



# HITTING THE HIGH NOTE AT ZELLERBACH HALL

## 40-YEAR-OLD BERKLEY CAMPUS VENUE INVESTS IN NEW TECHNOLOGY TO GREAT SUCCESS.

by Eileen O'Dea

**W**hen management of the famed Zellerbach Hall at the University of California, Berkeley upgraded its sound systems, the process was done with a light touch. After all, when artists such as Itzhak Perlman and YoYo Ma like the current surroundings, the less that things get changed the better. The Zellerbach Hall became the first venue to install a Constellation system to

(Left to right): Brian Zimmerman, head electrician, and Danny Nilles, head carpenter, Cal Performances



provide the proper acoustics for their varied presentations. Since then, they have hosted the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, university choruses, the Mark Morris Dance Group, and many more.

"I truly believe that a physical renovation would not have given us the high quality of sound, both for audience and performers on stage," says Tom Hansen, production director of Cal Performances. "Performers feel like their music is being presented in the best possible way, and that is possibly the most important return we see on our investment."

Meyer Sound Technology developed the

**info**

CAL PERFORMANCES  
calperfs.berkeley.edu  
MEYER SOUND  
meyersound.com

### KEY ELEMENTS /// FOR THE END USER

**ROI:**  
"Performers feel like their music is being presented in the best possible way, and that is possibly the most important return we see on our investment."

**RELIABILITY:**  
Thus far, Constellation has been extremely reliable for Zellerbach Hall. Since their venue is a "test" system, all queries and problems are directed to Meyer.  
—Tom Hansen, production director of Cal Performances at University of California, Berkeley

Constellation system specifically for live acoustic performances in concert halls. The Zellerbach installation, with Constellation at the heart, includes an array of speakers and microphones using low-voltage wiring.

The system enables operators to get creative and has proven to be a smart choice to showcase the diverse music offerings at Zellerbach Hall, making the hall acoustically appropriate for its artists. The technology also allowed for Zellerbach Hall to tweak the system in ways to create the "Optimal listening experience for every seat in the hall," according to Hansen. Constellation allows for each seat in the house to hear sound at its best.

As far as ease of usability, Cal Performances staff says that the Constellation is sophisticated yet straightforward professionals with knowledge of audio theory, acoustics, and the program material. The system operates on a closed network—accessible to only a handful of users—so not just anyone can take the operating reigns of the system.

Eileen O'Dea is a graduate student in communications at Marywood University in Pennsylvania, with a specialty in corporate communications. She is a recipient of an IHM Graduate Scholarship. Reach her at AVTIntern@nbmedia.com.

**moreonline**

Learn more about Cal Performances' events through videos featuring the artists and scholars who create them. Explore the video and audio segments featuring artists and scholars from Cal Performances past seasons via [avtechnologyonline.com/sept11](http://avtechnologyonline.com/sept11)