

## Melbourne Grammar School's Alfred Fenton Hall Wired for Sound, Controlled to Perfection

By Jade Leopoldo

Set in 3.3 hectares of leafy grounds, Melbourne Grammar's coeducational primary school Grimwade House provides for some 680 students and a teaching staff of approximately 50. Located in the heart of this junior school campus is the grand performing arts centre known as Alfred Fenton Hall. Built in 2005 to house school assemblies, lectures and concerts it was decided late last year that the hall needed a permanent projector solution. As it was, they were required to setup for assemblies as needed. This meant they had to manually lower screens into position and carry a projector into the room. In addition, the audio system was also in need of improvement, with a number of the auditorium's seats struggling for quality sound. With all this in mind, D.I.B Australia, working closely with Melbourne Grammar's new Media Manager Shane Castricum, set about designing a solution that was to be fast and simple to use, ultimately benefiting the entire school, from staff to students.

The first item addressed was the audio system and with the help of Terry Magee, System Design Consultant at Audio Telex D.I.B were able to design and install a high quality theatre standard speaker and amplifier combination. This was to become the primary audio system, enabling the hall to do away with its existing centre speaker. The chosen speaker series (Turbosound NuQ) was selected due to its professional theatre quality and fully tuneable speakers, which were to allow for high quality audio in a stereo format. Also added to the new sound structure, was an advanced audio routing control system known as Digitool. Providing for all audio switching and volume control, this device was to enable users to toggle volume for direct and simple control of Master volume, Fold back volume and even incoming microphone level independently and easily.

As part of the new permanent projector solution, an EPSON EMP-8300 projector was installed, due to its robust design, which was to cater for long periods of operation. Ideal in a

large hall environment such as that at Alfred Fenton Hall (with its high brightness of 5,200 ANSI Lumens), this projector was chosen in confidence that it could be used as part of the school's desired dual screen operation, which would allow them to have both a smaller presentation screen in front of the stage curtain, as well as a larger backdrop screen behind it. Initially other suppliers were looking at a two-projector solution, however D.I.B were able to design a unique system using only a single projector. Utilising a special Interfit screen lowering device from Screen Technics, they were able to design a system whereby the front 150" motorised screen would automatically lower into the correct viewing position from high up on the hall's ceiling. In turn, the projector was programmed via the Extron control system to automatically adjust its zoom settings to match this motorised screen when down. Alternatively, when the screen fully retracts and is out of sight the projector zoom adjusts to again fit nicely on the rear wall of the stage, acting as a larger backdrop screen.

Controlling all the aforementioned devices (projector, dual motorised screens, audio functions plus a whole host more) was the Extron Master Control panel. Located on the hall's stage, it was chosen for its ease of use. The Master Control panel does not make use of a colour touch screen, instead it incorporates physical buttons, which are clearly labelled and provide user-friendly feedback via tactile button response followed by illumination to indicate that the control input has been registered and is occurring. Not only is the Control panel user-friendly, but it also allows the school wireless access to control via any school laptop due to the control's in-built web server. Meaning that any laptop with a web browser and access to the school network can navigate to the built-in web engine, which has been set up to provide control of all AV system functions.

Complimenting the master control panel was the addition of an Extron presentation switcher and scaler, which will give





users the ability to switch between an array of inputs to their Epson projector. As well as switching inputs (to which this device does so seamlessly), it also provides for image scaling to match the display device. This means that the school no longer need worry about what resolution the presenter is using on their laptop. For example if they are using widescreen or a very high resolution laptop this device will automatically adjust to ensure the image fits onto the display screen and is not cut off. A handy addition when involved in hectic presentations, when time is often of the essence.

The upgrade to Melbourne Grammar's Alfred Fenton Hall was unique and incorporates a great number of highly advanced devices, however, it is still able to maintain simplicity and ease of use for school presenters. Meaning that anyone, from the highly capable IT minded to the less inclined can use the system at ease and with little training required. The school, which has grown rapidly over the past 80 years, now has an outstanding Performing Arts facility that accommodates large student numbers for functions of any kind. With its great flexibility and ease of use, it isn't hard to see why the newly upgraded hall is fast becoming the centre piece of Grimwade House! [www.dibaaustralia.com.au](http://www.dibaaustralia.com.au) 