

Speaking of EV...

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Success with EV: Rick Crank's Sound Dimensions LLC

Company Profile

Company: Sound Dimensions LLC

Location: Farmington Hills, Michigan

Owner: Rick Crank

A DJ knows what other DJs want in a sound system, right? So when Detroit-area former DJ Rick Crank bid on the new system in the main room at Regine's, a popular Detroit dance club, and learned from the owner that the system should not only meet a budget but also provide—as Crank put it in a recent interview with SOEV—“excruciatingly loud sound,” he knew exactly what to do. He chose Electro-Voice® products—in this case, eight T251i install boxes—and hung them around the 30' × 30' dance floor. Budget met. Sound excruciatingly loud. Done deal.

Crank started his audio install and rental business, Sound Dimensions LLC in Farmington Hills, Michigan, because other DJs and club owners in Motown kept asking his advice on getting the best gear for their businesses. Since 1990, he's been designing and installing systems in clubs, churches, and schools, as well as supplying rental gear to contractors for concerts and large DJ apps. To this latter end, he owns an

assortment of Xi™-Series cabinets from EV's X-Array™ touring line. The same Xi boxes make up the speaker portion of the focused but potent EV product range he offers for sale, along with T-Series™ 251i tops, Manifold Technology® Series MTL-1X subs, and Sx80, Sx300, and Sx500 cabinets. On the electronics side, Crank carries EV power amps (P3000s, CS3s, and CS4s), Dx38 speaker processors, and Klark Teknik DN360 graphic equalisers. Crank keeps an eye on EV's newest products, too: AC_{ONE} audio controllers, which he says work great in two-way club systems; and Midas Venice 240 compact mixing consoles. Crank is also looking forward to specing the new QRx speakers in some installations. He thinks they'll perform well—both acoustically and financially—in situations where he's previously used Xi or T251+ cabs.

So it was EV gear that helped Crank bid successfully for the Regine's job. Club owner Regi Thompson had rebuilt Regine's after it burned to the



T251i boxes surround a dance floor at Regine's. Their directivity let installer Crank maximize SPL on the floor without shutting down conversation.

“We’re not talking about an expensive product here, and club owners love the sound value for the money. It allows me to keep the quality level up while still submitting the best bid.” — *Rick Crank*



MTL-1X subwoofers lurk along the walls of Regine’s.



Crank at Regine’s with very satisfied owner Regi Thompson.

ground a few years ago, concentrating on creating an “upscale underground” look and feel with exposed brick walls, steel support pillars, burn-resistant rubber floor tiles, and such refined touches as tables imported from Italy and custom-built brushed stainless chairs. (He even added a little touch of good luck by selecting 711 as the street number (711 E. McNicholls); perhaps fate’s dice would roll in the club’s favor this time!) Thompson knew that his clientele is very music oriented, demanding not just high SPLs but also excellent fidelity. And Crank’s installation met the challenge. As if eight T251i hanging speakers weren’t enough for the main room dance floor, he also installed four MTL-1X subs around the loadbearing outer walls of the 80’ x 80’ room, with an AC_{ONE} controller to bring top and bottom ends together. The result is sound that’s not just loud enough for anybody but that’s free of phase cancellation and elicits awe-inspired reactions from the DJs for its cleanness and tightness. Even the white paint on the T251i cabinets turned into an advantage. Because the aircraft cable Crank used to hang the speakers tends to disappear into the darker walls, the speakers appear to float in midair.

The 100’ x 35’ second room has a 20’ x 20’ dance floor at the far end, with the DJ station tucked into the opposite corner. For this room, Crank used four FRi-122s, reinforced by two TL550D subwoofers with custom grilles, with an AC_{ONE} to mate the two ends together and powered by a CPS3 for the top end and a CPS4 for the subs. The crowning touch is a pair of FRi2082 low-profile boxes mounted above the two large steel doors that lead from the main room, powered by a P-1250. These, in Crank’s words, both “look good and do a really good job of minimizing sonic spillover from the main room.”

Thompson is very pleased with the results. As he mentioned to SOEV, “I’m not a sound expert, but I know what works. I’m very satisfied, and I know my patrons are. They just love it. Believe me, they would complain if they didn’t! The entire installation creates an environment that makes people think they’re not in Detroit anymore, but maybe in a New York or Miami club. The white speakers in midair complement the look of the club very well, and they focus the sound on the dance floor, so that people can carry on conversations around the floor. Even with four to five hundred people in the club, the sound is really great. Rick did a fine job.”

Crank likewise is happy with his Electro-Voice experience. He’s installed systems like the systems at Regine’s in other clubs in the area, such as Tonic in Pontiac and Karma in Ferndale, and enjoyed similar success. Crank credits the price ranges and durability of EV products, which he says are among the main reasons why he continues to carry them. He likes the straightforwardness and convenience of installing the products directly out of the box, with hanging hardware included. Yet when all is said and done, it’s that EV price/performance ratio that he likes the best. As Crank put it, “We’re not talking about an expensive product here, and club owners love the sound value for the money. It allows me to keep the quality level up while still submitting the best bid.”

For a club installer like Rick Crank, that’s a formula for success!^{EV} *Special thanks to Rick Crank, Regi Thompson, and Mike Torlone for their assistance with this article.*

X-Array™ Goes to the Opera

How do you reinforce sound for an opera performance in a sports arena while still meeting classical music's exacting requirements for balance and timbre? Simple! You plan carefully, and you insist upon Electro-Voice speakers and amplification.

When Opera Grand Rapids decided to present Georges Bizet's masterpiece *Carmen* at the Van Andel Arena in downtown Grand Rapids, they knew where to turn. Marshall Yoder, the production's sound designer, has an extensive background in corporate event production, specialized audio design, and recording, and has owned This Side Up, his own production company, since 1992. As well, he had produced for Opera Grand Rapids a performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* at Van Andel a few years ago. Yoder in turn asked Detroit's Corporate Sound Inc. to provide the gear he needed. And then they got to work.

A 12,500-capacity horseshoe arena with two seating bowls, Van Andel opened in the mid-nineties as a venue for everything from hockey games to rock concerts to corporate events to special productions like *Aida* and *Carmen*. According to Yoder, the arena has excellent sonic characteristics, and sound engineers enjoy working there. Because the stage for *Carmen* projected 130 feet into the floor space of the arena, one of the main challenges was ensuring that the seats to the immediate left and right of the stage in both bowls would receive good coverage and stereo imaging. Yoder designed the main and side speaker arrays with this desired wrap effect in mind. The two main arrays each included 15 X-Array boxes arranged in two rows of six boxes each, with a bottom row of three boxes. From onstage going offstage, the top row began with an Xf, then continued with an Xb, an Xf, an Xb, and an Xf, with another Xf at the off-stage corner. The middle row began onstage with an Xb, then alternated two Xns with two more



The four X-Array speaker clusters at the corners and sides of the lighting and sound grid.



Production elements in position for rigging.



An X-Array cluster at Van Andel. Note how wraparound approach helps stereo imaging on sides.

“The trick here was to reinforce the sound just enough but not get in the way, and the many compliments I received from finicky operagoers proved that the system did just that.” — Marshall Yoder



Grand opera on a grander scale: Sets, lights, PA in readiness for Opera Grand Rapids' Carmen.



The performance in full gallop.

Xbs, with an Xn at the offstage corner. The bottom row on both sides included two Xcn cabinets with an Xcb between them. The two side arrays each had a top row of two Xf and a bottom row of two Xn cabinets. Low bass was handled by two Xds subwoofers per side. These were placed behind the skirting that enclosed the orchestra pit, with two Xi-1152s per side on top of the subs as front fills. Originally, Yoder's plan called for delays 175 feet from the upstage point, but the long-throw capabilities of the X-Array boxes made them unnecessary. Yoder also used four 1152s per side for stage fill, rigging them on two trusses that ran above the stage from front to back on each side. Six Sx300s provided orchestra fill, and T-221s were used as floor monitors in the pit.

The main and side arrays and the subwoofers were all powered by EV P-Series amplifiers: eighteen P-3000s for the mids and lows, and six P-2000s for the highs. The stage fill speakers were powered similarly, with four P-1200s for the highs and mids and four P-2000s for the lows. P-2000s also drove the orchestra fills and monitors. The entire system was capped off with a Midas Heritage 2000 mixing board that handled the orchestra. Already the desk of choice for the Grand Rapids Symphony and the Grand Rapids Ballet, the Midas H2K was chosen, as Yoder put it, “for its sonic superiority.”

Carmen was the first occasion Yoder worked with Electro-Voice equipment on a large scale, and he found it an enjoyable experience. “I'd noticed several EV systems in the past and liked them,” Yoder said, “and this system really shone with its long throw and its ability to reproduce orchestral sound. The trick here was to reinforce the sound just enough but not get in the way, and the many compliments I received from finicky operagoers proved that the system did just that. People up in the second bowl, far from complaining about loss of volume or fidelity, told me that it was just like wearing headphones!” Considering how many opera lovers use headphones to tease out every last detail of their favorite recordings, this was high praise indeed!^{EV}

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