

HB COMMUNICATIONS TAKE ELECTRO-VOICE® Sx™ & FRI™ LOUDSPEAKERS TO SCHOOL AS PART OF AN EXTENSIVE AUDIO/VISUAL INSTALL

DANBURY, CT (January, 2003): HB Communications (www.hbcommunications.com) and Electro-Voice have a relationship that has extended over decades, having successfully worked together on countless institutional installations in the Northeastern United States. One of HB's professional specialties is in outfitting schools with state of the art education and recreation enhancing audio-visual technologies, a tradition of excellence that has extended right up to the present day with a recent installation project at Danbury High School, Connecticut. HB's Darren Clark and Gina Lauria described this comprehensive installation, and where EV loudspeakers came in to play.

Gina talked about HB's history and commitment to this field, a dedication that is reflected in the choices HB makes when specifications are made on site: "At its inception, HB Communications' primary focus was the sale of film projectors. By the early 1960's, HB was doing business under the moniker of HB Educational Systems. With President Johnson's NDEA Educational Grant in 1966, HB's sales increased by 200 percent. Today, HB Communications offerings have expanded to serve organizations from private businesses to public corporations, but the company's success is strongly rooted in servicing the educational community. HB Communications established its tech center in 1990 to support AV system integration. Today HB Communications has reached the elite status of Infocomm Certified Member Dealer, denoting HB's commitment to providing industry training to its staff of designers, fabricators, installation technicians and project managers. Currently, HB represents more than 300 leading manufacturers in presentation display, audio systems, videoconferencing, and streaming media technologies. With more than 200 employees in North Haven, Connecticut and Waltham, Massachusetts offices, HB has become one of the largest AV system integrators of its kind in the Northeast. Today's teaching facilities have come to rely on technologies that will enhance student interest and comprehension. HB's experience spans from simple display devices to comprehensive distance learning systems and professional audio systems."

This pedigree of quality and success has the name Electro-Voice etched into the details. Darren Clark described the ways in which a familiar, trusted brand like EV continues to provide solutions with their cutting-edge technologies, and how the loudspeaker systems work alongside other innovative products used in HB's corner of the pro sound industry: "This was a design and build project for HB, to provide sound and video for a large, typical school auditorium in need of updating. The city of Danbury was looking for exclusively for design/build contractors, the project went out for bid, and we knew it was going to be a very competitive project. Looking at the performance to price ratio, I considered all of the competition. In terms of bang for the buck, EV was the brand that would get the project done in terms of sound solutions. Every product we use in these kind of installations has to fulfill two criteria: it has to work very well – we don't want to get the job and be embarrassed by it or struggle to make it work, and we also

want to remain competitive on our bid. With this in mind I looked at competitor's products, and dollar-for-dollar I knew EV would provide the product performance we needed without pricing us out of securing the contract. That's why we chose EV, and that's why we've used EV so often in the past. I already knew they were good speakers, but I also knew that we weren't going to be priced out. I could have done this whole project using speakers at four or five times the price, but we needed to stay within a specific budget on such an extensive installation. And ultimately, of course, EV is a product we have a history with."

HB used a main cluster of two FRi+ 122/94's with a FRi+ 181S sub and a Xi 1082 near fill. Sx 300's were used as delay speakers and on stage monitors. The main cluster was flown using technology from a nearby manufacturer, as Darren recalls: "It was a particularly interesting rigging application for us. We used a company called Polar Focus out of Hadley, Massachusetts. They make the Zbeam™. We did some custom rigging with them for the main cluster. It's a really useful, interesting product that helped us maximize coverage in an acoustically challenging space." This kind of attention to detail ultimately makes the system easy to use, as Clark pointed out: "We did staff training on the system on November 5th, and the system was completely turned over to them on November 7th, so they've just started using it. They're very happy with it." Like the EV loudspeakers used in the install, Darren Clarke is no stranger to the theatre, having gained an MFA in Theatrical Sound Design from Yale: "When this project came in I thought 'it's basically a theatre.' Though it's used for educational space I saw it would benefit from someone who understood stage left, stage right, rigging terms, how a theatre works in general. I knew what a theatre would need, and working with the music and drama teachers on site was easy. The teachers cared a lot about the system, and got very involved once we were awarded the contract, fine-tuning within our design/build perimeters."

The Sx 300's were very easy to work with because of the new EV brackets and the OmniMount™ speaker mounts we used. It's a piece of cake, everything fits together. Once you attach the OmniMounts to the wall you have a lot of flexibility in how you steer and aim the speaker. The center speakers, the clusters flown with the custom Polar Focus piece, worked really well using the rigging points that come on the cabinets. Acoustically, the left/right pair of FRi+'s by the stage is used for presentation audio, with a video projector, or for use with the orchestra to reinforce the band, with vocals running through the central cluster. The left/right speakers, used with a FRi sub, sound great - we're really happy with the performance. Again, the performance per dollar was what really drew us to the EV's. Overall, this was a half a million dollar project, but it included a long list of lighting, rigging, curtains, acoustical panels, a whole audio system, and a video system. We wanted to give them a balanced system; we didn't want to shortchange on any of these renovations. We could have spent a lot more for speakers, but we simply didn't need to. We got speakers that met the requirements and also allowed us to provide all the other things they needed."

The Sx 300's and FRi's are truly being put to task in this multi media installation. Darren Clark described the interfacing issues he faced in making the constituent parts elements of a cohesive whole: "In addition to designing the live sound

system I described, there were a number of other things we had to do. For example, there's a sound reinforcement system that is hands-off using an auxiliary auto mixer connected to the Soundweb. There's a Christie Vivid Blue projector in the rear of the room that has computer connectivity, along with DVD, VHS, an audio cassette player, and all the other typical presentation sources. What that obviously allows them to do is make presentations, but also, with the Sx 300's on the stage, they can have quality, monitored sound for dramatic effects, video presentations, etc. They can route their presentation source's audio channels to the stage when someone is conducting a class. They can route the CD player to the onstage speakers through the Crestron touch panel we installed. We tried to give them as much as we could in terms of functionality. The auditorium is also equipped with a recording and monitoring system: there's a color camera at the back of the space, and there's a hanging stereo microphone over the stage. They have monitors backstage, so they can see what's going on in the performance, and they can use the presentation system to record that. They could very easily record a band rehearsal or a dance rehearsal for teaching purposes, just as they can do Powerpoint presentations or show movies, which sound great with the two-way 15" FRi's and single 18" sub, on the big drop-down Dalite™ screen. It's not a full surround system, but it sounds pretty good for a big room. One of the things that made this a big project for HB was this integration. Had this just been a sound system a whole variety of contractors could have done it. Tying it all together through the Crestron interface and using the Soundweb to give them these different modes are two of the things that HB can do that not any contractor could." And with the Electro-Voice Sx and FRi loudspeakers installed, students can actually hear the care and attention to detail that HB put into Danbury high school's new AV system each time it is used.

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