

CONCERTS

Inside the Resorts World Theatre

Katy Perry's show is the latest residency at the new Resorts World Theatre, a joint venture between Resorts World Las Vegas and Concerts West/AEG Presents. Designed by the Montréal-based entertainment design firm Scéno Plus, the 5,000-seat multilevel venue debuted in December with Carrie Underwood's *REFLECTION: The Las Vegas Residency*.

The eighth Vegas performance venue to be designed by Scéno Plus, it features the city's largest and tallest stage to date, covering an area of 13,550 sq. ft. The space, with the furthest seat no more 150' from the stage, features unobstructed sightlines, fully configurable high-definition LED screens totaling over 5,000 sq. ft., and an immersive audio experience through more than 200 L-Acoustics speakers powered by L-ISA technology. It is part of Resorts World Las Vegas, the city's newest attraction, a \$4.3 billion property.

The theatre was originally envisioned as part of The Echelon, a mixed-use project that was never finished. Thus, says Olivier Berthiaume-Bergé, of Scéno Plus, "The structure was almost 100% completed when we took on the project. When Resorts World Las Vegas became the new owner of the property, we revisited the original design in a lot of aspects, while utilizing the portion that was already built." One of the project's big challenges, he notes, involved "keeping the theatrical and stage amenities flexible enough to accommodate different artists with their own specific productions, [which] required some out-of-the-box thinking."

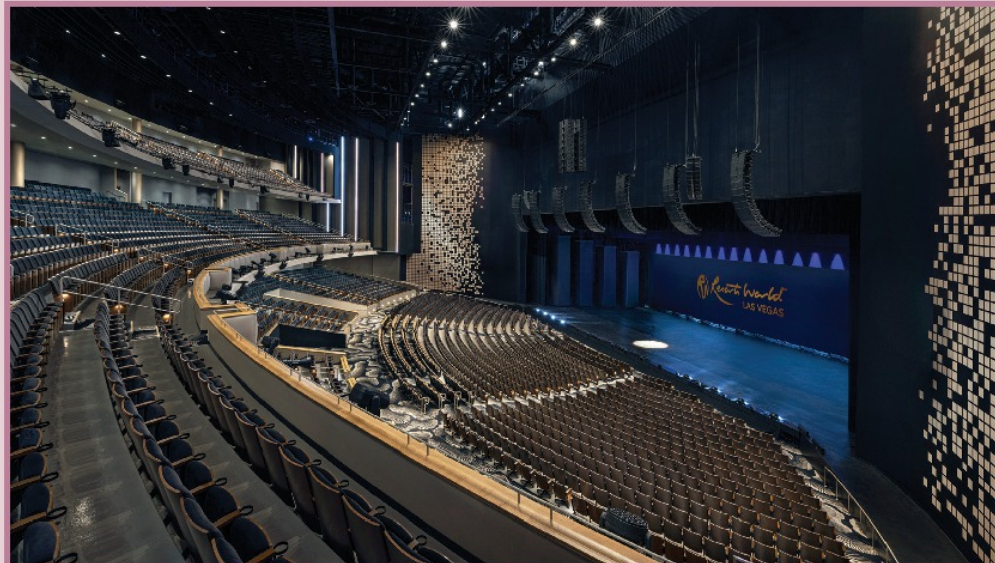
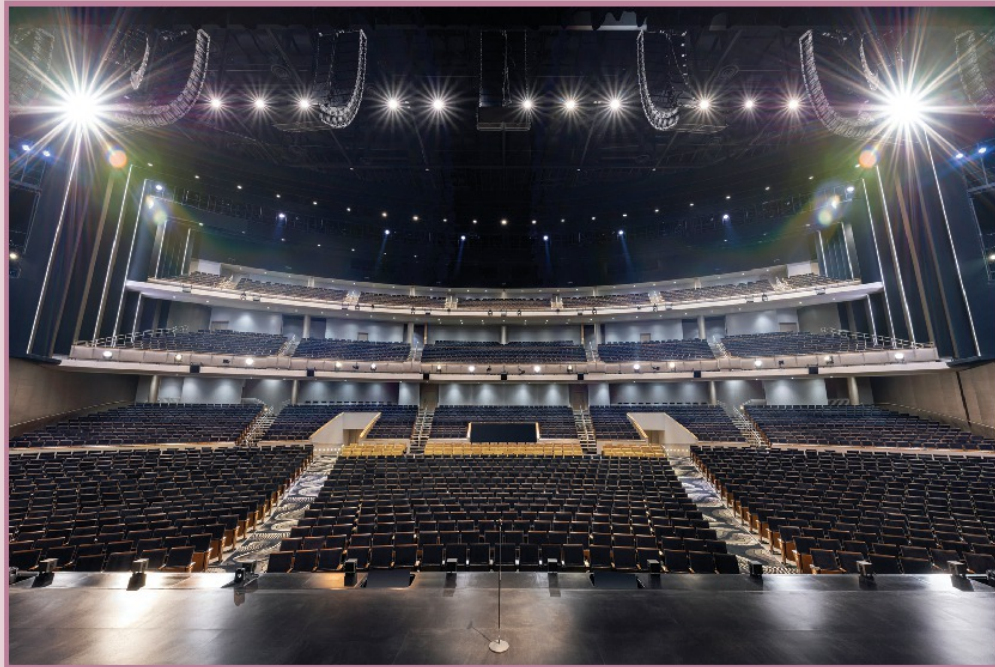
Describing the interior design, he says, "The sleek, yet simple, elegance of the theatre is set in a decor of pure and refined materials, like polished stone and bright metal, with a dark and shiny color palette invoking champagne bottles intended for

memorable tasteful evenings. Every room is embellished by elegant accessories and rich details, all thoughtfully created by renowned designers.

"A four-level lobby, articulated around an elegant atrium space and topped with a grand modern chande-

lier, offers a unique pre-show experience. Games of opacity and transparency in materials, as well as warm halo light effects, create textures enhancing distinctive spaces.

"The design approach for the striking volume of the audience chamber is picturesque, with the stage wall,



which extends itself toward the audience in a gradient from black to champagne, formed by a myriad of shimmering bronze tiles. In contrast, the seating area is sculpted by a magnificent play of curves in lighter tones and framed by lit arches, adding dynamism and structure to the space. Sièges Ducharme, also a Montréal-based company, supplied the seats for the venue.”

He adds, “It’s always a challenge to maximize the amount of people in a venue without compromising their experience. As a theatre designer, you want everyone in the audience to share the same experience, and you want the artist to feel every soul in the room. Regarding the Resorts World Theatre, the fact that the room and the proscenium opening are wide and that the public is distributed on four levels really helped us bring everyone closer to the stage. The curve of the seating layout is not too pronounced, which allows the artist to grasp the entire audience in a glance and really establish the connection that makes the magic happen.” Also, he notes, “The first eight rows of seats at the orchestra are on a very gentle slope and are dismantlable, so there’s a possibility to remove them and install tables and chairs for a gala event in that section.”

Designing a theatre in a busy hotel/casino complex can make for some acoustic challenges. Still, Berthiaume-Bergé says, “The isolation from the property was not as challenging as creating the perfect room acoustic for more than 200 L-Acoustics speakers, powered by L-ISA technology, with an advanced sound system design created specifically for the theatre.” Scéno Plus, he notes, “has an in-house staff of AV specialists who conduct sound modeling and sound prediction analysis.” But, he adds, “We worked with Romain Dumoulin, from Soft DB, who is an acoustical engineer and who has collaborated with us for the past ten years. He was able to validate

and orient our design approach and help us develop design and acoustical solutions that really brought us farther than in any of our previous projects.”

As a venue for stars, the backstage amenities are extensive. The theatre has eight dressing rooms spread over 4,000 sq. ft., which can accommodate up to 30 performers. The first star dressing room is, Berthiaume-Bergé says, “the size of a small apartment, which includes a lounge and dining area.” A second star dressing room also has its own living room. The rest includes four double dressing rooms, a five-person group dressing room, and another

that can accommodate 12 performers.

As detailed in the accompanying feature, Solotech supplied the theatre’s extensive inventory of gear. Overall, Berthiaume-Bergé says, “The real flexibility of the venue lies in the stage area, where artists can deploy almost anything to the limit of their imagination. The stage lifts, and is directly connected to the understage storage room through an enormous garage door, allowing the opportunity to transport, store, and bring the set pieces on stage from the different headliners sharing the venue.”

—David Barbour

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