

**No Ordinary Supper Club: Verse Acquires an SSL Live L300 at “Greatest Sounding Restaurant in the United States”**

**LOS ANGELES** — Verse, the high-end supper club recently opened by GRAMMY Award-winning mix engineer Manny Marroquin, Michelin-star chef Paul Shoemaker and hospitality veteran Rob Ciancimino, is no ordinary venue. The restaurant leverages Marroquin’s Larrabee Sound Studios, located next door, to place patrons in the acoustic ambience of a recording studio alongside the latest audio technology, including a Solid State Logic Live L300 mixing console at front-of-house.

“Larrabee has a rich, amazing history with Solid State Logic,” says Marroquin, a nine-time GRAMMY-winner whose mix clients include Kanye West, Janet Jackson, John Legend, Justin Bieber and Lizzo. The multi-room complex was the first in Los Angeles to install an SSL console, in 1979. Larrabee is currently outfitted with three SSL XL 9000K Series and two SSL Duality desks. “We have all SSLs,” says Marroquin. “And now we have an SSL Live — and it’s an amazing console.”

Verse launched at the end of 2019 to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of Larrabee Sound. The 3,800-sq.-ft. supper club, which accommodates up to 140 guests, is located close to Universal City in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Toluca Lake. Kimberly Biehl Schmidt, who designed the studios, lounges and other spaces at Larrabee, also designed Verse’s interior. A Meyer Sound Constellation acoustics system and 60 loudspeakers, together with the largest installation anywhere of the manufacturer’s Libra custom acoustical panels, help deliver an unparalleled listening experience to patrons.

“It’s the greatest sounding restaurant in the United States,” confirms Steve McGuire, a 30-year live sound veteran who currently tours at FOH with The Cult. McGuire has been helping to optimize the installed sound and performance P.A. systems, which Sound Image of Escondido, CA, installed at Verse. “I’m establishing a basic protocol that combines the capabilities of the room into a comprehensive but simple workflow.”

Verse boasts an all-star lineup of talent at FOH. When McGuire is unavailable, his position is taken by either Jim Ebdon, known for his work with Sam Smith, Maroon 5 and Aerosmith, or Kevin Madigan, whose clients have included Santana, Smashing Pumpkins and Crosby, Stills and Nash.

McGuire has configured the ceiling-mounted Meyer Sound speakers that are managed by the Constellation system into five time-aligned stereo zones, running from the performance area to the rear of the venue. Constellation uses a system of two dozen microphones to constantly analyze a space and, using DSP, can adjust the ambience to behave like a well-controlled recording studio environment, a cavernous concert hall, or anything in between.

Each zone is driven by a separate stereo bus on the L300 desk, which is installed in a sound booth adjacent to the dining room. “I can put whatever I want into those stems for those zones and change the mix from the front of the room to the back,” says McGuire. “You can send one mix to all those zones or you can spit them up with different elements; whatever you want to do.”

Noting that Verse is a low-SPL space, McGuire points out that diners closest to the stage area can hear some musicians ambiently, while certain electronic instruments require reinforcement. “As you go further back in the room, you have to start incorporating some of those instruments that are ambiently loud enough at the front but not at the back. Using five separate stereo stems, and with SSL’s Query function on the stems taking me to Fader Flip for all the elements of that stem, I can create different balances from the front of the room to the back.”

An SSL ML32.32 analogue stagebox feeds signals from the performance area to the L300. “Then, at the L300, there’s a Dante expander card that goes to a Mac Mini that I use for local Avid Pro Tools recording and playback. I also use the MADI fiber effects loop to get in and out of my Universal Audio UAD-2 Live Rack, which I use for all the reverbs; I like their EMT140 and 250, and Lexicon 480 and 224,” says McGuire.

A RedNet MADI to Dante Bridge links the ML32.32 stagebox over fiber to the Larrabee studios 500 feet away. “We’re pretty much recording every performance,” Marroquin reports. In addition to tracking to the local Pro Tools setup, artists can stream their performances over the link to a hub in Larrabee’s machine room, which can feed any K Series or Duality console in the complex, according to availability. “Channels 1 through 32 come up right on the desk,” he says. Larrabee’s collection of microphones and instruments, which include a Yamaha C7 grand piano, are also available to performers at Verse.

“My workflow is to get the band to play and track them into Pro Tools from the very start,” says McGuire. “I dial everything in as quick as possible to get the basic elements all sounding right. When they’re done, I walk out into the room with the SSL TaCo [Tablet Control] app on my iPad and put together the mix for the room. Then, when they perform, I can go out and adjust the zones.”

McGuire adds, “I’m so inspired every time I get on an SSL. It’s why I do what I do. I can’t tell you how many times, being a production manager as well, I’ve had to fight to make sure I have an SSL, because for me, inspiration is everything.”

Ciancimino, who runs the restaurant’s front of house, was previously at the Sayers Club in Los Angeles. “That was my first experience running a live music venue, so I’m very happy to be here,” he says. “We had a great system at my last place, and I was proud of that. But incorporating this SSL with the Meyer Sound system takes live music to a whole other level.”

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*Solid State Logic is the world’s leading manufacturer of analogue and digital audio consoles and provider of creative tools for music, broadcast, live and post production professionals. For more information about our award-winning products, please visit: www.solidstatelogic.com.*

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