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May 12, 2014 by Lisa Montgomery

What does "going to the theater" conjure in your mind? Driving to the local Cineplex with the family? If you're fortunate enough to have the space and funds for your own media system, it might make you think of strolling to the next room and hitting "play." For the owners of this spectacular 770-square-foot entertainment masterpiece, going to the theater is just as much about seeing a live performance on a stage as it is about viewing a blockbuster movie on a huge panoramic screen.

Creating an entertainment space that could function admirably both as a venue for live Broadway-inspired productions, put on by the family, and as a top-notch home-based cinema would test the design and integration skills of Cantara, Costa Mesa, Calif. Fortunately, the veteran installation firm had a designer on staff with a college degree and previous work experience in commercial stage design. "Adam [Purath] was invaluable to the success of the project," says Cantara president Jason Voorhees. "He understood the best way to lay out the room and the types of electronic equipment we would need to replicate the experience of being at an actual Broadway play."

The end result is a remarkable blend of traditional movie theater and live stage, as

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System Design & Installation
Cantara
Costa Mesa, CA
www.cantaradesign.com

Architect
Richard Krantz Architecture
Newport Beach, CA
www.richardkrantz.com

Builder
Bob Smith Construction
Laguna Beach, CA

Acoustical Design
Performance Media Industries
Novato, CA
www.pmltd.com

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the room transitions seamlessly between the two environments through the use of a sophisticated, custom-programmed control system from AMX. In cinema mode, family and guests are treated to a spectacular view of high-def movies presented by the screen-projector duo of a 175-inch-wide CinemaScope-format screen from Stewart Filmscreen and a 3D Titan 1080p video projector from DPI. The built-in surround-sound system, composed of nine speakers and four subwoofers from Genelec, which were carefully engineered and calibrated by Cantara, envelops theater-goers in three-dimensional audio. [Locate an installer today!](#)

As is sometimes the case when designing high-end home theaters, getting such a large number of speakers into their prime positions—and blending them into a traditional decor—called for a bit of creativity on Cantara's part. Explains Voorhees, to produce the most impactful audio, the center-channel speaker (responsible for dialog) should be placed as near to the center of the screen as possible. In most home theaters, custom electronics (CE) professionals will simply mount the center-channel speaker on the front wall and have the audio project directly to the ears of the viewers through the acoustically transparent weave of the screen. In this theater, however, the front wall sits about 12 feet back from the screen. (The 12-foot gap was critical for the conversion from theater to stage.) If placed 12 feet behind the screen, the center-channel speaker would lose much of its impact; left with no other alternative, the Cantara crew attached the 180-pound speaker to a motorized lift that lowers the unit from a trap door in the ceiling into the perfect position when it's movie time.

Curtain Call

You know the owners of this convertible entertainment masterpiece are true fans of Broadway when they took the liberty to have a dressing room built behind the stage. Here, performers can get prepared for everything from puppet shows and karaoke competitions to Broadway-inspired performances. Accoutered with closets stocked with costumes, the 150-square-foot space teems with creative possibilities—one of which was to install a Sonance speaker into the room and tie it to the AMX system that runs the lighting, A/V components and motorized screens and drapes in the main venue. This connection allows people who are preparing to take the stage to hear verbal cues right from their dressing room chair, says Cantara's Jason Voorhees, as audio from the stage mic travels directly to the dressing room speaker. The audio from a live stage performance can even travel to other speakers installed throughout the house.

Tricky speaker placement also gave the homeowners' daughter, a set design student at NYU, a chance to showcase her artistic skills. After Cantara had recessed the room's surround speakers into the side walls, she used watercolors to paint soft, free-flowing ivy designs on the surface of several large panels of acoustical fabric. These decorative but functional panels conceal the speakers without affecting their performance.

The surround-sound system, and the rest of the theater, springs to life the moment the owners step into the room and turn on the lights—preset, of course, to be just the right intensity level. This “flip of a switch” tells an AMX control system to prepare the room. “We call it the curtain warming mode,” Voorhees says. Soft pink LED lighting washes over a fabric curtain that covers the screen, and background music from a custom-curated Pandora station plays through the audio system. Using an AMX control app on an iPad, the owner, once settled in a seat, can choose to activate a TiVo receiver, AppleTV or Blu-ray disc player. At the same time, the lights fade, the music stops, the projector starts and the drape lifts to reveal the screen.

Okay, so what about the mysterious stage behind the screen? With just a tap of a finger on an iPad, the owners are able to quickly stow away all the movie gear, as both the screen and the center speaker retract into

the ceiling. An Arcam A/V receiver switches out of surround-sound mode so that only the front two speakers are active, and the screen of the iPad presents the owners with more than 60 different lighting scenes from which to choose.

“They can go from a scene that sets the lighting to make the stage look like a

rainforest, a sunny day or a foggy evening, complete with actual fog produced by a hazer machine,” Purath explains. In seconds the owners can customize any type of environment they want—a process, says Purath, that would typically require the use of a professional mixing board. The integration of these professional staging products with a robust residential control system was the key to keeping this multifunctional entertainment space simple to operate ... and to enjoy.

More home theater ideas here:

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[Lisa Montgomery](#) - Contributing Writer

Lisa Montgomery has been writing about home technology for 15 years, with a focus on the impact of electronics on a modern lifestyle.

2014 Home of the Year Product List

- 3 Genelec HT320BC Reference Level Active 3-Way Speaker
- 6 Genelec A1W26 Reference Level Active 2-Way In Wall Speaker
- 4 Genelec HTS4B Reference Level Active Subwoofer
- 1 Arcam AV8881.4 High Performance Audio Preamp/Processor
- 1 QSC Core 250i with Input/Output Cards High Performance Audio Processor with EQ, Delay and Bass Management
- 1 Performance Media Industries Custom Acoustic Materials Custom designed acoustic absorption and reflection materials
- 1 Electrokinetics Custom Lift Custom designed Center Channel speaker lift

- 1 Digital Projection Titan 1080p-330-3D Ultra Contrast Reference Level 1080p 3D Projector
- 1 Digital Projection 107-198 2.56-4.16:1 Lens
- 1 Panamorph ADC1SYS Anamorphic Lens System
- 1 Panamorph CK480-E [29-40 Feet] Long Throw Lens Conversion Kit
- 1 AudioQuest Carbon HDMI 10.0M High Quality 10M HDMI Cable
- 1 Stewart Filmscreen EMAB6190##13BMap-25-20-10 Custom designed motorized dual aspect and perforated projection screen
- 1 Lumagen Radiance XS-3D High Performance 3D Video Processor
- 1 XpanD AE125-Secured 3D Synch IR Illuminator
- 15 XpanD X104-LX1 High Performance Adult Rechargeable 3D Glasses
- 5 XpanD X104-SX2 High Performance Child Rechargeable 3D Glasses
- 2 XpanD 10 Port USB Recharging Hub Charges 10 pairs of 3D Glasses
- 1 Chief Manufacturing VCM73P Projector Ceiling Mount
- 1 Chief Manufacturing CMA101 Ceiling Mounting Plate

- 1 Samsung BD-E6500 3D Capable Blu Ray Player
- 1 TiVo Premiere XL4 TiVo Cable TV DVR
- 1 Apple TV Streaming Media Player
- 3 AudioQuest Carbon HDMI 2.0M High Quality 2.0M HDMI Cable

- 1 AMX MIO-R4-ZGWPRO Handheld Remote Control with Touch Screen
- 1 AMX NI-3101-SIG Control Systems Processor
- 1 Apple iPad User Interface
- 1 LaunchPort WallStation Wall Mounted Charging Base for the LaunchPort System
- 1 LaunchPort PowerShuttle - White Charging Sleeve for the LaunchPort System
- 1 AMX TPCControl License for iPad License to allow iPad to act as a Native AMX Touchpanel

- 1 Middle Atlantic MRK-4426 44 Space Equipment Rack
- 1 Middle Atlantic MRK-Z4 Seismic Floor Mounting Kit for Equipment Rack
- 2 Middle Atlantic D2 2 Space Equipment Rack Drawer
- 2 Middle Atlantic FI-2 Foam Insert for 2 Space Equipment Rack Drawer
- 2 Middle Atlantic CFR-9-18 9 Space Equipment Rack

- 2 Middle Atlantic 5-RS18 Low Friction Runner Kit for CFR Series Equipment Rack
- 3 Middle Atlantic Custom Rackshelves
- 1 Furman IT-Reference 15i Reference Level Power Conditioner
- 1 APC AP7931 Intelligent in rack Power Distribution
- 1 AMX NXA-WAP1000 Enterprise Grade Wireless Access Point
- 1 Redfish Illuminations Custom Designed Theatrical Lighting Package Theatrical Lighting Package including front, side, top and back lighting with Hazer (Fog)
- 1 iWeiss Custom Designed Theatrical Soft Goods Custom Sized Leg and Border Panels
- 1 Interactive Technologies CueServer DMX Recorder/Player
- 1 Shure MX202B/N Hanging Microphone acts as Stage Monitor for Dressing Room
- 1 RDL EZ-MPA1 Microphone Preamplifier
- 1 Autonomic MMS-2 Music Server
- 1 Acesonic KOD-3000 Professional Karaoke System
- 2 Shure SLX24/SM58 Handheld Wireless Microphone
- 1 Samsung UN40ES6500 Karaoke Confidence Monitor
- 1 Chief MFMUB Cart System for Karaoke Monitor
- 1 RePlay XD1080 Karaoke Performer Camera

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