



The Wynn Las Vegas Showroom is the host of the acrobatic show "Le Rêve," directed by the renowned theatre director Franco Dragone.



Located in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Colosseum at Caesars Palace holds a rounded, 4,000-seat theatre where international singing star Céline Dion took residence for a few years.

SCÉNO PLUS INC.

Entertainment-venue architect melds function and beauty with theatrical sites

BY LIN GRENSING-POPHAL

PATRICK BERGÉ WAS LITERALLY RAISED IN theatres. He toured with artists from ages 12 to 19, started working in a theatre at age 13, and focused specifically on theatre projects when he later went to architecture school—it was in his blood. Because of his early experiences and interactions with performers and technicians, he also gained a special appreciation for their needs, which he channels as president of architecture firm Scéno Plus Inc. Consequently, Scéno Plus' design solutions focus on the aesthetic and on the functional.

With every one of its entertainment-architecture and theatre-design projects, Scéno Plus considers the front-of-house impact on those in the audience and the back-of-house functionality that will create a comfortable and efficient working environment for those working the show. "We're very preoccupied by the quality of life of the artists and technicians," Bergé says. "When artists are happy and technicians are happy, it will show in the performance." This focus, he says, is very different from the approach that other architecture firms take.

Bergé also is keenly aware of the need to provide guests with an experience that can "get people out of their living rooms and away from their DVDs and giant screens," noting that creating a venue that contributes to an emotional experience is important. "The emotion is what will make

people get their coats on, get in the car, and go somewhere because something special is happening," he says.

Scéno Plus has created something special at venues like the Cirque du Soleil theatre at Walt Disney World's West Side District in Orlando, the Treasure Island Showroom in Las Vegas (hosting permanent Cirque du Soleil show "Mystère"), the Bellagio Showroom in Las Vegas (hosting permanent Cirque du Soleil show "O"), the Colosseum at Caesars Palace, and the Wynn Casino Showroom. It is the only company in the world that offers a wide range of integrated theatre services under one roof, including architecture, theatre design, interior design, technology, and specialized equipment and multimedia.

Specializing in transformable theatre, Scéno Plus has created multifunctional spaces that allow theatre managers to turn rooms around in just a few hours to accommodate standing shows, seated shows, touring acts, boxing or martial-arts events, banquets, and premieres. This flexibility provides producers and managers multiple options and possibilities for selling their venues.

Though it was Bergé's vision and experience that gave birth to the company, it is the staff and its high energy, collaboration, and commitment that ensure continued success. "It's all about the emotion and the feeling of

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
MONTRÉAL, QC

EMPLOYEES:
40

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
THEATRE DESIGN
AND ENTERTAIN-
MENT ARCHITECTURE

the space,” Bergé says. “That’s probably our primary strength—to be able to argue and fight over concepts in house, with a positive dynamic, to consider every angle.” When presenting to clients, Bergé prides his company on the fact that it has looked at every single angle that a client might consider.

The collaboration between different departments and the ability to have fun while continuing to challenge and drive each other ensures that every aspect of a project is given careful consideration. Many staff members also have experience in theatre and touring, helping them to understand client needs very well.

Scéno Plus’ major markets are Las Vegas, the United Arab Emirates, and Atlantic City, but the firm is expanding into new territory, most notably in South America, where cultural differences require adaptability both in business dealings and design solutions. In South America, Bergé notes, there is not a lot of money, but there are a lot of people. That requires larger venues—8,000 seats compared to 2,000-seat theatres, for instance—and lower

ticket prices for the same artists. Although the projects pose a tougher challenge, the firm helps clients with business plans in addition to actually creating the space. To be successful in both areas, Bergé says, “you need to get close to the culture, and you have to understand what people want to have in an experience.”

This exploration makes moving into new markets exciting for Scéno Plus. “It’s like we’re at the place we were maybe 20 or 30 years ago; we’re coming back to our origins,” he says.

And though the work itself provides ample reward—Bergé feels fortunate to have a job that continues to bring both creative satisfaction and personal pleasure—recognition from those outside the company, through awards such as the Outstanding Private Building Award for The Colosseum, the Award of Technical Merit, the Las Vegas Showroom of the Year, and the Eddy Entertainment Design Award for the Bellagio Theatre, provides third-party endorsement of the quality and expertise that the company brings to all of its projects. CBQ

