

Suburban Legend Using iLive for Theatrical Productions



FAYETTEVILLE, GA - Suburban Legend Audio got its start six years ago, “initially doing all recording work,” according to owner Jonathan Wade. “But I’ve always been involved in live theater, and that

has become a very successful niche for us as well.”

As demand for its services expanded, Wade opted to venture past the Allen & Heath GL3300 analog console he had been using.

“In shopping around for a larger board, I knew that going digital would provide a lot of advantages, both in terms of operational flexibility and being more portable and self-contained,” he noted. “The expanded audio capabilities, sound quality, and lower cost made the iLive-T Series an obvious choice.”

The company took delivery of its new iLive-T 112 with iDR-48 MixRack in May and, with a large outdoor musical theater production looming, Wade set about the task of learning the system.

“I had experience with digital, both from mixing at my local church and in the recording studio, but this was my first time using an iLive,” he said. “I felt very comfortable with it right away. It’s very intuitive, very easy to learn.”

After a few small initial shows, Wade’s first large gig with the iLive was Twilight Theater’s production of the musical *Les Miserables* at The Frederick Brown, Jr. Amphitheater in nearby Peachtree City.

“We had a live orchestra and a cast of 85,” Wade recalled. “We also had 24 wireless mics and some people playing multiple roles, so there was a lot to keep track of. With the iLive, I was able to program the entire show, scene by scene, in advance. When rehearsals started, the audio was 90 percent done, which was incredible.”

Maintaining control of the mix through the approximately 118 scenes Wade had programmed was another concern addressed by the iLive.

“In addition to the stage miking and the orchestra, we had multiple cast members swapping mics, which meant compensating for the differences in the strength and EQ of their voices,” he said. “Having the ability to write and instantly recall scenes allowed us to do that seamlessly.”

During the production, Jonathan Wade maintained control of the mix through the use of Audio Groups and DCAs, with inputs

grouped together in a logical production.

“I’ve got the main PA system on one DCA, and the orchestra all together on the second one. All the wireless mics are on a third DCA, which I then have broken down by four additional DCAs - bass, tenor, alto, and soprano - so I can control the vocal mix with just four faders. And if someone is too loud or too soft that night, I can go to the source group and adjust that mic on the fly. The DCAs give me access to everything I need at the push of a button, and I can get back to the top layer just as quickly.”

Outputs required for the show were met with the iLive’s iDR-48 MixRack, which handles up to 64 inputs and 32 outputs. The house sound system was a left-center-right system, with frontfill. In addition, backstage subwoofers were set up to add realism to the gunfire and cannons in the show’s battle scenes. Six monitor mixes were required: stage left and stage right, two side stage aprons, one for the orchestra, plus a backstage feed to allow actors to hear their cues.

For *Les Miserables*, Wade configured the T-112 so that the top layer, Level A, gave him control of the 24 wireless channels, with the last three faders showing the Aux outputs dedicated the stage, orchestra, and side stage monitor mixes.

“That’s something I love about the iLive - the ability to put anything on any fader,” he states. “I can configure the surface the way my brain works, and what makes sense for the show. All I do is hit Next/Go to change scenes, and I can mix 90 percent of the show without changing layers. And if I do have to make a minor tweak, I don’t have to stress about it because the next scene is already programmed.”

Wade also credited the iLive for “bang for the buck” and portability. In addition, “having all the EQ, gates, compression and effects onboard is a huge plus.” After supporting *Les Miserables*, Suburban Legend went on to support other productions, including *Guys and Dolls*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, and *Fame*, all within a matter of weeks.

“To do four live musical productions in different venues, with different people, in that time frame, is extremely challenging,” Wade said. “By using the T Series, I can literally sit down at home with my laptop and a script and use the Offline Editor to program the entire show. That’s a huge plus. When the director asks for changes in a scene, I can handle it on the fly in the middle of rehearsal, without holding things up. And the consistency we get in the mix, night after night, is something that everyone appreciates. With the iLive, I’m able to work more efficiently, with less stress. I love it!”

For more information, please visit www.suburbanlegendaudio.com and www.ilive-digital.com.