

# The Metropolitan Opera

## Customer

John Kerswell

## Location

New York City, NY

## The Customer

John Kerswell is a distinguished audio engineer and broadcast operations director with over thirty years of experience. After graduating from SUNY Fredonia's Sound Recording Technology program in 1988, Kerswell began his career as a composer and performer before transitioning into broadcast engineering.

His early work included launching CNBC in 1989, where he served as Senior Audio Engineer for 18 years, later joining the Metropolitan Opera in 2007 as Director of Audio Operations, managing the audio infrastructure behind one of the world's most technically demanding live performance venues.

"I just happened to be sitting in the audience at the Met during the very first Live in HD broadcast and thought: I want to be a part of this. Shortly after, a friend sent me a job posting for the Director of Audio Operations. It was a perfect fit," says Kerswell.



## Solution at a Glance

► With decades of experience in live broadcast and audio engineering, GRAMMY-winner John Kerswell relies on Studer technology to meet the Metropolitan Opera's complex technical demands.

► At the Met, John Kerswell, Director of Audio Operations, oversees intricate daily audio requirements—managing extensive mic arrays and delivering simultaneous live stereo (radio) and 5.1 mixes (cinema), all within a dynamic repertory schedule.

► Kerswell credits the Studer Vista V console—with features like Vistonics, redundancy, and intuitive routing—as critical to maintaining broadcast-grade performance and operational flexibility in a high-pressure environment.

► Since Evertz acquired Studer, Kerswell reports consistent expert support, noting confidence in the team's ability to respond swiftly to mission-critical scenarios.



# The Background



John Kerswell has spent over three decades at the intersection of live performance and broadcast audio. Now serving as Operations Director at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, NY, he oversees a demanding, fast-paced environment that requires robust, highly flexible audio infrastructure.

In 2007, Kerswell joined The Met at the start of its Live in HD series, live broadcasts of opera performances to cinemas worldwide. At that time, the venue was using the analogue Studer 903, followed by an SSL C100 installed the following year.

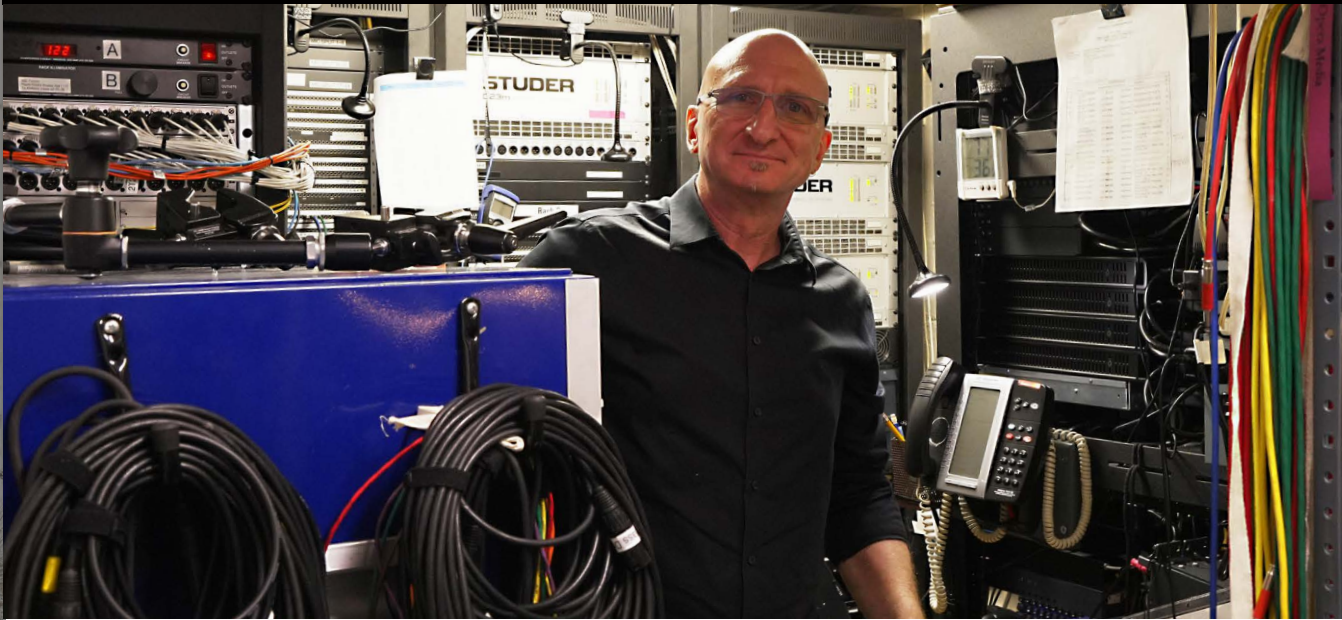
“My predecessor was committed to outboard Grace preamps and wanted the SSL with line inputs only. I submitted out of respect, but I was glad to move back to Studer,” he recounts.

The current Studer Vista V system was deployed in summer 2019. Since its installation, it has supported four seasons of productions that earned GRAMMY Awards for Best Opera Recording.





# The Requirements



As a repertory theatre, the Met stages different productions each day, with overlapping rehearsal and performance schedules. Kerswell's team must manage up to 30 orchestral microphones, vocal area mics, offstage sources, audience reaction mics, and redundant wireless systems for up to 14 principal performers.

"We rehearse one production in the daytime and perform a different opera in the evening. The versatility the console offers from production to production is essential for our operations," he states.

In addition to local reinforcement, the audio team delivers stereo mixes for live radio and discrete 5.1 mixes, created simultaneously, without upmixing or downmixing.

"We have constructed a precise gain and panning formula to simultaneously produce live stereo mixes for radio and 5.1 mixes for theater simulcasts, it's a uniquely complicated scheme. We've attempted this on other consoles, but it's easier to build and monitor on the Studer Vista V."

**- John Kerswell, Director of Audio Operations**  
*The Metropolitan Opera*





# The Studer Technology



The Met's control room is centered on a Studer Vista V console, supported by:

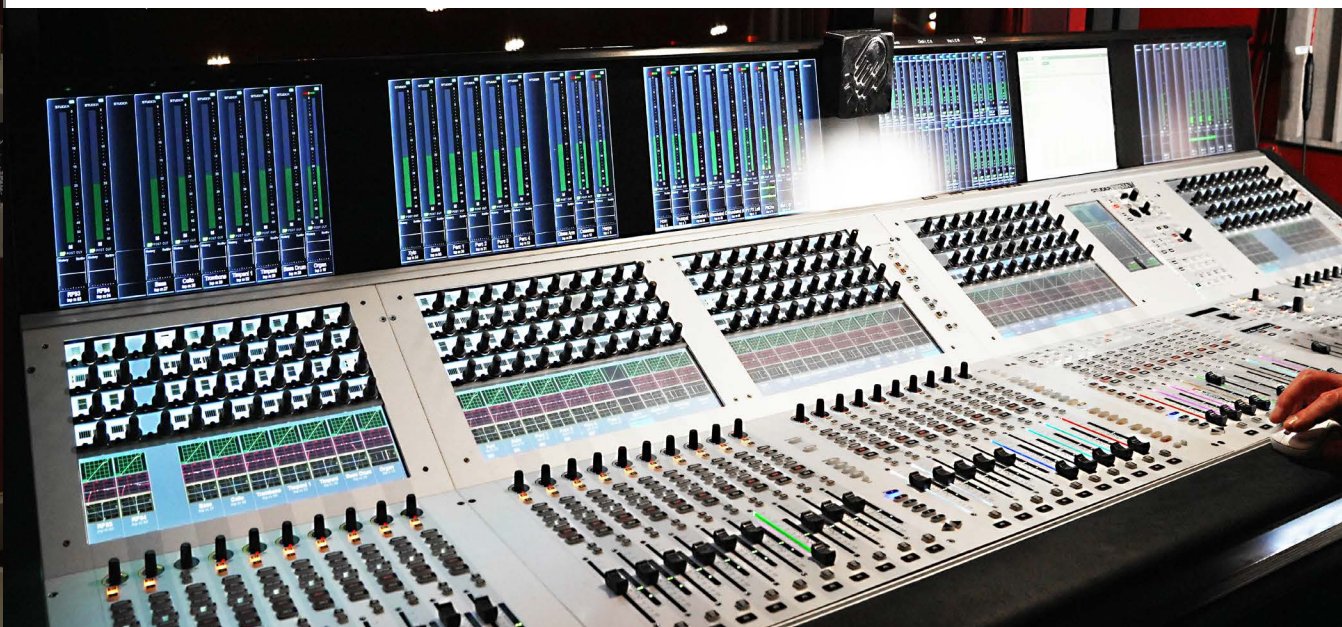
- 2 × Infinity Core (Compact Core 600)
- 2 × D23m loaded with Dante, MADI, AES and analog IO
- 4 × D21m loaded with Studer Transformer-based mic pre cards and analog line outs
- 1 × Compact Stagebox

Studer's Vistonics interface and General Patch GUI were key factors in Kerswell's decision to invest, offering unmatched clarity and workflow efficiency.

"Nothing compares to the intuitiveness and functionality of the routing and channel control on this console. There is no console I can work quite as quickly and in such an organized manner as I can on the Studer Vista V, except maybe the Studer Vista X," he says.

But for Kerswell, the most critical feature is redundancy. With global audiences relying on uninterrupted performance, system failover is non-negotiable.

"Our end users pay for tickets in 2,200 theaters in 70 countries. Apart from running tests we've never had to switch over to the redundant system. But if it were not there, we would not own this console."





# The Ongoing Partnership



When Evertz acquired Studer, Kerswell was cautiously optimistic. Since then, he says he and his team have experienced consistent, reliable support.

“We purchased the Vista V less than a year before Evertz acquired Studer. I’m happy to say it has been one pleasant professional and expert experience after another.”

“I am very happy to say that there have been no down-to-the-wire, nail-biting situations with this console. But looking at the support we have received thus far, I am confident that if a time-critical event arose, Evertz would be quite ready for the occasion. No question.”

**- John Kerswell, Director of Audio Operations**  
*The Metropolitan Opera*

