

Immaculate Conception Seminary

When Veteran Sound Contractors Provide Input for White Instruments' Newest ParaMedic Digital Equalizer, the Result is Out-Of-This-World



Can a couple of hard-working sound contractors in the Big Apple actually affect the end product of a manufacturer deep in the heart of Texas? For leading signal processing design and manufacturer White Instruments, the answer is a resounding "You bet."

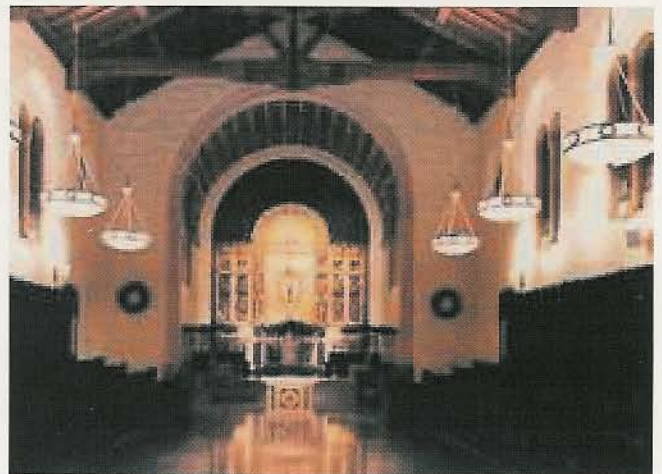
For more than a decade, the New York-based duo of Robert Pelepako and Steve Minozzi, directors of Monte Bros. Sound Systems, had been enthusiastic customers of the high-end signal processing equipment designed by White Instruments. When White's current owner Robert McKee took over the company several

years ago, Pelepako and Minozzi talked to him and his design team about developing a digitally controlled equalizer. On a parallel path, the techs at White Instruments had already begun plans for such a unit. After a series of consultations and give-and-take between the veteran sound engineers and the White engineers, the White ParaMedic Equalizer was born. Introduced last year, the one or two channel ParaMedic equalizer features 70 assignable filters, high/low pass, shelving, and direct control from the front panel RS-232 port via White Windows v2.xx software.

"The White Digital ParaMedic Equalizer is a joy to work with," says Pelepako. "It's a powerful piece of equipment that really makes our job a lot easier." Case-in-point for Pelepako is one of Monte Bros.' most recent-and most ambitious-applications, the Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, Long Island. The seminary serves the entire diocese of Rockville Centre and its services are attended by the top clergy of churches throughout the New York City metropolitan area. Last year, the seminary underwent an extensive renovation. Although the existing sound system was just four years old it was plagued with audio problems, prompting church officials to request a new system.

Monte Bros. was contacted for the application based on their extensive resume of more than 750 church applications in New York area, as well as through a referral from the architect and contractor involved in the renovation. After design estimates and a formal proposal, the first step for Minozzi and Pelepako was to discuss with the seminary staff how the main room of the chapel was to be used and to find out how the renovation changes would affect the overall layout.

Basically, the sound system covers the chapel within the seminary's walls. The main body of the





chapel contains antique choir stall-type seating in the monastic tradition. The stalls run the axis of the chapel and rise tier above tier to accommodate the entire seminary community and diocese clergy. The altar is located approximately one-third of the way down the nave of the chapel, with no fixed position for the pulpit. Depending upon the program of the service, the pulpit may be moved to various locations within the nave. Therefore, it was essential to design a sound system that permits the celebrant to move about freely.

"Conceptually, we wanted to create a sound system that would be transparent, non-directional, intimate and capable of reproducing the spoken word and music as naturally as possible," said Pelpako "Ideally, the system would give the effect that the natural acoustics of the room made the sound, not the system. We chose to go wireless with the main microphone locations for two reasons. One, the celebrant had to be mobile. And two, crypts directly below the chapel made hard-wiring impossible."

According to Minozzi, the White ParaMedic Digital Equalizer was instrumental in facilitating the system. "Working with this new piece of equipment was invaluable," he said. "It allowed us to surgically manipulate frequencies and create digital parametric filters as needed."

In addition, Pelepako used Lectrosonics diversity digital coded lavalier microphones for the main celebrants, and Lectrosonics H-175 diversity digital coded transmitters with Audio-Technica AT9915QMR/ML microphones for the pulpit and general use positions. For aesthetic purposes, the transmitter was positioned inside the pulpit and the AT915QMR/ML was placed directly on top of the pulpit.

The mixer is a Bi-amp Advantage V-RAM EQ with two auxiliary inputs (one for tape play). "We configured eight microphone inputs via a computer interface and through the V-RAM EQ, allowing us to gate and adjust tones with three bands of equalization on each microphone," said Pelepako.

Six NEAR DT-2 loudspeakers were placed along the side walls of the chapel as a distributed system. The speakers were unique in that they respond extremely well to equalization and, when combined with the White ParaMedic equalizer, were able to deliver the natural, unprocessed sound the system installers sought in the application. Upon completion of the installation, Monte Bros. performed an analysis of the room using a TEF20 analyzer with time delay spectrometry.

In fall 1998, Bishop R. McGann, D.D. rededicated the newly renovated chapel and the new sound system performed exactly as expected. Many long-time churchgoers were pleasantly surprised by the clarity and natural sound of the new system and were able to hear every word for the very first time.

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