

News

Gordon College Chapel Equipped with NEXO GEO S12 Line Array



WENHAM, MA - MFI Productions recently upgraded the audio system at the 1,600-capacity A.J. Gordon Memorial Chapel at non-denominational Gordon College with a new, white NEXO GEO S12 line array.

"The Chapel on campus is the largest performance venue on campus," noted Chris Imming, the college's director of media services. Along with the Gordon's academic curriculum, the space hosts Chapel services, Convocation programs and special events, with a performance stage for large-scale ensembles, choirs, and bands.

"We wanted to provide audiences with clear and intelligible speech reproduction while also meeting the growing expectations of professional and touring artists," Imming said. Artists performing there include Third Day, Caedmon's Call, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Jars of Clay, the Art Music Justice Tour and Jeremy Camp.

"Often there is little to no time to flip the space. Having a system with the NEXO GEO S12 at its core allow us to continue to host touring artists with less dependence on outboard gear. We hope this reduction in production set up time and expenses will allow us to host additional tours in the future."

"The primary goal of the new system design was to address both coverage and intelligibility issues," added Denis Gosselin, MFI Productions, noting that, "as praise and worship performances increased, a 'portable' system was purchased for use when the praise team was leading worship. That system relied heavily on a pair of single 18" subs and a single 15" 2-way cabinet on the stage platform. While that system did provide full range audio support, it was never intended as a long-term solution since components were undersized for the venue and left huge gaps in coverage."

The College researched their system analysis and design needs in-house, and as an educational opportunity, students were also involved in the design and installation process.

"Both InfoComm and NSCA training was essential in our ability to carry the project from the design stage through completion," said Imming. "Throughout the design process, we evaluated both point source and linear array systems from six or seven companies.



"While linear arrays are certainly not the best solution for every venue, we chose to pursue compact array designs for the project after completing some EASE modeling of the hall," Imming said. "Satisfied by the computer modeling, we felt that arrays would provide a cleaner install and, in white, disappear into the stage proscenium."

"We narrowed the list of manufacturers down to three and scheduled onsite demos. Each demo system came in for two days to allow time for flying and tuning. The extended demo period also allowed us to utilize each system for a worship team rehearsal, a regular chapel with a full house, and critical listening demos with various faculty and staff members whom regularly utilize the space."

Gosselin noted that one of the challenges in a space like the A.J. Memorial Chapel was to balance system design with aesthetics by maintaining the clean look of a traditional New England chapel.

"Considering no existing rigging was in place, previous touring groups always had to ground support arrays or utilize speaker stacks on the stage, taking up real estate on the stage and providing a disproportionate amount of SPL to the front section. Several months into the design stage, we came up with a rigging platform that would provide us with great flexibility to accommodate system demos and fine-tune array placement during the install. With limited weight capacity of the rigging platform, the NEXO GEO S12 Series provided an aesthetically pleasing install while maintaining intelligibility and musicality." The complete system includes 14 white GEO S1210 boxes and 14 GEO S1230, two NEXO RS15 white subs, four NEXO PS8 speakers and two NXAmps 4x4 and one 4x1.

"We were all very impressed with how the GEO S12s made it all the way to the back of the room and remained warm and clear even under the balcony," notes Gosselin. "Since this building has a wide range of audio demands ranging from traditional services, full theatre productions, and full concert applications, it was extremely important to get a box and design that would fit the bill. The NEXO rig delivered the sound to the room in a very specific and predictable manner, which helped to cover the listening area evenly and keep as much reflection off of the hard surfaced walls as possible. Lloyd Kinkaid, Yamaha design specialist, and his knowledge of NEXO's GeoSoft was a huge time saver and allowed us to play around with SPL and pattern options before the first GEO S12 box was hung. Most importantly, it was accurate, with the end result reflecting what was predicted on our laptop! To an audio contractor, Lloyd and GeoSoft are a very powerful source of knowledge, instrumental in getting it right the first time."

For the upper balcony, MFI Productions chose to hang two NEXO PS8 speakers to the ceiling to help restore any high frequency loss after the 100 throw. "Despite their small size, Gosselin says, the PS8 puts out an amazing level of full frequency sound. The asymmetrical high frequency horns allowed us to dial in coverage to both the upper and lower sections of the balcony without throwing extraneous sound on the back wall and added just a little extra sparkle at the very top of the balcony.... Perfect!"

MFI also installed an Aviom Pro16 Digital Snake, Aviom Pro 16 Personal Monitoring System, Sennheiser IEM300 G2/G3 Series, Sennheiser Antenna Combiner, Professional Wireless Helical Antenna and Low Loss cable, Sennheiser EW335G2 Wireless Handhelds Microphone, HME DX200 Wireless Intercom System, HSA Rolltop Desks, Bag End Floor Monitors, and a Listen Assisted Listening System.

"It was a pleasure to work with MFI Productions on both the demo and install as they were very accommodating when it came to partnering with us on the install. Our students had the opportunity to get some real hands-on experience flying and installing our tour-grade system. Now that the new system is installed we finally have an audio system that is up to par with the rest of the video, projection, and lighting capabilities."