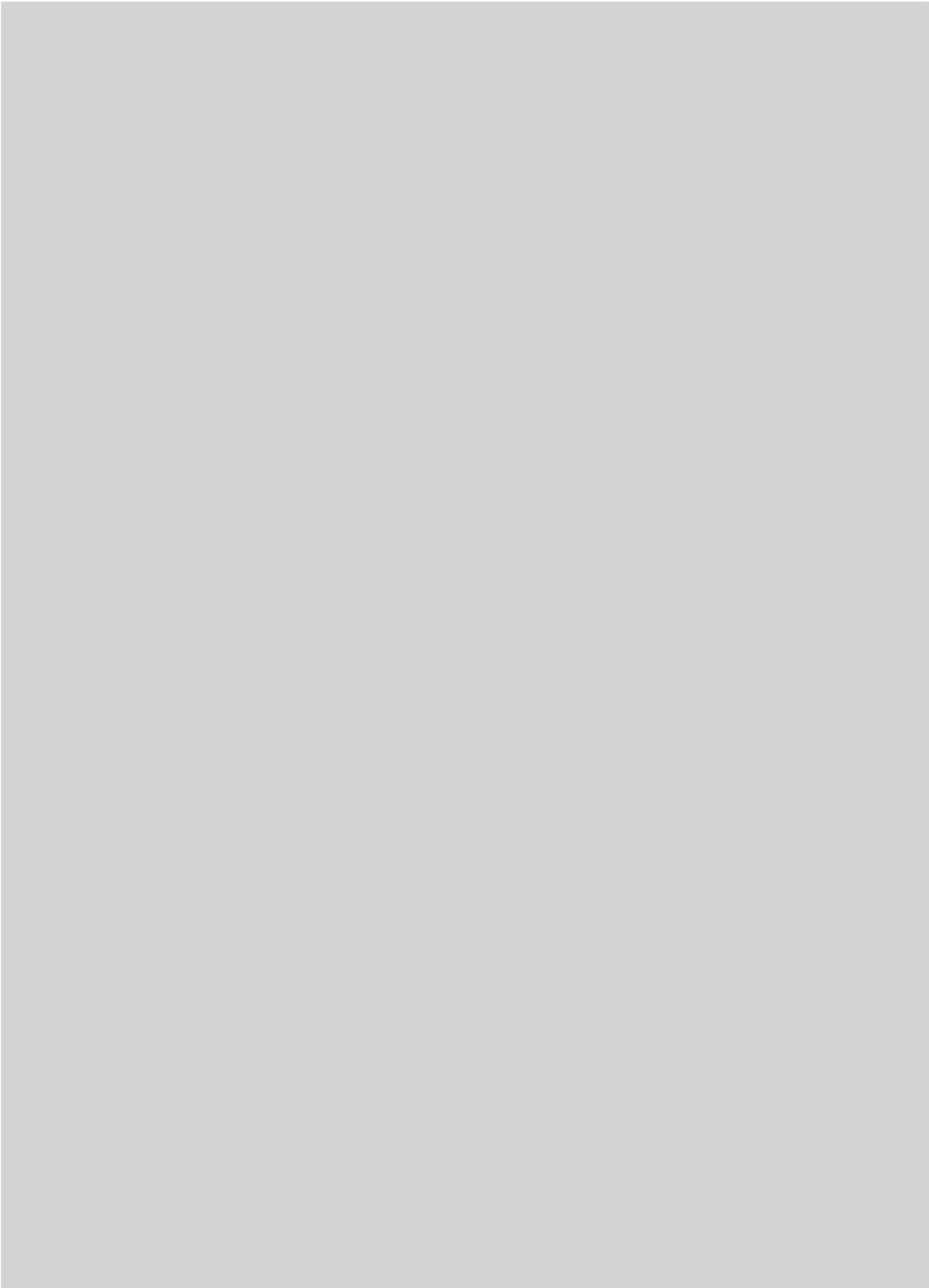
- 10 x Shure SM58 Vocal Mics
- 2 x Shure PG58 Mics
- 6 x Shure SM57 Mics
- 2 x Shure Beta91A Instrument Mics
- 1 x Shure Beta52A Instrument Mic
- 4 x Shure Beta98H/C Clip-On Instrument Mics
- 1 x Sennheiser Série 900 Evolution Drum Mic Package
- 4 x Sennheiser E935 Vocal Mics
- 2 x Sennheiser E906 Guitar Mics
- 2 x Sennheiser MD421-II Mics
- 4 x Sennheiser E914 Mics
- 4 x Neumann KM 184 Mics
- 4 x AKG PCC 160 Mics
- 4 x Shure ULXD124D/58 Wireless Mic Packages
- 4 x Shure WCM16 Headworn Mics
- 2 x Shure MX153 Headworn Mics
- 2 x Shure WA302 Instrument Cable for Beltpack
- 4 x Shure MX412/C Gooseneck Mics
- 6 x Radial Pro DI Passive DIs
- 2 x Radial Pro D2 Stereo DIs
- 4 x Radial JDI Passive DIs
- 4 x Radial J48 Active DIs
- 2 x Radial JPC PC DIs
- 2 x Radial Twin ISO Isolation Transformers
- 4 x Shure SRH940 Headphones

INTERCOM

- 5 x Clear-Com BP210 Wireless Beltpacks
- 5 x Clear-Com HS15 Headsets
- 8 x Clear-Com BAT41 Rechargeable Batteries
- 10 x Clear-Com RS-701 Partyline Beltpack
- 10 x Clear-Com CC-300 Partyline Headsets

HARDWARE

- 2 x Middle Atlantic MKR-4031 Rack
- 1 x Middle Atlantic MRK-2431 Rack
- 1 x Middle Atlantic EWR-10-22 Wall-Mounted Rack
- 2 x Multi-Caisse Rock Pack Mobile Rack



Salle Maurice-O'Bready



VENUE STAFF

Bernard Langlois - Operations Manager

Mario Haché - Technical Director

Jean Grondin - Assistant Technical Director

André Morin - Sound Technician

Bruce Giddings - Sound Technician

François Poirier - Sound Technician

Gilles Jean - Lighting Technician

Marc Longpré - Lighting Technician

Emmanuel Foulon - Lighting Technician

Marilou Castonguay - Lighting Technician

Philippe Arbour - Lighting Technician

They were able to hit the target, with Hope and Gerr's Technical Support Manager, Ian Robertson, coming in to tune the system just in advance of the opening show. "The way everything turned out, it wasn't always easy because of the time frame, but the end result is exceeding my expectations."

Beyond the timeline, Lapointe says the job was a fairly straightforward one for his firm, considering some of the more elaborate, interactive, and often unusual projects XYZ has taken on of late. He adds that this is the kind of job he and his colleagues savour – on time, on budget, and done right. Says Lemieux about their work on SMOB: "XYZ did a very good job on this and were very professional with it. We've come to count on that from them."

"It was a big project with a lot of different companies taking part," Haché

emphasizes, "so sometimes it can be hard to keep everything clean, but it was nice having companies with so much experience that could take our feedback onsite and make things happen. They made sure nothing was left behind."

It's the team on the ground at SMOB that are now most excited about what's been delivered. "I do the advances with [the visiting] productions, and it's the same brands that come into play all the time, so we have had people that aren't familiar with our brand," says Haché. "But it's been performing so well; we kind of like convincing people to try it out and then hearing what they think, because at this point, it's all been positive feedback."

Lemieux shares a story he heard from the venue's director, Mario Trépanier, a few weeks after the system's premiere performance. "He told me that when they're doing sound checks in the afternoon, the system will go very loud because the visiting en-

gineers want to test it out and really push it to see what it can do," he laughs. "So apparently it's pretty powerful, because people hear that around the campus."

And while it predates his time with the venue, Haché says the experience of working with a developing brand name is one that isn't foreign to his venue. "People were saying similar things and [having similar reservations] with our Meyer system that we installed in 1987, as we were one of the first venues in this area to use their gear," he says. "But when they came to our venue and actually heard it, they were blown away. And that's the same thing that's happening with the Outline system right now." ■



*Andrew King
is the Editor of
Professional Sound.*

