



EVOLVING "O" SOUNDSCAPE

BY JERRY PLACKEN

Cirque du Soleil's wildly innovative production "O" has been seen by more than 4 million people since opening at the Bellagio Theatre in Las Vegas about six years ago. The 90-minute spectacle unfolds in and around a 1.5-million gallon pool.

The production's original sound designers, Jonathan Deans and Francois Bergeron, created the intricate audio soundscapes that envelope "O" with a Level Control Systems (LCS) SuperNOVA system at the heart of the surround system feeding dozens of loudspeakers distributed throughout the theatre. (A CADAC F-type console at front of house was on hand for live mixing.)

In an upgrade with roots back to 2001, an LCS VRAS (Variable Room Acoustic System) was recently implemented by Deans and the "O" sound team to not only create different acoustic environments, but also to implement them on cue. VRAS, an option in LCS Matrix3 devices, is the invention of Dr. Mark Poletti of New Zealand's Industrial Research Ltd.

A Matrix3 package has replaced the original SuperNova system. LCS CueConsole2 systems replace the CADAC at front of house and added to mix monitors for monitor engineer Sylvain Brisebois. CueConsole is a control surface that links to the Matrix3 processing frames via a standard Ethernet cable, providing flexibility to place or move the mix position anywhere in the space for production and rehearsals. CueConsole's control surfaces can also be completely re-mapped on a scene-by-scene or cue-by-cue basis.

Bill Mansfield, head of audio at Bellagio, notes, "The flexibility of the system is unparalleled. It can be configured to accommodate an individual mixer's working style, both in the hardware and software interface layout as well as the cue structure. And, the automation and control options allowed us to easily interface it with our existing systems in the theatre. Best of all, it sounds fantastic."

◊ Equipment Photo Credit: John McMahon | ◊ Performance Photo Credit: Tomasz Rossa | ◊ Costumes: Dominique Lemieux