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July 2009

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SECOND ACT

Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion Rebuilds After Hurricane Ike



The lawn at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion is addressed by an EV XLC system comprising 32 XLCi127DVX and eight XLCi907DVX line array loudspeakers, mounted in various configurations on a total of nine posts.

WOODLANDS, TX—Consistently ranked as one of the best outdoor amphitheatres in the U.S., the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in Woodlands, TX suffered extensive damage when Hurricane Ike hit the Gulf Coast in September, 2008. Now, after a \$9.5 million renovation project

funded largely by charitable donations, the 16,040-capacity venue is back at the top of its game, equipped with a brand-new Electro-Voice sound system designed and installed by LD Systems of Houston, TX.

A concert by the Dave Matthews Band on May 1 marked the official

reopening of the Pavilion, followed on May 3 by a capacity crowd for country superstar Kenny Chesney. Celebrating its 20th season this year, the Pavilion is also a major venue for classical musical performances.

The renovated Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion features many new post-Ike perks, including an expanded roof and almost 4,000 additional covered seats, but it is the sound system covering the outdoor lawn area beyond the amphitheater's Teflon roof that's causing the biggest stir. The lawn, which can accommodate over 11,500 guests, is addressed by an EV XLC system comprising 32 XLCi127DVX (120-degree horizontal coverage pattern) and eight XLCi907DVX (90-degree) line array loudspeakers, mounted in various configurations on a total of nine posts. All the boxes are level-three weatherized. The system is powered by 31 P3000RL remote-control amplifiers, and controlled via a NetMax N8000-1500 digital matrix/processor with FIR-drive, running IRIS-Net control and supervision software.

"The lawn system is an essential part any 'shed' style venue," noted Robert Ausmus, director of production services, LD Systems. "Whereas an act's touring PA will be deployed to cover the covered seating area, the house lawn system—typically one or more permanently installed delay rings—is critical to cover the large part of the audience out on the grass." The lawn system also needs to meet stringent rider specifications, a fact which caused LD Systems to look at tour-proven EV products.

Another goal in the system design was ease of use, a factor that is aided by EV's NetMax. "The touring engineers provide a matrix feed of their mix, which is fed through NetMax," Ausmus explained. "From there, the lawn system is time-aligned to the sound wing, so the audio can be delayed to the first ring of speakers; the second ring of speakers is then delayed back to the first ring to ensure accurate time alignment. This is all built into the N8000-1500, and common groups of speakers over the nine positions can be controlled and monitored in IRIS-Net, which is unheard of in typical lawn configurations. We're able to better control and manipulate more zones to get the best possible results."

The design and installation process was a smooth collaboration between LD Systems' Production Services Department and its Systems Integration Department. Tom Smith, the LD systems engineer on the project, mapped the system and Mike 'Monk' Shear (LD) and George Georgallis (EV Tech Support) provided all the NetMax/IRIS-Net programming. LD's Nelson Wilcox served as project manager, efficiently and effectively guiding the installation process under a very aggressive construction schedule.

The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion now has what Ausmus called "the ultimate dream lawn system, and more than likely one of the best lawn systems on the North American shed circuit."

"The future definitely looks bright for the new Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion," Ausmus said. "We're just scratching the surface of the potential this system has. It was exciting to channel our success and expertise with EV equipment in the touring realm into a prestigious permanent installation project like this." ■

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EQUIPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 32 XLCi127DVX (Level 3 weatherization)
- 8 XLCi907DVX (Level 3 weatherization)
- 31 P3000RL processed with NetMax N8000-1500 w/FIR-drive