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THE RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR RINGS IN THE HOLIDAY WITH JBL VERTEC AND CROWN SOUND SYSTEM

More Than One Million People Will See the Christmas Spectacular This Holiday Season

NEW YORK, NY – DECEMBER 6, 2002 – The Radio City Christmas Spectacular®, starring the world-famous Radio City Rockettes, returns to Radio City Music Hall for more than 200 performances this holiday season. The 2002 Edition of The Christmas Spectacular features a cast of more than 140 people, including a thirty-five piece orchestra. This year, Sound Designer Dan Gerhard chose JBL's VERTEC™ Line Array speakers powered by Crown amplifiers for the grueling schedule of up to six shows per day.

Gerhard specified the VERTEC/Crown system after successfully using a system at another event. "VERTEC provides excellent full-range sound for music from the orchestra as well as pristine clarity for spoken word, which is crucial for this show," said Gerhard. "The requirement at Radio City is for a sound system to cover from top to bottom, which is about a 90° vertical throw when the speakers are flown above the set as they are for this show, which VERTEC is very capable of handling.



The Great Stage at Radio City Music Hall for the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. The Sound System includes two arrays of VERTEC line array speakers from JBL powered by Crown amplifiers.

“Also, from an audio standpoint, the Christmas Spectacular uses a lot of headset lavalier microphones which can cause many problems. The more coherent the sound is in the room and the more impact it therefore has, you can keep a lower overall level, which is important. The greater the clarity, the less volume you need for the audience to hear the details of the show. VERTEC provides this clarity, so the show can be clearly heard without the high volume that could cause listener fatigue and feedback.”



The Radio City Rockettes in “The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers.”

The audio challenges of this ninety-minute show are staggering. Two Midas H3000 consoles are operated by sound engineers Tommy Arrigoni and Russ Lynn. The orchestra requires 75 inputs, with a dozen live microphones for performers on stage, and many channels dedicated to pre-recorded program. The entire show is run to time code to allow audio from the 3-D introductory film, pre-recorded materials and sound effects to be precisely integrated with the live music, dancing and acting on stage. The VERTEC system is made up of two arrays flown above the stage. Each array contains fifteen VT4889 and two of the new compact VT4887 line arrays. Forty-two Crown MacroTech 5002VZ amplifiers provide the power. Processing is handled by two BSS 366 OmniDrives.

“The VERTEC system’s performance is excellent. In fact I have even had comments from the lighting people saying they have heard things they never heard before. What I notice the most is the clarity – the midrange is far superior to anything we have ever used. This is where the orchestra lies, in the mids – getting definition in the reeds and other instruments is critical,” stated Lynn. “I have also used a lot less channel equalization than usual. We are running lavalier mics with no equalization and getting lots of gain and clarity from the VERTEC speakers. I have never come close to feedback with these lavaliers. The orchestra is sounding bigger than it ever has. The sound is a 100% improvement over anything we have done before.”

The VERTEC sound system was installed in October as preparation began for the shows. Sound rental company Promix provided the system and assisted in the installation. “Setting up the VERTEC rig was a breeze. The rigging and its simplicity blow away the other line arrays,” said Arrigoni. “Tuning the system

was simple and painless. There was very little change from the factory set ups for the VT4889, mostly to compensate for the needs of an orchestra compared to the average amplified musical performance for which the system would generally be used. If I was doing a rock show, I don't think I would have made any changes."

"The response has been nothing short of wildly enthusiastic. Even people who usually don't comment on sound have told us they hear parts and instruments they never heard before. Everyone is aware of the improvement and impressed by it," according to Gerhard. "I don't like to describe audio systems or speakers in non-technical terms, but it's hard not to with VERTEC. These are just very natural sounding speakers – they are very musical – they sound like the band."



Two compact VT4887 speakers for front fill are hung under the main array of fifteen VT4889 speakers.

The Radio City Christmas Spectacular debuted in 1933; one year after the Music Hall opened its doors for the first time. Originally performed as a holiday "gift" between movie screenings, The Radio City Christmas Spectacular began its full 90-minute format to overwhelming public response in 1979. The show quickly developed into a holiday tradition for families around the world. This year, more than one million people are expected to attend the show at Radio City Music Hall, making it the #1 live show in America.

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