

HALL OF MUSIC PRODUCTIONS, PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Putting the “Rah, Rah, Rah!” in Purdue University’s live event productions

CUSTOMER:

Hall of Music Productions, Purdue University, US

EQUIPMENT:

Grass Valley K2 Dyno Replay System, K2 Dyno Production Assistant (PA) system, Kayenne Video Production Center switcher, Kayak production switcher, four LDK 8000 Elite and four LDK 4000 Elite HD cameras, eight 3G Transmission systems (triaux)

APPLICATION:

Live event productions, including video scoreboards



BACKGROUND

Today’s college video production departments are challenged with providing fans attending college athletics games and major live events and concerts with the same high-end production values they see on national television, but with limited budgets and mostly unskilled (student) operators. Despite this, Hall of Music Productions at Purdue University, in West Lafayette, Indiana, has continued to captivate fans with the latest in video production equipment from Grass Valley™.

Stephen Hall, Director, Hall of Music Productions, said they had been discussing migrating its equipment from standard-definition to high-definition for nearly three years—as other schools in their Big Ten conference began to make the move—but were hard-pressed to find an economical solution that satisfied their “quality first” concerns. Then they spoke to a few people in the sports and entertainment business and, after several negotiations over the spring of 2011, decided that Grass Valley’s live production technology was right.

“Image quality was—and is—very important to us, that’s why we chose Grass Valley technology,” Hall said. “I see a lot of schools acquiring low-quality gear, particularly in the sports video board production area, that costs a lot less than what we spent but doesn’t deliver the type of fan experience we have become known for here at Purdue. This is our reputation at stake. We always say, ‘you get what you pay for.’”

Hall and his team of professionals and student operators support the university’s audio, lighting, staging, and video needs for most major campus functions. This includes the

athletics department’s men’s and women’s basketball games held at the school’s newly refurbished Mackey Arena and football at Ross-Ade Stadium. They also create graphics and video content that appears on the big screen scoreboards at both venues, for the enjoyment of those in attendance.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT GEAR

In August, the university purchased a Grass Valley K2 Dyno™ Replay System (with K2 Summit™ Production Client and 4.8 TB of internal storage), a K2 Dyno Production Assistant (PA) system, Kayenne™ and Kayak™ production switchers, and four LDK 8000 Elite and four LDK 4000 Elite HD cameras, each with Grass Valley’s new 3G (triaux) Transmission system. Most of the school’s venues are wired with triax, but may someday convert to fiber-optic cabling. When that occurs, the Grass Valley 3G Transmission system can be retrofitted with a fiber transceiver module, protecting the school’s initial investment.

Some of the gear has been permanently installed in a new control room inside Mackey Arena. Hall of Music Productions has also set up a portable “flypack” system, complete with the Grass Valley LDK 4000 cameras and a Kayak switcher, which can be easily moved around and quickly set up to cover a wide variety of live events on campus. This allows the department to provide video production support for major events across the campus or in any of the four venues it manages. Commencement ceremonies, concerts, lectures, and a wide variety of conference and educational activities will now benefit from the new HD gear.



Film and video studies student Edgar den Uijl (left) watches as FVS student Dave Sult receives instruction from Louis Dierckman, Hall of Music Productions producer and director, on the Grass Valley Kayenne switcher.

“I can’t say enough about the great job that Grass Valley did in helping us get up and running. They helped us figure out how we wanted the equipment to be installed so that it would make our workflow as efficient as possible.”

Stephen Hall, Director, Hall of Music Productions, Purdue University

SEAMLESS THIRD-PARTY INTEGRATION

Hall of Music Productions are also using a Chyron HyperX HD graphics platform, which has been tightly integrated with the Grass Valley switchers and K2 Dyno Replay System. Hall said it was very helpful that the Grass Valley gear could easily be combined with the Chyron HyperXHD without disrupting their existing graphics production. In addition, video clips are played out directly from the Kayenne switcher’s internal clipstore making video rolls and playback simple and efficient.

Hall also likes the multiformat support that the Grass Valley products provide, because they produce a wide variety of events and the gear has to handle it all. “We know we’re getting our money’s worth and that’s the most important part of this investment, he said. “We don’t get to spend the money twice.”

REAL-WORLD EDUCATION

Hall said Hall of Music Productions also chose Grass Valley equipment because that’s what they often see when they visit professional video production organizations, such as local TV stations or video production companies.

“As part of our process, since we are part of a university, we try to involve students in what we do,” Hall said. “That was one of the big reasons we decided to purchase Grass Valley products. We knew that our graduates would encounter the same equipment in the real world, so if we have students holding a Grass Valley camera, switching with a Grass Valley switcher, and working with the K2 Dyno Replay System, we believe they will fully understand the gear and (hopefully) be very employable.”

Training was easy for the staff and students, which was critical, since they received the new equipment on August 1 and began using it at the stadium on September 1—in time for the 2011 football season. Basically, they had three weeks to get everyone up to speed.

“At Purdue we have students that have an aptitude for video production and love the new Grass Valley products,” Hall said. “We have a strong film and video studies program here, so the training went fairly smoothly. It really has not been any harder to train our students than it was to train our professional video staff.”

The reaction among the video production staff and students has been “extremely positive,” according to Hall, who added that when you introduce new gear there’s always a training curve.

“We got through it fairly easily,” he said. “There were a few ‘oops’ moments, but that was mostly attributed to operator error.”



“The fact that the servers and replay system were part of a total package meant that, in essence, Grass Valley provided us with a turnkey HD video system solution. No other manufacturer can do that without sub-contracting these important elements.”

Stephen Hall, Director, Hall of Music Productions, Purdue University

HD MIGRATION IMPROVES PURDUE'S IMAGE

Today, thanks to the new Grass Valley equipment, images on the school's existing video boards look better than ever because of Grass Valley's Emmy® Award-winning Dual-Skin Contour Circuitry and dynamic pixel management system. In layman's terms, this means the picture created by the Grass Valley cameras is brighter, crisper, sharper, and richer in color than any of its competitors. Indeed, fans notice the difference.

“The other very obvious difference is that the picture is bigger [a wider 16:9 HD aspect ratio],” Hall said, “but the higher quality of the images and the fact that we can provide replays off of six cameras versus four [beforehand] are the intangibles that create that ‘wow’ factor we were after. Using the Dyno, we can now build replays and highlight packages very quickly, which we could never do before. Also, students tell us being at the sporting events is much ‘cooler’ than it used to be. That's the highest compliment we could get.”

Another new element that the Grass Valley equipment offers, according to Hall, is the ability to provide referees at some games (particularly women's games) that aren't televised with instant replays. With the K2 Dyno, they have created video clips

with an embedded shot clock and make it available, via the Grass Valley Summit Production Client server, on demand.

The equipment has also allowed them to provide fans in the elite “donor area” of the venues with a mobile application on their Apple iPads to watch the highlights and other video elements displayed on the big screen in the palm of their hands. This could not be done without the Grass Valley gear providing the live video content to the server and app developed by a company called XOS Digital.

The new gear has also enabled Hall of Music Productions to consider supporting outside clients with a full range of video production services, as a way of generating new revenue for the organization. Needless to say, Hall is “extremely happy” with how the new technology has been embraced by everyone at Purdue.

“Grass Valley is a company that thinks about the technology and how it works best in different situations, like ours,” Hall said. “Their products are flexible and don't force you into a box, the way some other vendors products do. We feel very flexible in how we now do things. And the fact that it integrates seamlessly with other technology we use is invaluable to us.”

GLOBAL SERVICES



Grass Valley Global Services specializes in the defining of, deployment of, and support of today's dynamic file-based workflows, based on Grass Valley and third-party solutions. With Grass Valley Global Services, you can achieve your operational goals in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible with a partner you can trust.

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