**Line Studio at WMS Signals New Era for Hawaii’s Recording Studios**

*WSDG crafts a world-class center for musical community in the heart of an island paradise*

**HONOLULU, HI – Hawaii has long been a celebrated cultural destination renowned for its enduring local identity and unique melting pot of musical sensibilities. As its artistic prominence has grown in stature globally, the need for modern audio production infrastructure to support Hawaii**’**s present and future musical talent has never been more pressing. Seeing the opportunity to create a new creative and educational hub for this growing musical community, audio engineer and educator Sam Fong of Hawaii**’**s** [**Washington Middle School**](https://washingtonmiddleschool.org/) **sought out the services of global architectural acoustic consulting and media systems engineering firm** [**WSDG**](http://www.wsdg.com/) **to create** [**Line Studio at WMS**](https://www.linestudioatwms.org/)**, a new, world-class recording studio and audio education complex that is already making waves with aspiring and professional musicians across the island chain.**

**A community-focused musical vision**Washington Middle School, a Title-1 classified Public School where at least half of its students live below the poverty line, has distinguished itself through its dedicated team of educators driven to provide better opportunities for their students. As the only school in Hawaii providing students with pro audio training, the staff of WMS was well-equipped to plant the seeds of what would become Line Studio. Fong and WMS Principal Michael Harano were eager to explore the educational and cultural implications of a professional-grade facility. “We truly want to elevate the quality of life for our students and present them with opportunities that broaden their own vision of what their lives can become,” said Fong. “The concept for Line Studio was to create a real recording studio that would have value for both our students and for the local musicians of Hawaii. Both sides of that equation were very important to us.”

“On the one hand with students, we could offer them a real opportunity to develop their minds and skillsets when it comes to audio and music that would be applicable whether they choose to work here or on the mainland. We also knew that by opening the studio up to public projects, we could enrich the culture for local musicians by providing opportunities that might not have existed before for them also in terms of recording and production.”

This community-focused approach was very much at the center of the concept for Fong and his colleagues. Citing Hawaii’s close-knit local culture and rich musical heritage, he felt compelled to ‘dream big’ in what at first, seemed like an impossible project. “Music is deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture and people are proud of it,” he says. “However it has always been difficult to make a living doing it here and we’ve lacked some critical infrastructure to support our musicians. We really wanted to make a difference for the community when dreaming up Line Studio.”

“Fortunately for us, that dream met reality the moment we approached John Storyk and WSDG.”

**Designing the dream**After meeting WSDG Co-Founding Partner, Storyk at NAMM in 2016 and sharing WMS’s story, Fong and his colleagues then undertook a whirlwind tour of WSDG-designed studios in the continental United States to gather ideas for Line Studio. The synergy with the WSDG design team saw the concept quickly fall into place. “We were immediately intrigued by the dream that Sam presented us with,” says Storyk. “We knew right away that this would be a very special project for WSDG and an opportunity to play a critical role in providing something life-changing for the next generation of musicians and engineers.”

“We were challenged to raise the horizons for recording studios in Hawaii with the design of Line Studio at WMS,” adds WSDG Partner, Director of Business Development and Project Engineer Sergio Molho. “To create something that would rival anything on the mainland and provide the next generation of Hawaiian musical talent with access to the best facilities and technology available.”

Led by WSDG Partner, Director of Production Romina Larregina, the WSDG design team committed themselves to designing a world-class recording studio that would function equally well as a configurable teaching environment out of a 1600 ft2 former computer classroom. After utilizing advanced predictive analysis techniques to aid in the layout design of the room and optimize the acoustic environment of the unusual space, the team got to work. “We developed a spacious live room and large control room and floated the entire complex to assure total acoustic isolation,” explains Larregina. “To account for Hawaii’s unique weather conditions, we also designed a custom HVAC system to ensure ideal temperature and humidity conditions to preserve the studio and its components as well as provide a comfortable atmosphere for its occupants.”

“We also created two Iso booths including one constructed around a nine-foot grand piano. Both are fitted with sliding doors, which enable them to both enlarge and function as integral elements of the Live Room.”

The interior and lighting design of the studio was inspired by the lush Hawaiian surroundings. WSDG Partner and Art Director Silvia Molho integrated elements of the trunks and leaves of the local kalo plant within the custom designed rear wall Wave Diffuser and other aesthetic/acoustic elements of the Live Room and Control Room interiors. “It was important that the feel and vibe of the studio reflect its users and exist as a unique creative space,” says Molho. “The organic design sensibility grew naturally out of an attunement with the school and the local culture. Incorporating native woods and other local Hawaiian materials into these aesthetic and functional details also added to the sustainability of the project.”

“WSDG has designed thousands of rooms, but this one was very special to us,” adds Larregina. “We designed it to be an inspirational space where the only limit was the imagination of those inside of it.”

**Accessing advanced studio technology**

The media systems engineered for Line Studio at WMS played an equally critical role in the success of the project. The design of these systems, led by Sergio Molho and AV Systems Senior Designer Federico Paez, had to reflect the latest in recording studios, education and webcast technology at the highest levels while still being accessible to the mixed age audience that would be using the space. “As a multi-use space, we needed accommodation for dedicated audio and video equipment that would also be accessible to a student audience,” explains Paez. “Accommodating both and providing facilities for crossover and collaboration was key to the success of the studio.”

For audio recording/mixing, WSDG specified the SSL AWS 948 48-channel analog mixing console and AVID MTRX interfaces. Studio monitoring is provided by a main custom Symphonic Acoustics speaker system, co-designed by George Augsperger and WSDG, as well as an additional Dolby Atmos 7.1.4 ATC speaker array for immersive audio production. The complex also includes a substantial equipment closet, a full complement of outboard gear, and a Sound Lock with wheelchair access. “Ultimately we wanted a level of technology that would give the musicians and students room to grow,” says Paez. “Everything here is world-class and top of the line, which allows them to keep pace with the demands of recording technology without having to leave the islands.”

Video production for Line Studio is supported by a NewTek Tricaster-equipped broadcast station positioned opposite of the Control Room window with multiple view screens. This also serves larger classroom sessions when viewing angles are at a premium. All A/V components were provided and installed onsite by AVN | SYS. Final system tuning and certification was performed by WSDG’s Acoustic Engineer Pietro Gennenzi and Sergio Molho.

**Forging a new future for the music of Hawaii**

Officially in operation and actively serving its a community that includes State Agencies, DOE schools, non-profit groups, and local artists, Line Studio at WMS has already surpassed the wildest expectations of its originators. Seeing the vision grow from concept to final product has had a profound impact on both the team behind it and the community it was designed to serve. “WSDG truly saw our dream for this studio and made it a reality,” says Fong. “It has become an amazing vehicle to drive the vision of the future of what you can accomplish with music in Hawaii. The dream really does go on and on from here.”

“As this project has grown, we’ve seen the multitude of benefits a facility like this can provide,” said Storyk. “It’s bigger than the school. It’s as big as the community wants it to be, and that’s an incredibly special thing.”

"Line Studio at WMS represents the contextualization of education at its highest level and a step in the direction of reimagining how students will be educated in the future,” added Washington Middle School Principal Michael K Harano. “Once stepping down that path, there can be no turning back."

For more information about WSDG, please visit: <http://www.wsdg.com/>

**ABOUT WSDG, LLC**
WSDG (Walters-Storyk Design Group) is an 13-time TEC award-winning international firm specializing in architectural acoustic consulting and media systems engineering. Pioneering architect/acoustician, John Storyk (AIA), founded the company in 1969 with the creation of Jimi Hendrix’s Electric Lady Studios in New York City’s Greenwich Village. WSDG provides a wide portfolio of design and consulting services that support architectural projects throughout all phases of project development. Our international team of consultants have provided timely, detailed and cost-effective advice on highly sensitive and complex architectural construction and renovation projects, from small but critical retrofits to challenging ground up construction projects. WSDG has extensive experience with sensitive architectural issues including historical renovations, additions and new construction projects in media production, corporate, government, transportation, education, broadcasting and cultural / entertainment sectors.

Past clients include Jay-Z, Bruce Springsteen, Alicia Keys, J Cole, and Jack Antonoff, corporate entities such as Spotify, Sony, CBS, Novartis, and IBM, and global governmental AV installations as well as and educational institutions such as Berklee College of Music, UCLA, University of Music Vienna, and NYU.

WSDG is a 13 time NAMM TEC award winner for studio design, including last year's winner, Rue Boyer, Mix with the Masters’ flagship Paris recording studio.

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