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STAGING CONCEPTS IMAGINATION WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

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Imagination with a Personal Touch

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& Written by Mark Fitzgerald*

Some of the best concepts and designs begin modestly in the mind's eye before taking root and coming into focus. A conversation happens, a handshake. Maybe a picture is drawn or a model is developed.

Of course, it helps to begin with the end in mind. Knowing how a product will be used and for what purpose and in what context can save a lot of time. In the performing arts world, the need for customized platforms, seating risers and accessories have vaulted Staging Concepts into a highly specialized corner of the fabrication industry.

“We design a lot of custom solutions for projects that require all kinds of outside the box thinking,” explains Dan Stachel, senior project manager. “We’ll take a look at what a customer or somebody’s trying to do and find a way to produce it. We depend greatly on our design and engineering department to make sure the product corresponds to its intended use.”

Quality Products

Operating out of Minneapolis, Minn., since 1990, the company offers two distinct product groups: portable staging products and railing systems. Portable staging products are supplied to stadiums, arenas, ballparks, convention centers, theatres and production companies as well as educational, worship and governmental organizations. The ornamental railing systems are engineered designed and fabricated to precise specifications for a myriad of venues, from sports facilities to hospitals.

“Everything that we manufacture is for a purchase or a contract,” explains Michael Hayden, president and CEO. “We are not a rental company; we do sell our portable staging products to rental companies or production



companies, who in turn will rent out the equipment locally or use it for an event they are producing.”

To streamline the process, most of the specs on the legacy side of the business — namely a good deal of the staging equipment that the company sells — have been written in advance from tested data provided by in-house engineers.

Talent In-house to a Packed House

Staging Concepts has about 70 employees and collaborates closely with engineers and architects around the world to optimize the latest technology and ensure that its products meet the code requirements.



“We have many seasoned engineers in-house,” notes Hayden. “So we believe we have the expertise and know-how to produce the most superior and advanced modular, lightweight, custom designs to consistently meet our clients’ needs. One of our key drivers is to always offer the best value in the marketplace.”

All equipment is manufactured at Staging Concepts’ Minneapolis facility by a fabrication team boasting a combined total of more than 200 years of hands-on experience. Over the years, Staging Concepts has patented proprietary labor-saving techniques that have established it as an industry leader in both efficiency and quality.

“We recycle and employ green manufacturing practices that won’t compromise the quality of our products,”

says Hayden. “Everyone here, our administrative, sales, design, project management and fabrication staff, is committed to ensuring that all our products live up to the expectations of our customers.”

Impressive Feats

In producing custom applications for the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami, Fla., Staging Concepts worked directly with teams at the center, as well as with JR Clancy and Gala Systems. The company’s scope of work involved designing and installing custom components in the Arsht Center’s Knight Concert Hall and Ziff Ballet Opera House. In the Knight Concert Hall, it designed, manufactured and installed eight custom rolling sound wagons with two tiers of elevated seating. Each wagon is over seven feet



a custom, automatic, seat-wagon lift-gate system. The system is capable of lifting a section of seats to allow vehicles access the field. Staging Concepts also designed, manufactured and installed over 37,000 feet of ornamental railing throughout the stadium.

Scheduled to open spring 2010, the new Target Field in Minneapolis exemplifies Staging Concepts' ability to provide custom solutions for any facility's needs. Staging Concepts supplied the ballpark with over 35,000 feet of aluminum railing, along with portable seating riser platforms and portable aluminum platforms. In addition, Staging Concepts provided Target Field with an operable platform similar to Busch Stadium's seat-wagon lift-gate. Furthermore, the company moved into a new area of expertise - miscellaneous metals - and provided the Plaza adjacent to the Ballpark with nine decorative aluminum topiaries standing at nearly 40-feet tall, plus provided the surrounding aluminum canopies and a variety of other architectural metal products. "We were extremely pleased to furnish such a wide variety of products for such an impressive ballpark, especially in our own backyard," says Stachel.

tall and can be rolled to the back of the concert hall when not in use. The company also provided the Ziff Ballet Opera House with stage trap platforms installed on the orchestra pit lift.

Staging Concepts also provided a variety of enhancements to Busch Stadium in St. Louis. In collaboration with Uni-Systems, the company designed, engineered, manufactured and installed



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Looking ahead, Hayden is optimistic about opportunities throughout the country and internationally. “We are seeing tangible evidence right now that economy is in the recovery mode,” he says. “We’ve had many favorable responses to our inquiries and positive results because of our bidding activity.” ■

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