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“Best in the business,” Engineering Harmonics wins world stage in Kansas City and Dallas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Toronto, June 1)—Renowned Toronto consulting firm Engineering Harmonics Ltd. has been awarded two large contracts for the design of performance sound, video, and communications (PSVC) systems at new performing arts facilities in the United States—the Metropolitan Kansas City Performing Arts Center and the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. In prestige and scope each project is noteworthy in itself, but coming together the successful bids total close to \$6.6 million and represent “the best quarter in the history of the firm,” according to Engineering Harmonics’ president and founder Philip Giddings.

“These are the two biggest contracts in our field awarded in the United States in the last six months. We are pleased to have been selected for both projects from a very strong field of competitive bids,” Giddings said.

The privately held company is growing at about 20 per cent annually, due chiefly to its contributions to such projects as the new Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, designed by acclaimed architect Frank Gehry, Hollywood’s Kodak Theater (home of the Academy Awards), Dewan Filharmonik Petronus in Kuala Lumpur, and Seattle's Benaroya Concert Hall.

“We have a great admiration for Philip Giddings—we think he is the best in the business,” said Richard Pilbrow, chairman of Theatre Projects Consultants (TPC) of South Norwalk, CT, theater designer for both the Kansas City and Dallas performing arts centers. TPC has provided design expertise to more than 800 projects in 50 countries since its inception in 1957. “We have been using Engineering Harmonics for many years on our projects,” he added.

Engineering Harmonics has built its reputation designing performance sound systems that integrate high decibel amplified shows into the prized natural acoustics of concert halls, which are usually tailored to the performance of acoustic music, and—not coincidentally—funded largely through the philanthropy of patrons of symphony, opera and ballet. A substantial portion of a performing arts center’s revenue, however, typically comes from other types of performance, such as popular music, which is amplified to levels that can swamp the acoustics so carefully crafted into a hall, unless the performance sound system is properly designed.

The \$304 million Metropolitan Kansas City Performing Arts Center, designed by architect Moshe Safdie and Associates, is slated for completion in 2007. The 360,000 square-foot performing arts center will be home to the Kansas City Symphony, the Kansas City Ballet, the Lyric Opera, and other arts organizations. It will contain three performing spaces—a

2,200-seat ballet/opera house, a 1,800-seat concert hall, and a 500-seat flexible, experimental theater (to be built later)—all spilling out into a central glass-enclosed lobby area and lush terraced gardens overlooking the city. Engineering Harmonics will be responsible for the technical infrastructure and systems to support broadcasting and recording, video, paging, intercom, hearing assistance, and surtitles (opera lyrics, for example, projected above the stage), in addition to the performance sound systems.

The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, expected to open in 2009 at a cost of \$270 million, includes five venues—the Winspear Opera House, multiform theater, the City Performance Hall, Annette Strauss Artist Square, and Grand Plaza. Engineering Harmonics will collaborate on the 2,200-seat Winspear Opera House, designed by architects Fosters and Partners, and the 600-seat multiform theater. The theater will be engineered with state-of-the-art technology supporting classical and experimental drama, dance, and music productions. The Center will become the main-stage production facility for the Dallas Opera, Dallas Theater Center, Dallas Black Dance Theater, Texas Ballet Theater, and Anita N. Martinez Ballet Folklorico.

Headquartered in Toronto with a staff of 19, Engineering Harmonics specializes in the design of performance sound and AV for performing arts centers, sports and conference facilities, corporate and government offices, lecture halls and houses of worship.

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