

Goin' To A Go Go...

The World Famous Whisky a Go Go Finally Has An Audio System To Match Its Rep **By David John Farinella**

Music fans around the world would be hard pressed to name a venue that's had the history that the Whisky a Go Go has had since its opening on West Hollywood's Sunset Strip in 1964. Indeed, the famed club has hosted a virtual who's who of rock 'n' roll royalty that starts at The Byrds and The Doors in the 1960s, runs through The Kinks and The Who and continues with such bands as Roxy Music, Nirvana, Soundgarden and The Police.

To be sure, fans have seen some of the world's best. Seen, yes. Heard? Well, kind of... Yes, the Whisky had a full-fledged PA

show Contreras and Hines non-line array solutions. "I thought the line array was wrong and, I think it was a bit of a set up, but they asked me what I would put in there," he recalls. "I said that what I *wouldn't* put it is a line array. The line array was battling the room."

The team opted for a more conventional box that included four EV Xi-1153s and four Xi1122MHA speakers that are powered by a pair of TG7s and 10 TG5 amps with RCM-26 DSP cards. A NetMax N8000 matrix controller with IrisNet is used to monitor the system. The gear was purchased from

running noise and making sure all of our lines were matched up," Hines says. "Of course, the first time we ran it one side was right and the other side was a little mismatched. So, we had to go back through and get everything copacetic. Once we did that it was like the system wasn't fighting itself and it was able to breathe. It was beautiful."

The only real adjustment came when the outside 1122s had to be angled away from the sidewall. "The room is basically a box and you're hitting it at an angle, so you're aiming towards the corners," Hines explains. "The outside ones were really close to the walls and we had to gain shade those and really check phasing a lot. It was getting a lot of reflection and it was phasing out almost. We also delayed the inside cabinets a little to make it more unison when you walk from one side of the room to another. That made the transition from one cabinet to the other smooth."

Even after investing in all that gear, Hines points out that the room was not sonically treated. "We talked about it, but ultimately the management didn't like the idea of changing the look of the room," he says. "Only the back wall of the stage has a curtain and some foam behind it. It's nothing special."

At the same time, Contreras points out the problems are few. "The room is small, so there aren't a lot of headaches," he says. "About the only time something comes up is when a band comes in and wants to crank up their amps."

Contreras, who has been at the Whisky for 14 years now, believes the installation lives up to the history of the room. "It's a small, intimate, live rock and roll venue," he says. "The PA does justice to that." **FOH**

"They asked me what I would put in there. I said that what I *wouldn't* put it is a line array. The line array was battling the room." —Jason Hines

and yes, it was tuned for the room, but there was just something missing from the custom-made boxes that were built in 1986 and included all JBL components. "It was a big, bulky looking system," reports the Whisky's lead tech Leonard Contreras. "It was a nice sounding PA for its time and there was plenty of power, but it was getting old and tired."

So, the tech team and Whisky owners started to look around for a new system last summer. Ideas were kicked around and even a system or two was auditioned, including a Renkus-Heinz line array. "It sounded amazing," allows Whisky head engineer Jason Hines. "It was active boxes, which wasn't our preference, but for a demo rig, it was great." He adds, however, that "at the end of the day, it wasn't giving us enough coverage. The back of the room was really hot and the side of the room was a little bit dull. It's a pretty short throw room, so the line array wasn't the way we wanted to go."

Don't Line Up **FOH**

Contreras, who doubles as a touring FOH engineer for such bands as Devil-Driver, recalled that he had heard Electro-Voice on the road and he made a call to David Brown, who reps the brand. Brown came down to the room, took a look around and then opened his laptop to

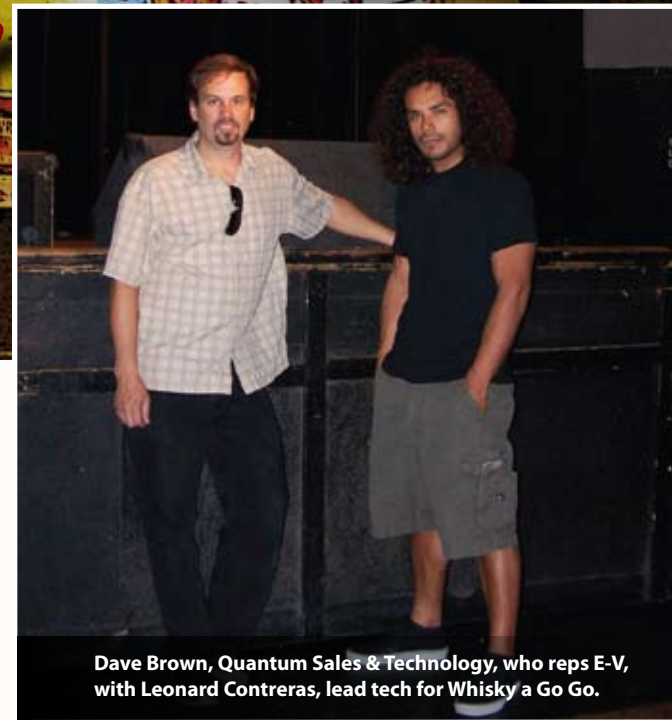
Rat Sound in Oxnard, Calif. The MTL-4 subs had been replaced within the last six years and did not need to be replaced. The most vintage piece of gear at the club is the desk, which is an Amek 501.

Picking and purchasing the gear was one thing, installing it was another. Yet, the most difficult thing the crew had to overcome was finding the time to get it done, since the club is booked with local, national and touring acts. "It took us two days," Hines recalls. "We did it non-stop, because we didn't really have a lot of downtime." The crew of four Whisky staffers, along with Brown who came in to help tune the system with Smart Live, got it all done.

Blood, Sweat and Red Bull **FOH**

After pulling the old system down, the team started to prep the area for the new Fly-Ware. "The place is three stories with the main room being the first two stories and there are offices above," Hines explains. "We had to hang the system from the subfloor of the third floor. To get to those I-beams we had to cut away a ton of mesh and drywall. Then we put our chains and hoists up there."

Once that was done, a couple of the guys got to work prepping the cable, soldering and running the lines. "Once we got everything pinned it was just a matter of



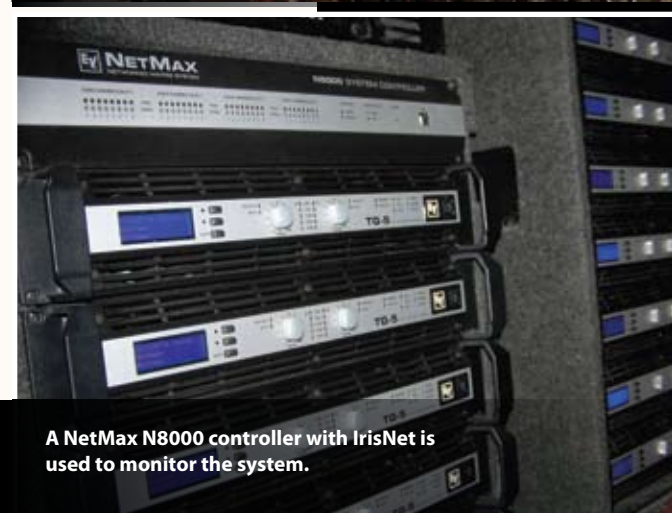
Dave Brown, Quantum Sales & Technology, who reps E-V, with Leonard Contreras, lead tech for Whisky a Go Go.



Dave Brown with E-V gear.



The Whisky a Go Go crew opted against line arrays and in favor of four EV Xi-1153s and four Xi1122MHA speakers.



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