Issue 29 • May 2010

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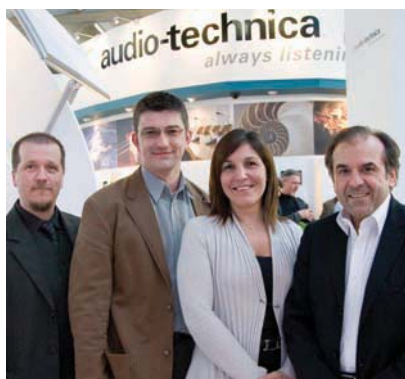
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audioPRO INTERNATIONAL

ISSUE 29 **May 2010**
CONTENTS

⇥ **IN THIS ISSSUE**

EDITORIAL

As outlined by API deputy editor Rob Hughes, NAB CEO and president Gordon Smith's keynote speech was as appealing as a rotting fish hidden under the sofa.

Smith stated his disapproval of the RIAA's decision to push for radio stations to pay to play label's songs. He stated: "It's what we call a 'performance tax'. Labels like to call it a 'right' or a 'royalty,' but whatever you call it, it's basically a bailout of the major recording companies."

While I do understand that he feels this would hurt the radio stations and broadcast community, he has not considered the recording studio owners and engineers who have seen the rise of home recordings force bigger and more expensive rooms and engineers to their demise.

These days everyone is his or her own producer, and a recording engineer only needs to own a Mac loaded with recording and editing software to release a record. And while I have been a supporter of punk and independent music, labels and bands for the past two decades, there is also a need for major labels who support commercial studios with budgets that are big enough to maintain a room with a proper mixing console and real outboard, as opposed to a hard drive with the latest plugins.

It is true that the major labels have been slow to react to illegal downloading, but with bands like Radiohead offering a 'pay what you like' scheme for their recordings, how is anyone supposed to expect punters to travel to the record store and pay 20 quid for the latest major label release?

Independent labels do their part to promote up-and-coming bands and seasoned artists who do not have mainstream appeal, but even bands like Sonic Youth would not have been able to survive and make a 30-year music career without the budgets, distribution and exposure that being on a major label can bring.

There needs to be a better solution, but condemning the RIAA for trying to keep the recording industry alive is not the answer.

Andrew Low – Editor
andrew.low@intentmedia.co.uk

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Riedel and Digico join forces

Digital audio manufacturers work to integrate their technologies, starting with the 2010 Red Bull Air Race

FIBRE AND network audio specialist Riedel Communications has teamed up with Digico, in order to work together with the digital console manufacturer on the integration of their respective technologies.

"We've always seen our products as an open platform," explained Andreas Hilmer, Riedel's director of marketing and communications. "Integration

> " We've always considered our products to be an open platform.
> **Andreas Hilmer**
> **Riedel Communications**

with other manufacturers always results in benefits for our customers. Therefore, we're very proud to welcome Digico as our newest technology partner."

"Riedel, as the leader in signal distribution solutions for the event industry, is a partner that is

interesting for us in many aspects," added James Gordon, managing director of Digico.

Following their agreement to work in co-operation with each other, the new partners have pledged to pool their resources to develop solutions that will greatly increase the

compatibility of their respective products and create substantial benefits for their customers.

For the 2010 season, Digico's SD8 console is to serve as the main mixing solution in Riedel's set-up for the Red Bull Air Race world championship. The event's complete signal

distribution for HD video, audio, intercom and data is based on Riedel's fibre network solution MediorNet. In addition, a RockNet audio network solution is fully integrated with the MediorNet backbone.
➢ **riedel.net**
➢ **digico.biz**

Audio Technica consolidates Europe

Microphone manufacturer opens new Central European office and appoints Greek supplier

Audio-Technica welcomes onboard Space Lights & Audio

AUDIO TECHNICA has announced the opening of a new Central European office and the appointment of a new distributor, based in Greece.

The firm has launched the new office, located in Budapest, in order to provide better service to existing distributors in the region. This will allow AT to have a base close to the Baltic region, improve support and reduce delivery times.

The new distributor, Space Lights & Audio has been appointed to focus on AT's range of mics, headphones and wireless products. It is an established distributor in Greece, with more than 50 dealers there.

"I look forward to developing close relationships with our Greek dealers in 2010 and beyond," said European sales director Isabelle Wear.
➢ **audio-technica.com**

Hartley Peavey scoops MIPA for Lifetime Achievement

Musical innovator becomes the tenth influential industry figure to win prestigious award

HARTLEY PEAVEY was bestowed with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Musikmesse International Press Awards in Frankfurt recently. The award is an exclusive accolade that is not necessarily given every year.

"The MIPA Lifetime Achievement Award goes to leaders and innovators who have made major contributions to the development of the MI and pro audio industry," said Gerald Dellmann, CEO of MM-Musik-Media-Verlag. Hartley Peavey is one of only ten figures honored by this award, which include Ikutaro Kakehashi, founder of Roland Corporation and Jim Marshall, founder of Marshall Amplification.

During his acceptance speech, in addition to thanking the press who had voted for him, Peavey acknowledged all those who have accompanied him throughout the last 45 years and, in particular, Peavey's development teams across the world that have helped turn so many product ideas into successful commercial realities. He also noted that the key to his success is his 'can-do' attitude: "All my life I've been told

'you can't do that – you're crazy'. Well, I'll admit to being crazy, but you can do it – you won't do it if you don't try." He concluded with an assurance that Peavey intends to remain at the forefront of technological innovation for many years to come: "The fat lady hasn't sung yet with Peavey."
➢ **peavey.com**

PAGE 14
PLASA Focus

PAGE 30
Studio consoles

PAGE 34
Dave Swallow

NEWS

HME in agreement to acquire Clear-Com

No changes planned but the pair plan to combine their expertise to develop brand new products

HM ELECTRONICS (HME) has announced a definitive agreement to acquire Clear-Com.

A business unit of The Vitec Group, Clear-Com will continue operation as a wholly owned subsidiary of HME, with no changes planned for its award-winning product portfolio or business plan.

HME, a privately-held company based in Poway, California, is focused on digital wireless intercom solutions for restaurant, hospitality, sports and pro audio markets. The company has stated that combining its expertise in wireless with Clear-Com's leadership in TDM Matrix and integrated IP and wireless solutions will offer an expansive selection of communication products and technology for intercom customers with different applications and system requirements. The acquisition will also further HME's reach into new markets, while allowing the combined companies to leverage synergies in product development and operations. In addition, Clear-Com will continue its long commitment to providing best-in-class service and support to new and existing customers.

> *After enjoying substantial growth over the last decade, it was time for HME to take the next step.*
> **Chuck Miyahira**
> *HME*

"After enjoying substantial growth in all our key sectors over the last decade, it was time for HME to take the next step," said Chuck Miyahira, CEO of HME. "Clear-Com is the best-known brand in the mission-critical intercom marketplace, and brings a wealth of industry knowledge, innovative technology and great business partnerships around the globe. This acquisition will expand the HME business in the pro audio space with a wider range of complementary communication solutions."

"We are extremely pleased to make this announcement," said Mitzi Dominguez, president of HME. "Both companies have been in the professional intercom business for over 30 years and share similar cultures and core values. And there is tremendous synergy between the two companies. With our combined expertise in the professional audio industry we will focus on finding new innovative ways to help our customers."

"We see a great fit with the strategy and vision of HME. The efforts of our combined teams will bring added value to our customers and greater opportunities for both companies," said Matt Danilowicz, who will continue in his role as president of Clear-Com under the new structure within HME. "HME's complementary expertise in wireless, its operations and manufacturing excellence, and its appreciation of our markets will solidify the growing recognition that Clear-Com's products are setting a new standard for the industry."
➢ **clearcom.com**

Tannoy establishes Middle East office

Graham Lawton to manage new Dubai operations

Graham Lawton sees opportunity for growth in the Middle East

TANNOY HAS opened a dedicated regional office in the Middle East, based in Dubai and headed up by Graham Lawton.

Tannoy has stated that the new office represents a significant step in developing its operations in the Middle East loudspeaker market, providing technical support to key customers in the installed sound sector, as well as acting as a point of contact for regional distributors across all of Tannoy's markets.

The firm has reported steady and continued growth in the installed sound market throughout the region in recent years. The company's loudspeakers have already been used for projects such as the Burj Khalifa and Dubai Mall.

Prior to joining Tannoy, Lawton worked for PMK International Consulting in its Dubai office. He said: "There are serious growth opportunities in this region."
➢ **tannoy.com**

AVSL Group goes on the hunt for worldwide distributors

Manchester firm seeks international partners

THE AVSL GROUP has announced that it is actively seeking exclusive worldwide distribution partnerships.

Headquartered in Manchester, the company's current catalogue features nearly 5,000 products that cover the general electronics, AV, sound & light, PA and MI trades. Its current brands include Adastra, a long established PA brand that offers the latest in 100V line, public address and background music systems. Citronic products *(pictured)* take care of the pro DJ and club install market, while the Mercury product line has solutions for homes and offices, including aerials, computer accessories, lighting and power supplies. For the sound and lighting market, the firm can supply gear from QTX Light & QTX Sound, and AV:link covers multimedia install products to home audio.

AVSL also distributes products from Chord, a new music and accessories brand, featuring over 500 products covering everything for the MI sector including guitars, keyboards, effects pedals, cases, percussion instruments and a comprehensive range of leads and cables and so on.

The firm has offices in the Far East, making it suited to providing full turnkey solutions, product sourcing, marketing and supply of its wholly owned brands and OEM business to the global market. The company has stated that it endeavours to develop and diversify its product range by working closely with long-term supply chain partners in order to meet customers' needs.

Companies interested in joining AVSL's international distribution partnership program should contact managing director Phil Williams at export@avslgroup.com.

⊁ NEWS

Audio suppliers back new trade event

Crossover brands sign up for Audio Pro International sister publication's Retail Conference & Expo

A NUMBER of pro audio suppliers have signed up for *Audio Pro* sister title, *MI Pro*'s new trade event – the MI Retail Conference & Expo. Among these are music equipment giant Roland, mic and headphone specialist Audio-Technica, recording pioneer Tascam and live sound manufacturer Monacor.

The targeted trade event, aimed at boosting business for music equipment retailers, takes place at The Brewery in central London on June 29th. It was announced just a few weeks ago, but already over 100 retailers have registered to attend, representing over 150 shop fronts throughout the UK. These include four of the UK's largest chains and a raft of top independents. Additionally, both the sector's main buying groups, Rocktronic and Euromusic, have backed the event.

"Audio Technica is very pleased to be a Platinum Partner of the MI Retail Conference & Expo," commented Harvey Roberts, the senior marketing manager at Audio Technica. "This is an exciting move for MI and we welcome the introduction of a focused business event designed to explore innovation in retailing and in turn develop benefits for the industry as a whole.

"The fresh thinking displayed by Intent Media in not taking the traditional trade show route is to be commended and is a major factor in Audio Technica's decision to support the MI Retail Conference & Expo.

"In doing so, we will be supplying a mix of sales, support and marketing staff during the event, with an emphasis on extending product knowledge, rather than sales. In our view it is this type of longer-term strategic approach that will yield the greatest reward for the industry."

Tascam, a global leader in the field of project studios, interfaces and field recorders, recently celebrated 30 years since the creation of its revolutionary Portastudio – the product that single-handedly turned the recording industry on its head. The recent NAMM and Musikmesse shows saw lots of new gear from the manufacturer, which dealers will be able to discuss with the Tascam team at the UK event.

Coming in as the sponsor for the After Show Party, Roland's managing director, Tim Walter, said: "Roland is delighted to be supporting the MI Retail Conference and Expo in London this June. We like the idea of an invitation-only event and always look to work closely with our dealers. And we're always up for a good party."

All MI Retail Conference & Expo retail participants will receive a goody bag containing an iPod Touch. If you're a retailer and wish to register your interest in the event, please email: mirc@intentmedia.co.uk.

For more information about the MI Retail Conference & Expo, or to discuss Event Partner packages, please email Jodie Holdway or Darrell Carter, or call them on 01992 535647. mi-pro.co.uk/events

MI Retail Conference & Expo
Tuesday, June 29th
The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London, EC1Y 4SD
An miPRO event

2011 TEC Awards to be held at NAMM

Nominations period extended until June

THE TEC FOUNDATION for Excellence in Audio has announced that the 26th TEC Awards will be held at next year's NAMM show. The ceremony had traditionally been held at the American AES event. The awards will now take place on January 14th, 2011.

"We are sure those attending NAMM will enjoy sharing in the recognition of technical and creative achievement that the TEC awards bestow," said Hillel Resner, president of TEC.

Also announced was the extension of the eligibility period for award nominations from March 31st to June 30th 2010. Online voting will take place in November.

Resner made a point of assuring audio professionals that the TEC Foundation looks forward to continuing its long time relationship with the Audio Engineering Society, during whose convention the TEC Awards have been presented since their inception.

The TEC awards, founded in 1985, consist of 24 honours for outstanding achievements in audio products and projects.

⊁ **tecfoundation.com**

Hand Held Audio responds to Ofcom announcements

Channel 38 mics added to company's hire stock

HAND HELD AUDIO has added dedicated Channel 38 radio mics to its hire stock. The news follows the recent Ofcom announcements concerning Channel 38 (606 – 614Mhz) as the replacement for UK radio microphone Channel 69.

The company now offers the Trantec S5.5 system, which covers Channels 38, 39, 40 & 41 (606 – 638Mhz) and provides a lower cost rental option.

Hand Held Audio has stated that, following a thorough testing and assessment process, the S5.5 proved itself to have the quality and durability to 'cut the mustard' in the hire department.

Its current stock is 16 S5.5-RX diversity receivers (capable of running as a 16-way system), with relevant antenna distribution and cabling. Transmitters are the S5.5-LTX belt pack and S5.5-HDX hand held with dynamic cardioid capsule. Battery life is a useful ten hours from one AA. Microphone options for the body pack include the Trantec LP2 and Sennheiser MKE2 omni lapel mics, plus headworn and instrument models.

⊁ **handheldaudio.co.uk**

WWW.PALMER-GERMANY.COM

Play a guitar just like a ringing a bell

Actually, you can tell the heritage behind this product with a bell-shape filter that prevents boosting of undesirable frequencies and no semiconductors on the signal path. The Palmer Direct Injection Box – Classic Tube Circuit (PDI-CTC) is intended for DI and preamp use. For the latter, a 4-band filter circuit has been integrated. Featuring a true tube circuit with an output transformer, a balanced signal is provided at the electrically isolated XLR output connectors. The circuit design enables the shortest possible signal path in order to bring out the subtle tone characteristics of a tube.

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dts™ Digital Entertainment

X Games broadcast shreds through 40 million TV sets worldwide

300 mics deployed for record-breaking broadcast of the 14th annual winter extreme sports event at Buttermilk Mountain

ESPN'S BROADCAST of the 14th annual X Games set new all-time viewership records, as over 40 million people tuned in to watch the world's most daring athletes compete in extreme snow sports events.

Held at Aspen/Snowmass at Buttermilk Mountain, in Colorado USA, the annual

> *It is always our goal as a network and event to deliver the best in action sports to fans worldwide.*
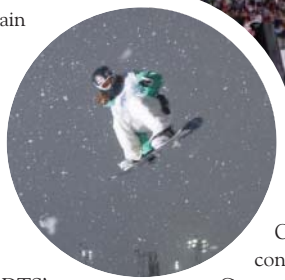> **Rick Alessandri**
> *X Games*

winter action sports event welcomed 200 world-class athletes for a ninth straight year in a row.

X Games 14 was ESPN's second largest coordinated event next to Summer X Games in Los Angeles for ESPN. Over 300 microphones and 45 audio crew members descended on Buttermilk Mountain.

Courses including the Super Pipe, Big Air Freestyle, Snowmobile jumps and a 7,000 foot-long X course were fully miked from top to bottom in order to avoid audio dead spots in the broadcast. ESPN kept the audio consistent and in control by networking all of the mix consoles using 15 Hydra boxes located around the venues that enabled any of six consoles used for the program to access any microphone on the mountain. In the event of a system failure, any remote truck on-site had the ability to take over the main audio broadcast to maintain complete redundancy.

DTS team members Dave Casey, John Pollono and Mark Seigle provided on-site support to integrate both DTS Neural Surround Encoders, Decoders and the mono2stereo synthesizers, as well as providing updates via DTS' Facebook page.

"It is always our goal as a network and event to deliver the best in action sports to fans worldwide," said Rick Alessandri, senior vice president, X Games Franchise. "The continued success of Winter X Games, coupled by our increase to an all-time high in programming hours, speaks to the amazing talents and dedication of the athletes competing at Winter X."

ESPN and ESPN2 televised 24.5 hours of live high-definition programming from January 28th to the 31st. Additionally, the Winter X Games were also televised on ESPN's International networks to 172 countries and territories in Latin America, the Pacific Rim, Middle East, Africa, Israel and Canada.

Reidel bets big in Las Vegas

Artist 1100 Series control among the many product launches made at NAB tradeshow

RIEDEL COMMUNICATIONS released several new products at this year's NAB convention in Las Vegas.

Known for its advanced intercom, fibre, audio and radio technology, the company used the show to launch the new Artist 1100 Series OLED Intercom Control Panels, Riedel's new control key panel for Artist digital matrix intercoms.

The Artist 1100 series features high-res color OLEDs. With 65,000 colors and a resolution of 140 dpi, these new displays are able to show up to eight highly detailed characters of up to 24x24 pixels, making it well suited for displaying icons and Asian characters. Definable marker colors for the keys complete the labelling options and provide instant function identification and signalisation, for incoming calls, for example.

The company also exhibited the new Embedder/De-Embedder, which expands MediorNet's software-based conversion and signal processing features. The new tool embeds, de-embeds and shuffles any AES3/EBU signal as well as other data formats, such as control data for cameras. The MediorNet Multi-I/O Breakout Panel was also debuted to offer a solution for interfacing audio and other signals with MediorNet. It provides eight AES and eight analog four-wire connectors over CAT-5, in addition to 12 GPIOs and four serial ports via Sub-D 9-pin connectors.

Other products highlighted at the show were the new MN-HD4I-O and MNHD4O-O cards, which provide four inputs or outputs with optical SFP connectors for four HD/SD-SDI/ASI or two 3G-SDI video sources. The cards support all relevant video standards up to 1080p@60Hz. Each input operates independently and is equipped with auto format detection and on-board signal processing and conversion.

Rediel also showed the Riedel Router Control Software (RRCS) 2.0 software, which provides a universal XML interface to enable third party router control systems to control Riedel Artist Intercom systems. Version 2.0 of the software features an expanded set of XML commands to provide deeper integration of external third party control systems and Artist.

The world's first native integration of VoIP telephone technology into a matrix intercom infrastructure was debuted by Riedel in Las Vegas. Riedel's new firmware update for the Artist VOIP-108 client card, SIP-compatible VoIP telephone servers can now be integrated into the Riedel Artist digital matrix intercom system. As a result, it is possible to call any VoIP telephone within the network directly from an Artist key panel. It is also now possible to call Artist panels from a VoIP telephone.
✈ **riedel.net**

Avid acquires Euphonix

Open standard protocol plans revealed

AVID HAS entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Euphonix. The firm plans to support and sell both Euphonix control surfaces and Avid's existing Icon solution.

"This acquisition greatly expands our portfolio to offer customers a complementary set of workflow solutions, from independent producers creating music in their home studios to broadcasters preparing segments for national broadcast," said Gary Greenfield, Avid's chairman and CEO.

"As audio and video workflows continue to converge, we are now well positioned to deliver control surfaces that work across both audio and video applications, making the content creation process more cost-effective and efficient for our customers."

Avid now plans to further develop an open standard protocol that greatly increases compatibility between the Euphonix control surfaces and a wide range of Avid and third-party audio and video applications, including Media Composer and Pro Tools.
✈ **avid.com**

EVENT REVIEW **NAB**

April 10th - 15th Las Vegas Convention Center
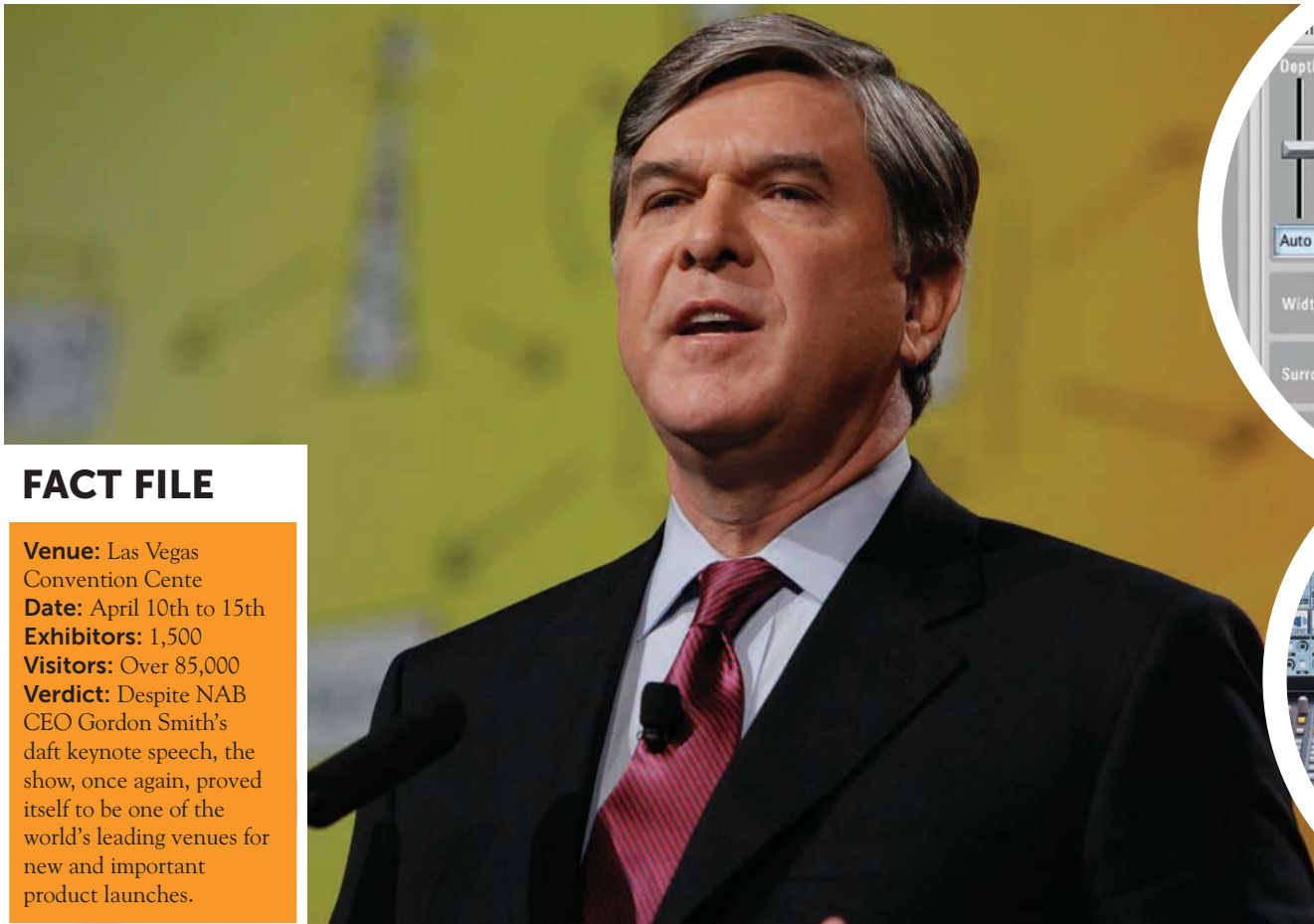
FACT FILE

Venue: Las Vegas Convention Cente
Date: April 10th to 15th
Exhibitors: 1,500
Visitors: Over 85,000
Verdict: Despite NAB CEO Gordon Smith's daft keynote speech, the show, once again, proved itself to be one of the world's leading venues for new and important product launches.

NAB the limelight

Not only was there more new stuff launched at NAB 2010 than ever before, CEO Gordon Smith delivered a staggering keynote speech. **Rob Hughes** brings you an extended report...

Before I started my NAB show review, I only had one page, minus a Hand Held Audio ad, on which to report all the thrilling NAB news. But armed with some ninja-like summarising techniques, I was sure I could rustle up a concise account. That was, until I read a transcription of the show's keynote speech, at which point, quite frankly, I decided to give it up and put it down for two pages.

The speaker was NAB president and CEO Gordon Smith, a man that, until Barrack Obama's presidential campaign began to gather pace in 2008, was a two-term Republican senator from the state of Oregon. Smith wasted little time in addressing the current big issue for broadcasters in the States – the record label-led drive, heavily backed by Congress, to introduce a tax levied at radio stations when they play music.

"It's what we call a 'performance tax'," says Smith. "Labels like to call it a 'right' or a 'royalty,' but whatever you call it, it's basically a bailout of the major recording companies. The industry, with desperation in its eye, has decided to bite the hand that feeds it. Who's hand? Ours. In other words – us. In short, the RIAA has decided radio stations should pay for promoting the record companies' songs."

There's no denying that the man's got a point, but what I find amazing is that he makes it not just to an audience of broadcasters, but to an audience of engineers, studio owners and equipment manufacturers, many of which have fallen on rock-hard times due to the meagre profits gleaned from music in the age of the MP3. The labels have no money to pay the studios and engineers; the studios and engineers have no money to spend on equipment – in fact, far from having money for new gear, many haven't even got enough to survive. Those that have kept their heads above water have done so by thinking outside the box, but still we're left with a small and saturated market with so few customers remaining at the high end that the manufacturers have been forced to focus on prosumer gear that the artists themselves can afford. Big desks are almost a thing of the past – who can afford one these days?

As far as by-products of the digital revolution go, it's not just the availability of cheap and powerful equipment that's helping to usher in the age of the home studio and the DIY album. And who cares how bad MP3s sound when they have been poorly recorded in the first place?

It's not the fault of radio stations that the record industry is haemorrhaging money – quite the opposite – and, as a potential local radio station killer, the performance tax (to borrow Smith's description) is a huge concern. It's an archaic business model, unworkable in this day and age and a daft move by the RIAA. Nevertheless, it should be viewed, quite literally, as a survival attempt by the industry, which, incidentally, has as much right to continue to exist as the broadcasting industry and the musical equipment industry that feeds off it.

I agree with Smith that the performance tax should be scrapped – I just think it's a little ignorant to demand it in this fashion without giving any consideration to how the record industry might otherwise survive. He didn't offer anything in the way of a solution; he only condemned the record labels and even mocked their hardship: "The recording industry handled the digital revolution about as well as Louis the 16th handled the French revolution,"

he remarks. "Technology chopped the head off the record industry's business model. So what did the industry do? It began suing people. The problem is that you can't stop technology with trial lawyers. You know you're in trouble when the health of your business is reduced to suing teenage offenders."

I wonder if Smith ever considered how much of his audience wanted, maybe even needed, to see the record industry get back on its feet. Clearly, it has very little bearing on broadcasting if they don't, which makes his comments sound somewhat selfish. Small, independent labels rely on the publicity that radio offers and will surely be happy with the time-honoured free play and free promotion arrangement.

And what is so bad about happily sitting back and watching the big labels disappear and in their place arrive an army of indies? I'm sure there are many hundreds of disgruntled artists out there baying for blood and if the reports of holding back royalties are to be believed, it's not the most ethical of industries. But for every ruthless fat cat in the business, there are dozens of honest, hardworking folks that need to put food on table just as much as NAB members.

Small, independent record labels are exciting and refreshing in many ways and have a lot to offer, but I can't help thinking we will miss the big labels once they are gone. For all their shortcomings, they gave a fortunate few artists – if very little else – access to the kind of people, places and equipment that helped create truly brilliant records and it's just very sad to watch these studios, engineers and big desks of old go down with the record industry ship. Smith can relax in the knowledge that his local radio station will always have plenty of songs to play, but they might not all sound as good as they once did.

Now for the new gear bit…

MOVING SWIFTLY on to all the new stuff that was unveiled at show, I'd just like to point out that, of all the subfolders in my inbox – and there are many – the one labelled NAB is definitely going to be the next to burst at its digital seams. In fact I've had more NAB press releases than I had Frankfurt ones. Fact. Although 90 per cent of them are video-related. Boo.

In no particular order…

Riedel Communications introduced several new products including the new Artist 1100 Series OLED intercom control panel, software-based embedder/de-embedder for MediorNet as well as the MediorNet Multi-I/O breakout panel. The single RU panel is connected to the MediorNet frame via two 44 pin Sub-D connectors to the MediorNet MN-MIO Multiple I/O card (*pictured*).

RTW and TC Electronic announced a partnership to develop new audio metering products for professional broadcasting, production, post-production and quality control applications. RTW will offer TC Electronic's loudness radar meter LM5D as a software option for its new TouchMonitor series and will work with TC Electronic to present a hardware version of the loudness radar meter LM5D.

RTW also announced a partnership with Lawo. The pair have jointly stated that the new RTW TouchMonitor TM7 will be available as a fully integrated hardware option for the Lawo MC2 range of digital audio consoles.

Avid introduced new versions of its industry-leading editing systems Media Composer, NewsCutter and Symphony. New features include improved audio effects and multi-channel audio support, which delivers the ability to apply hundreds of real-time audio effects with support for Real-Time Audio Suite (RTAS) audio plug-ins.

Linear Acoustic unveiled the LQ-1000 loudness quality monitor. The LQ-1000 provides comprehensive loudness and peak level metering of up to eight channels of 5.1 surround and/or stereo AES or SDI audio per industry-standard ITU-R BS.1770, a crucial requirement for mixing and transmitting in compliance with the ATSC recommended practice standard A/85.

Solid State Logic announced the integration of its digital broadcast console range with the Optocore Optical Digital Network System. The firm also revealed the C100 HDS V2. The second edition of the Digital Broadcast Console includes a new processor upgrade option for the Blackrock processing unit and Blacklight, SSL's new high channel count optical I/O format. These options significantly increase the channel count and DSP power of the board.

Clear-Com launched the HelixNet, a unified intercom platform for a new generation of intercom systems that share a common design philosophy that the company refers to as 'cabling simplicity, flexibility and system intelligence'.

The first two products in the family, the HelixNet Main Station (HMS-4X) and HelixNet beltpacks (HBP-2X) also made their debut.

DTS debuted Neural UpMix, a new Pro Tools plug-in designed to upmix content up to 5.1 and 7.1 channels and the latest version of its best-in-class audio encoding suite, DTS-HD Master Audio Suite v2.5 (MAS 2.5).

AKG introduced its new, free iPhone application, which streamlines the workflow for wireless microphone monitoring and configuration by linking Harman's HiQnet protocol to the iPhone and iPod Touch.

The new application can be used to monitor wireless system parameters and radio frequency connections on stage for some of AKG's most popular wireless microphone systems. AKG also announced that it is making its AMS Online Configuration Tool live at the beginning of May 2010. The new tool was created to effectively streamlines the customisation process for users seeking to personalise AMS mics.
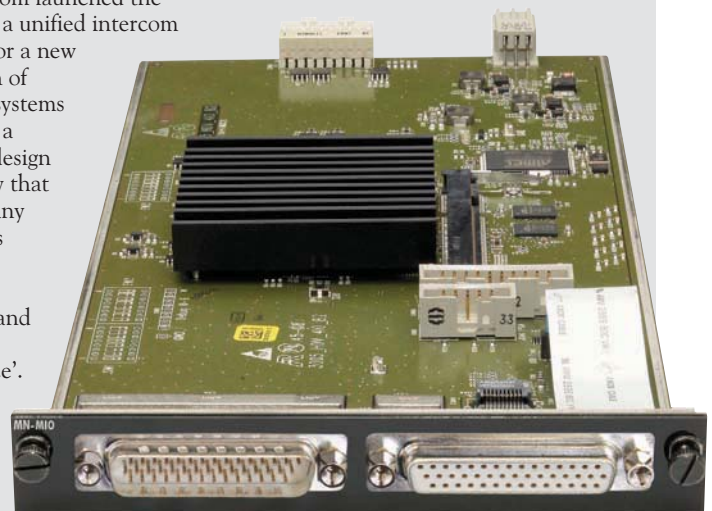
⠿ EVENT REVIEW **PALME**

April 26th - 28th Dubai International Exhibition Centre

FACT FILE

Venue: Dubai International Exhibition Centre
Date: April 26th - 28th
Exhibitors: 200
Visitors: 700
Verdict: Volcanic activity was the only thing keeping heads away from the show, which saw its stongest turnout in recent years. Pro audio could have been better represented though.

Under the **PALME**

Closed airports couldn't put a stop to the 2010 PALME show, which, in defiance, was actually the biggest yet. However, pro audio is still underrepresented at the show, as **Rob Hughes** finds out...

I begin this report with slight trepidation with regard to what I'm going to fill it with, because, unlike the NAB show, which caused my inbox to fill up faster than a hard disk from the 90s, pretty much the only PALME news I have received is from PALME itself. I was hoping for a great audio-related lead image, but this one, from a rather successful AV integrator, was the best I could find (although you've got to admit, that is one cool VW).

But there was one manufacturer who sent us some PALME news and boy am I proud to say that it's a British one – good old Tannoy sent us a press release to say that, not only would it be exhibiting at the show – alongside sister company Lab.gruppen – but also that it would have its full range of enclosures on display, plus a live demonstration of the VQ NET system. Lab.gruppen, of course, was to show off its latest PLM 20000Q.

It came as no surprise that Tannoy was supporting the PALME show, since the firm has a very strong presence in the region and has taken the bold step recently of opening an office in Dubai, due to a good amount of success there of late (*for more on this see news, page 5*).

Tannoy isn't alone in recognising the importance of the show, which is the Middle East's only trade event dedicated to professional audio and lighting; the likes of Digico, Meyer Sound, Electro-Voice, d&b, Riedel and Sennhesier were also present. However, they were among a smattering of audio firms who made the journey. The industry wasn't nearly as well represented as it should have been. It makes you wonder how many companies are not taking full advantage of the market in the Middle East and the UAE in particular.

While there's not a whole lot of new products to report, fortunately, as far as general show news is concerned, it's a different story.

First off was the great news that the show has grown by ten per cent compared to 2009; 7,000 visitors attended the show this year, coming to see 200 exhibitors representing over 800 brands from 30 countries. This, I'm sure, came as a relief to the show's organisers, who will have been concerned that the volcanic ash issue might have put a dampner on the show's proceedings.

The team from AC Entertainment Technologies drove through the night to Nice from London to board a flight to Dubai, arriving at 1am, to make the event. "We said we would be at PALME and when we say something we mean it, but this is also an important trade show in the Middle East and the only one we exhibit at," said Cally Bacchus, AC's international sales director.

"PALME has always been an important show at which to do business and this year is no exception. The extent to which the exhibition has grown compared to 2009 proves the importance of the date on the international entertainment calendar," said Alex Heuff, exhibition director of PALME Middle East.

One of the chief highlights of the event was the educational programme, which was led by renowned industry professionals and included certified courses on the latest technologies and techniques from education providers. Meanwhile, more than 30 speakers from leading companies across all areas of the industry participated in conferences and seminars during the show, focusing on systems integration.

Elsewhere, The PALME Middle East Awards, the region's most prestigious awards ceremony for recognising and rewarding innovation and technical excellence covering categories for AV, audio technology and lighting design, were held in front of a packed crowd at the Al Multaqua Ball Room at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre. Winners included Sennheiser Neumenn for Best Pro Audio Technology of the Year and Riedel Communications for Most Innovative New AV Product of the Year.
➢ **palme-middleeast.com**

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RSS
by Roland

EVENT REVIEW **PLASA FOCUS**

April 27th and 28th Royal Armouries, Leeds

FACT FILE

Venue: Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK
Date: April 27th and 28th
Exhibitors: 133
Visitors: Over 1,800
Verdict: The relaxed atmosphere of the show made it possible for industry professionals from the north of England to network and have personal introductions on new kit from a variety of well-known brands.

Photos by Chris Toulmin

In true focus

PLASA Focus: Leeds 2010 grew by nearly 30 per cent this year and displayed a wide range of the latest pro audio gear from UK and international manufacturers. **Andrew Low** looks into what this riverside show has to offer...

As an American living in the UK I am always eager to travel to new places to ensure I'm not missing out on a part of British history or culture that will enhance my view of the world. Since moving here three years ago I have been to some very random places that most Brits wouldn't visit unless forced to for an ill-conceived wedding.

I always research beforehand and ask colleagues and friends what to expect, or not expect on my journey to England's more obscure cities. "You'll get mugged up there", "the seaside town that time forgot" and "I once fell asleep pissed on a train and ended up there" are the usual responses I get. However, when I started planning my trip to Leeds for PLASA Focus I was amazed at the unanimously positive responses I got. "The only place outside of London I would live", "best shopping outside of London" and " a great night out" replaced the usual negative

descriptions. So I was not surprised when I arrived on the first day of the show to see a river walk, a laid back atmosphere and an outside area that was as relaxed and positive as the attitude of the show's exhibitors.

Although no one could tell me

> *I'd forgotten how good exhibitions can be. The great hospitality, buzz and business opportunities at PLASA Focus make people want to come back.*
>
> Bob Mundy
>
> **Adam Hall**

what Leeds is historically known for (was it steel or cotton?), it is easy to figure out that is is a fun town with a thriving pro audio community.

When PLASA took over responsibility for the show from its beginnings as AC Entertainment Technologies annual event, the aim was to make it a networking event and a dedicated show for the north of England's audio, video and lighting pros. Now in its second year, the show is literally busting at its seems, as the organisers sold out the show floor and even had to make last minute recourse for Digico, which was so eager to take part, it had its name printed on the napkins given out during the show's free lunch.

And if the report of a free lunch isn't enough to convince you that this is a show worth attending, take it from these happy customers...

"I'd forgotten how good exhibitions can be. The great hospitality, buzz and business opportunities at PLASA Focus make exhibitors and visitors want to come back.

"It's a show we're proud to be at and we can't wait to come back next

year," Adam Hall director Bob Mundy commented.

Harvey Roberts, senior UK marketing manager for Audio Technica, said: "PLASA Focus proved both an enjoyable and a successful event and without doubt the busiest we have seen. Attracting a wide range of customers across the north of England and Scotland, we now regard PLASA Focus as one of our key trade events of the calendar.

"At a time when exhibitions are finding it harder and harder to attract both exhibitors and visitors alike, it is encouraging the Leeds event continues to bring in the crowds."

Show director Nicola Rowland commented: "We'd anticipated a good turnout after the great response to the first PLASA Focus, but the past two days have exceeded our best hopes. The show is becoming a 'must attend' gathering of the audio, lighting, video, rigging and stage engineering communities in the north

PLASA EVENT REVIEW

of England, and this year an even higher proportion of visitors made the trip from beyond the immediate region. The number of new products on show and the unique atmosphere of PLASA Focus underline how effective and popular the show is, for the industry, where it can come together and do business, in the right place, at the right time."

The highlight of the show's seminar program was ex-Hacienda production manager and Ear To The Ground live director, Jon Drape's presentation on Manchester's The Warehouse Project. Joined by Rob Ashworth and Pete Robinson, the class was an in-depth explanation of an event that attracts 55,800 people to a temporary nightclub held in a car park below the Piccadilly train station.

Focus also served as a venue to bring the latest new gear to those who couldn't travel to shows like NAMM, ISE or Prolight+Sound this year. Many companies made the UK debut of new kit at Focus, including Yamaha and its new M7CL-48ES digital console and MY8-SDI-ED interface card, Allen & Heath with the newly launched iDR-16 3U MixRack and iLive-R72 rackmountable control surface, Sound Technology with the Soundcraft Vi1 and Digico's new SD9 console *(See page 22)*.

Prism/Sadie had three location recording hardware platforms on show. The Sadie 6 Live branded systems are hardware multi-track recorders consisting of a Sadie hardware unit and dedicated multi-track recorder software. The LRX2 multichannel location workstation includes 64 channel DSP, hardware front panel with moving faders and edit controls, three "slither" audio card expansion slots, headphone and monitor outputs.

The Live H64 64- channel multi-track recorder is supplied with MTR multitrack software and includes many security features for live recording, including file preservation, in addition to disk mirroring and minimal disk requirements.

The TC Group International had a strong presence at the show with Lab.gruppen's new PLM 20000Q

powered loudspeaker management System and the Lake LM 26 standalone processor; in addition to Tannoy's range of installation loudspeakers, such as the QFlex digitally steerable array and recently expanded VQ series.

RCF showed newly developed products for both their Professional and Commercial catalogues, such as the UK debut of the VSA 2050 digital steerable column. This multi-amplified vertical steerable array houses a new generation of digital technology. Its inbuilt DSPs sends the audio signal to each speaker, which is then processed and optimised for controlling its vertical acoustic dispersion pattern.

Alongside Sennheiser UK's own wireless microphone and monitoring products, it showed new gear from Apart. The Mask2 loudspeaker is a compact (94x 82x 108mm) full-range loudspeaker that delivers 50W RMS. Products from loudspeaker manufacturer DAS were also on the Sennheiser stand, including the Arco series. K-array loudspeakers were exhibited, such as the company's slimline installation KK50 Kobra and KV50 Viper line array and KKS50 sub-bass elements, together with the Redline 100 and 200 ultra-slimline two-way systems.

Audio Technica's updated 2000, 3000, 4000 & 5000 wireless systems were on show for the first time in the UK at Focus. Improvements across the ranges include both the functional and the ergonomic and are designed to boost performance and usability.

OHM announced that it is currently developing a new common DSP platform for future OHM speaker management systems. All DSP solutions will be freely groupable and configurable via this new software and multiple DSP's in the system will be controlled as one cohesive unit. The Oyster is the first model in this new range and is intended mainly for fixed installation and mobile use due to the fact that its control is only accessible via PC or Mac. The two input, six output unit has a front panel mounted USB port, power, signal and peak LEDs and XLR connectors at the rear.

➢ **plasafocus.com**

✈ **EVENT PREVIEW** AES

AES Europe, Hammersmith Novotel: May 23rd – 25th

All about audio

The travelling AES Europe tradeshow is to visit London for the first time in 23 years. **Andrew Low** speaks to AES executive director Robert Furness to find out if, this time, there is a chance it might stay…

Days after the 2009 AES Europe show it was announced that this year's event would be held in London and may remain there indefinitely. AES executive director Roger Furness admits that the networking aspect needed to be addressed and the organisation promised to react quickly and make additional efforts to successfully promote the 2010 show.

While the decision as to whether the show will remain in London or not is yet to be made, selfishly, we at API hope it stays. But with the promise of big name producers and an extensive technical programme, perhaps AES will become the UK's own audio-centric show, with PLASA and BVE completing the triangle of all things pro audio in Britain.

Furness assures that although the show is in the UK, it will remain a European show and its fate will be based on the reactions of both visitors and exhibitors.

"Some exhibitors have said that it might be better for AES Europe to stay in one city for two or three years and then move to another city, rather than changing every year," he explains. "We have taken on board the fact that a lot of companies are not in great shape and people like to network at our show.

"Some of the venues that we used in the past have not been great for networking because of the proximity of the exhibition space to the seminar rooms. As such, we have chosen a venue that was smaller and more compact and although they are on different floors, the exhibitions and technical seminars can be reached in less than 90 seconds."

Furness believes that the Novotel will be an ideal venue for the show. "One of the benefits of being in a hotel is that you have all the benefits of its facilities, so exhibitors can take clients to private areas or the bar for in-depth conversations."

Companies such as DTS and PMC have also taken advantage of facilities at the Novotel and booked demo rooms.

There have also been changes made to the technical programmes for better accessibility and to cover a wider range of topics.

"As well as the programmes of more cutting-edge seminars, we have a series of six events running in conjunction with the APRS," he says.

"Three of them concentrate on the business of running studios, as many are having tough times trying to fit into the current recording scene.

"We have included additional seminars that are similar to the events we host at our American show. One of these will be a series of Platinum Sessions featuring high-profile record producers talking about their work. That is in addition to the workshops and tutorials on broadcast and video game audio. We have a format that people who have been to our past shows will recognise, with some new things that make it more approachable for those who have been put off by the idea of going to AES in the past."

Over 40 exhibitors will show 80 brands during the show. Among them will be British mixer manufacturer Allen & Heath, showcasing a selection of its products from the iLive digital series and its dedicated broadcast and recording mixers. It will be highlighting the iDR-16 3U MixRack and iLive-R72 rackmountable control surface, which

is designed to provide a space-saving, lightweight, digital live mixing system, and which provides many of the features of the larger touring iLive systems at a lower price point.

In addition to exhibiting at the show and providing reference-level monitoring for the AES's seminar programme, PMC is equipping its own surround-capable seminar room at the show to demonstrate its latest monitors and launch the new active model, IB2S-XBD-A.

A number of top industry producers, mix and mastering engineers will also be giving presentations in PMC's dedicated room during the course of the show.

Meanwhile, Trinnov Audio will showcase the Optimizer ST2-Pro stereo loudspeaker processor and the Trinnov loudness meter module.

Furness points out that early stats are showing that that the visitors and exhibitors at the event will represent a broad cross section of both the European and UK trade.

"There are American exhibitors as well and there is actually a larger quantity of exhibitors from outside the UK than in, which makes it even more interesting for UK visitors because they will see gear that they would not normally see."
➤ **aes.org**

Director of success
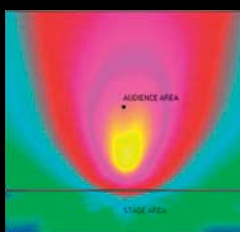
With Marcel Babazadeh, Innovason's hotly tipped sales director, settling quickly into his new role, **Rob Hughes** tracked the man down amid volcano ash horror to find out what the future holds for his new company...

Earlier this year, French digital live console manufacturer Innovason announced the appointment of Marcel to the position of international sales director. Babazadeh has now been in place at the firm since March and some industry observers are already noting that his enthusiasm and vigour for the role has put Innovason in an advantageous position – it now has the personnel, as well as the products, that could see the company develop significantly in 2010.

Prior to taking over the Innovason sales operation, Babazadeh was a sales director and sales tonmeister at Studer, heading up digital mixing console operations in the European and South American markets. As a producer and Tonmeister, he has also published a large number of compact discs for various labels and has worked for several radio stations.

Philipp Lawo, CEO of the Lawo Group, which has a majority shareholding in Innovason, notes: "Marcel has extensive experience in audio hardware sales; his commercial success with leading companies in our industry provides irrefutable evidence of this. I was particularly impressed with his excellent relationship with users, pre and post-sales support, and his thorough product knowledge."

Having heard lots of positive talk about Babazadeh – both officially and informally – *Audio Pro* was keen to catch up with the man himself and get his take on why this is such an exciting move for Innovason – and Lawo – and what it means for the future of the company. With volcano Eyjafjallajokull (I didn't have to Google that, honest) spewing its catastrophic contents into international airspace, it was no mean feat, but we managed to corner Babazadeh the minute he arrived home from NAB, just hours before our deadline...

We hear that you're very excited and enthusiastic about your new role. What is it about Innovason that interests you the most?
Where is Innovason in times when many other companies are cutting investments and trying to save money on R&D, people and facilities and on the quality of their products? Since Philipp Lawo came into the picture we've observed a different, powerful spirit. Lawo is a family-owned business with a very high level of commitment towards progress, quality without compromise, and superior technology and it is boosting Innovason towards the future. It can be seen in our new corporate design and can be experienced in our youngest product, the Eclipse. The ability and willingness to invest into innovation is what excites me most. I am pleased to be part of that movement and to bring this message to the marketplace.

Can you tell us a bit about your history in the business? What made you move from being a producer and Tonmeister to working in audio hardware sales?
In fact, I never really stopped being a Tonmeister, just as I never really stopped being a musician either. During the last few years in pro audio I have managed to produce at least two CDs per year with different artists and have maintained two different music groups giving concerts on a regular basis. It is just the amount of time and energy that I invest into these things that have decreased, of course.

How will your experience of being a producer and Tonmeister help you in your audio sales role?
My thorough education as a Tonmeister in Detmold (Germany) gives me the basis to trust my perception in terms

Philip Lawo talks about "irrefutable evidence" of your commercial success with other leading audio companies. Can you expand on this and maybe detail some of your achievements with previous companies? To what do you attribute your success in previous roles?

I had the opportunity to be part of the introduction of large format digital mixers in Latin America. Starting with high volumes in Brazil, I could extend part of this success to Chile, Columbia and Venezuela.

In my previous role I also had the chance to work with clients in European countries that are typically not the ones with the strongest economies recently. Nonetheless, it has proven to make sense to visit these places, find the opportunities and right partners for high-profile products and to accompany a prospect through his decision process until the end. This can sometimes take a very long time but prove successful in the end, like it did in Hungary, Croatia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia.

Is there anything in particular that you achieved with the previous digital console brand that you'd like to replicate at Innovason?

Keeping the good spirit and an open mind for opportunities. Focussing on the needs of our clients and knowing our strengths. Working in a team to make things possible that others don't dare. Bringing good revenue back to the company and helping users to secure their investment.

Do you think that with Innovason you're being given solid foundations to work with?

During the last Musikmesse in Frankfurt, I received great feedback from users and distributors all over the world. Most of them appreciate and support our energy for innovation. To 'push the limits' is much more than just a claim; it is a statement that we make in respect to ourselves as well as to the market.

of audio quality, practicability and usability of a product in our business. It allows me to judge the value of a product or a performance and to spot opportunities to improve the quality or the workflow of somebody's project. Also the communication aspects play an important role. The skills that you need to talk to a famous artist, an executive producer or even a hysterical singer might also prove to be useful in pro audio discussions.

What is your technical experience with mixing consoles or other audio hardware?

I have worked for years on large format mixers in the analog and digital domain and it has served my desire for perfection in sound. Since the big projects of the large record companies started to vanish, we have had to cope with smaller footprint consoles, even so far as working with just a laptop and a mouse. In some areas this has not been the case: live touring, live PA, live theatre and broadcast. In these fields you will continue to find consoles into the future and keep on working on microphone placement, acoustical environments and so on, plus the adrenaline that differentiates live from studio work. My perspective is very much coming from this user's point of view.

How do you think having Lawo as the major shareholder will benefit Innovason?

Great expertise in manufacturing, highly efficient, quality products in pro audio; a visionary concept to lead the company into the future; identifying and making use of synergies within both companies for the sake of both; value-driven motivation; family-owned business.

You say you want to take Innovason to the next level. Can you explain what you think the 'next level' represents for the company right now. Where do you think it is positioned in the market and where would you like it to be?

I can see Innovason products in theatres, musicals, live touring venues, football stadiums, TV studios, live-broadcast environments, fixed installations such as houses of worship and more. This is what we have: a wonderful product in Eclipse and a passionate team to market, develop and sell it.

➢ **innovason.com**

> *In my previous role I worked with clients in European countries that are typically not the ones with the strongest economies recently. It has proven to make sense to visit these places, find the opportunities and right partners for high-profile products and to accompany a prospect through until the end.*
>
> **Marcel Babazade**
> *Innovason*

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Cold cuts

The Imperial Ice Stars returned to London recently for a performance of Cinderella on Ice. While they took care of the flashy moves, SFL Group took care of the audio, as **Rob Hughes** finds out...

The Imperial Ice Stars, who, to date, have wowed nearly three million people across five continents, returned to London recently for a frosty interpretation of the story of *Cinderella*. The incredible skaters, who have won critical acclaim with their portrayals of *The Sleeping Beauty on Ice* and *Swan Lake on Ice* once more kept the audience thrilled, as they performed *Cinderella on Ice* in the surroundings of the Royal Albert Hall – frozen over for the first time in 25 years and only the second time in its entire history.

The sophisticated production boasts magnificent projected scenery, stunning special effects and, of course, imposing live orchestral music. For the occasion, a newly commissioned score was composed by Tim A. Duncan and Edward Barnwell and recorded by the 72-piece Moscow State Cinematic Orchestra, along with ten soloists from the Manchester Symphony Orchestra. The Royal Albert Hall show was complemented by a 20-piece live orchestra.

SFL Group brought its expertise into the famous London venue for the first time. The firm provided FOH sound reinforcement in the form of a d&b line array system and monitoring via a brand new ten-way personal monitor mixing system from RSS, which proved to be the ideal solution to the unusual monitoring requirements of the musicians, who were positioned behind the stage rather than in the pit. For the occasion, SFL Group purchased 10x RSS M-48 Personal Monitor Mixers from the Roland Systems Group, together with two S-4000D Splitter and Power Distributors and a 40-channel I/O modular rack. Forty channels of microphone signals from the 20 musicians were sent to the S-4000S rack and were then split to the M-48 mixer units and out to the front-of-house console.

"The monitor engineer used to use a console to check submixes and set the gain structure for the orchestral mics," explains SFL's Mark Payne, who was mixing front-of-house for the show. "Now he uses a laptop to simply configure the system and set the gains on the S-4000S rack, the musicians set their own mixes on the M-48 units and the monitor engineer is free to roam in a supportive role."

SFL was one of the UK's early adopters of the RSS suite of digital audio products, and has supplied M-48 personal monitor systems to a number of other end-users, particularly for applications in houses of worship.

"The M-48 has the flexibility that other personal monitoring mixers lack," says Payne. "It is a true 40-channel mixer, offering 16 very flexible subgroups, so it's ideal for doing complex productions. The sound quality is superb, offering excellent headroom, and the ambient microphone on the unit is a nice touch: musicians can turn this up and spin ambient sound into their headphones, which creates a very natural scenario, especially for orchestral players who are used to playing near other people."

The ten M-48 units were distributed between different sections of the orchestra so that the brass players were sharing, woodwind players were sharing and pianist and percussionist got their own units as did composer and conductor Tim A. Duncan.

"Two musicians can happily use the same unit because there are two headphone outputs," explains Payne, who also points out that everyone is playing to a click track. "The live music is heavily augmented by a string section recording by the Moscow State Cinematic Orchestra. This is played back on Digital Performer running off a Mac, along with the special effects."

Although this is the company's first time in the Albert Hall, SFL principals Mark Payne and Tom Jeffery are no strangers to large events. Their rental operation is a full service one, offering lights, projection and staging as well as sound, and every year they handle one of the UK's largest conference audiences – 40,000 people at the ExCeL Centre in London.

"RSS digital products and the M-48 in particular fit in with our service-orientated ethos," says Tom Jeffery. "Instead of managing technology, we get to manage people – it takes just one minute of instruction to get musicians up and running with this simple self-monitoring gear. There are no hurdles to jump, but nor is there any compromise. It's a very intuitive system, which saves time and money, and allows us to focus on delivering our A game for the production."

> "Instead of managing technology, we get to manage people – it takes just one minute of instruction to get musicians up and running with this simple self-monitoring gear.
> **Tom Jeffery**
> SFL Group"

⚡ **LIVE SOUND** DIGICO SD9
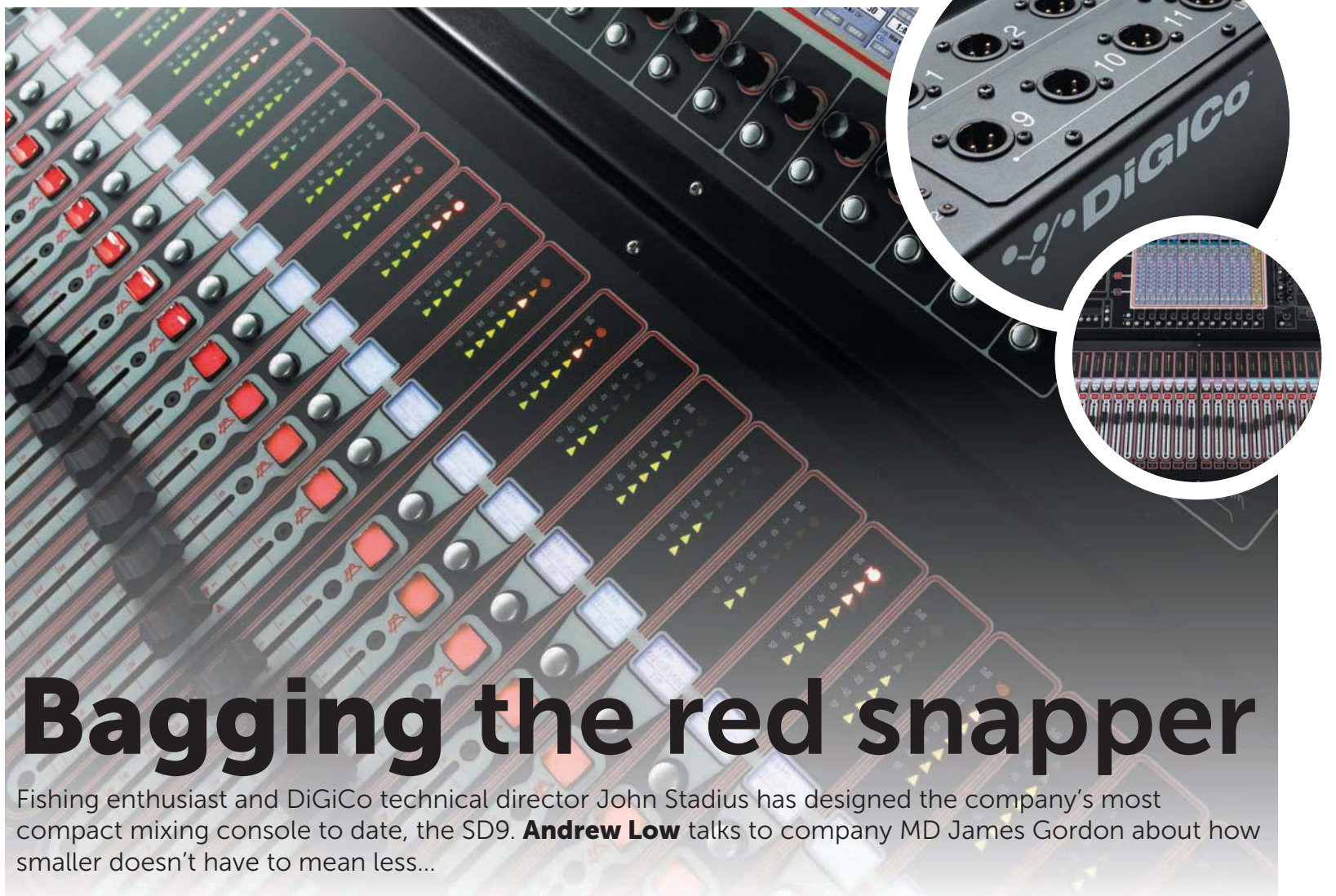
Bagging the red snapper

Fishing enthusiast and DiGiCo technical director John Stadius has designed the company's most compact mixing console to date, the SD9. **Andrew Low** talks to company MD James Gordon about how smaller doesn't have to mean less…

DiGiCo entered yet another new area of the market with the recent launch of the new SD9 digital mixing console at this year's Prolight+Sound. The Crimson framed board is listed as the 'red revolution', as it comprises many of the features that have made DiGiCo a leader in the live mixing market in a smaller format, with a price tag that people outside of the arena touring and the mega church markets can afford.

Designed for use as a compact system for theatres, corporate events, HOW and as a FOH or monitor desk, it became an instant success after its launch when 450 SD9s were sold within days of its introduction.

The main features of the SD9 are a large full colour digital TFT LCD touch sensitive screen, 24 full-length motorised faders with touch-sensitive fader caps, high resolution bar graph meters, fast access encoders and buttons, plus user defined RGB backlit LCD scribble strips to provide access to all of the board's functions. With a third generation Stealth Digital Processing software, its Super FPGA technology incorporates floating point processing for optimised headroom, dynamic range and audio quality. The SD9 also features many of DiGiCo's innovations, including snapshots, global scope, channel specific recall scope per snapshot, and a global crossfade for each console section, plus eight user Macros for fast access to presets.

The company also introduced a new D-Rack digital stage interface, which connects to the SD9 via a digital CAT5E cable and provides 32 microphone inputs, eight line outputs and eight modular outputs that can be selected as either analog or AES.

According to DiGiCo's MD James Gordon, the hardest job hasn't been designing or selling the SD9, rather convincing its technical director John Stadius to create the board. "Stadius was the hardest one to convince because he won't comprise on quality," Gordon explains. "He won't design XLRs on the back panel of the console, so it has to have a digital snake and a remote stage rack, and those things add additional cost to the manufacturing process.

"He also designed a new FPGA engine board for the SD9. We have moved away from DSP, which is very good for audio engines, but it is not a very flexible format to use to scale up and down as we design new consoles. With the SD7 we used a large scale single FPGA and were able to use the same programming from on the smaller chip sets. We were able to incorporate many of the key features from the SD range in the SD9, as it operates the same way and has the same audio path. Stadius is very keen on maintaining the audio path and we have to protect our own brand name, so it has to sound good."

Unique DiGiCo features, such as multiband compressors and dynamic eqs are also integrated into the SD9. "We were the first to include multiband compressors inside the console," Gordon comments. "Usually you can only get one inside a desk because they are processor intensive, but we actually offer them on every channel of the SD7, eight on the SD8 and four on the SD9, which can be used anywhere on the board.

"In addition, any of our desks can drop tracks straight to a multitrack recorder. We did this for the first time with the D5, but after RME's introduction of the MADIface, users can record up to 56 tracks from any of our consoles on to a laptop. The files are multi format, so they can work with any of the major software formats. These features are very significant in the corporate and small touring markets."

In addition to the sonic characteristics of the SD9, special attention was also paid to the aesthetics of the console.

"We wanted to make it look special. The top panels are made from rolled, anodised aluminium, so they look amazing. We are an independent company so we can be creative throughout the design process. We have a focused team, which means the ideas are easy to process and there isn't a design by committee process. There are always a few little jokes on the panel, too. For instance, SD's peak LED is a red fish. Stadius is a keen fisherman and always names our desks after a fish. The SD8 was a Barramundi and the SD9 is the Red Snapper.

⚡ **digico.biz/SD9**

> *The SD9 has the same audio path as our bigger consoles. We have to protect our own brand name, so it has to sound good.*
> **James Gordon**
> *DiGiCo MD*

A little more conver

Howard Lindeman is the FOH engineer tasked with creating a modern retro sound for the European leg of Elvis
why his weapon of choice for making the band sound fresh, but still reminiscent of the 1950s was Avid's Venue

Despite a singing career that lasted 23 years, Elvis Presley's only concerts outside his native US were five shows in three Canadian cities in 1957. But for the leagues of European fans that never realised their dream of seeing the King perform live, *Elvis Presley In Concert*, an extraordinary production that reunites former Elvis band mates live on stage, with a state-of-the-art, video-projected apparition of the man himself, is undoubtedly the next best thing to seeing The King in person.

Recognised by Guiness World Records as the first live tour to be headlined by a performer who is no longer living, the show's concept is to present an Elvis Presley concert that remains as faithful as possible to the legendary performer's greatest US gigs. To achieve this, the producers edited together concert footage containing some of his finest performances. Since the films were originally recorded in multi-track, they were able to isolate Presley's vocal and then replay it, along with the accompanying video footage, to reincarnate Elvis for the show. A 16-piece orchestra and the original band members then play along live to the recordings. It may sound wacky, but it has wowed cynical critics, not to mention adoring fans.

For the European leg of the tour – which has previously included a sellout date at London's Wembley Arena – the man charged with taking Elvis' vocal tracks and combining them with the live feeds from the musicians to create a cohesive FOH mix was award-winning sound engineer Howard Lindeman. The brief was to produce a mix evocative of the 1950s, yet with 21st century studio-grade sound quality. The FOH console was therefore a top priority and Lindeman, who was previously based out of New York's Hit Factory, chose Avid's Venue D-Show board to help him achieve this.

"We've gone back to the 50s and early 60s, taken an artist – coined as the 'King of Rock n Roll' – and integrated him with the 21st century technology of Venue," says Lindeman. "This cross-fade between old and new lets us improve the quality of Elvis's vocals and makes the band sound fresh, but still reminiscent of the 1950s.

"The way the desk sounds is the most important thing for us, he continues. "Some digital desks can end up sounding a little harsh, but I have found that the D-Show console sounds great straight away, and out of all the digital consoles I've used it's the most intuitive. It allows you to be creative, without it being creative for you.

> *We've gone back to the 50s and early 60s, taken an artist – coined as the 'King of Rock n Roll' – and integrated him with the 21st century technology of Venue.*
> **Howard Lindeman**

ersation

Presley in Concert. **Rob Hughes** finds out
D-Sho w console …

are even more reliable than outboard. "They just provide us with a level of confidence; we no longer have to worry about someone dislodging a cable, causing it all to stop working," he says. "We really want the reliability of the 21st century, but with the added warmth of the old equipment – and plugins always work.

"For example, the Massey L2007 Mastering Limiter plugin adds lots of warmth and depth to the sound. I also use a set of great analog tape emulation plugins to help bring the vintage sound of analog gear to digital audio," adds Savage.

The Venue D-Show system is well respected by many live sound professionals for its ability to integrate seamlessly with the Pro Tools software. This is perhaps most evident when using the system's virtual soundcheck feature. In the past, musicians were required to be present for a soundcheck and it could often be a laborious process – an engineer such as Lindeman might need a band to perform each song several times before the optimum sound was achieved.

"Recording all our rehearsals through Pro Tools means we have the option to do soundchecks without the band," explains Lindeman. "I can now play back individual tracks into the mixing desk in a flat recorded mode and use it as a virtual soundcheck. The bigger picture is that it gives me as much time as possible to get things right before the band arrives for the day. Rehearsals are really for the band; I still mix in this time, but it means I don't need to ask them to repeat tracks."

With the Venue system, the direct link to the Pro Tools HD Core and Accel cards is taken from the stage rack remote preamp, so play-back into the console is at exactly the same level it was recorded. With this setup, an engineer can adjust the recorded track level as if it were coming from the microphone. These capabilities are considered particularly powerful for refining mixes in conjunction with snapshots, where an engineer might need to program in preamp and recording level changes to take place during the course of the show.

Venue's snapshot automation system allows any configuration of parameters on the console to be stored and recalled on command. With any performance – and certainly in this case of mixing over 70 channels, including video and a live orchestra – the ability to have an automated workflow can completely change how sound engineers work, affording them the time to perfect mixes, as opposed to frantically trying to keep them together. This can often make the difference between an average mix and a sublime one with creative flair.

However, although Lindeman uses snapshots as a starting point for each track, he prefers to mix the shows night by night: "As a template for each song, snapshots work really well, but when you are touring the performance naturally changes and evolves," says Lindeman. "Everybody has their own style of mixing; everybody has their own way of using automation. I still usually like to mix but snapshots let me quick-fire new settings for each track.

"In the beginning I used analog consoles," he concludes, "and I worked solidly for the whole of a two-hour concert, rather than fine tuning according to the different conditions as the show progressed. Now, with much of the work done pre-production, the Venue allows me the freedom to be more creative. Elvis' vocals are taken from different years, using different mics and the ability to automatically recall preset eq levels allows me to smooth out any differences during the show and really just concentrate on the music."

⩒ **avid.com**

> *We really want the reliability of the 21st century, but with the added warmth of the old equipment – and plugins always work.*
> **Mike Savage**

"It also offers us the flexibility to use plugins to warm up the sound and get more of an analog emulation. I use as many Fairchild plugins as I can – I have Fairchilds on the guitars and on the bass to recreate that sound of the old tube-based gear warming up. I also use many of the Bomb Factory Classic Compressors, including BF-2A and BF-76 plugins, the ISA 130 De-esser, part of the Focusrite Forte Suit and the Pultec Analog EQ Simulator plugin, all of which add greatly to the overall depth of this performance."

The onboard plugin system is one of the standout features of the Venue boards and the main attraction for many engineers. The D-Show comes with a set of pre-loaded plugins, meaning that operators know what they can expect if they are hopping from one to another during a tour. If they have particular favourites that are not included in the pre-loaded bundle, or are trying to create a specific sound, there is a broad range of both Avid and third-party plugins that can be loaded onto a Venue system on any given evening.

Since they are (these days) a reliable alternative to analog outboard units, plugins are entirely replacing rack-mounted processing equipment on the tour. In fact, Mike Savage, the system technician working alongside Lindeman, says that they

✈ **LIVE SOUND** FESTIVAL GEAR

Punters will hear their favourite festival sets with the help of numerous new innovations

Festival fodder

Audio Pro's guide to some of the latest product introductions suited for the upcoming festival season...

The festival season is upon us, a time that pro audio manufacturers have been eagerly awaiting as they have been unleashing loads of new kit to provide punters of all shapes and sizes with the latest and best sounding gear to survive and thrive this summer.

With weather, noise restrictions, slashed budgets and radio frequency limitations to consider, the new fleet of festival gear houses the latest technologies to address all of the above while still providing optimised sonic performance.

The 2010 festival season will see a great number of RSS compact digital mixers and personal monitors in action at events all over the UK, including Brecon Jazz Namfest in Chippenham and the Glastonbudget festival.

Know as Europe's largest festival for tribute bands and new acts, Shuttlesound (Electrovoice UK) and Roland Systems Group are equipping Glastonbudget's VIP backstage marquee with M-48 personal monitor mixers and RSS digital control equipment, along with V-Drums and Roland keyboards, for bands to rehearse and warm up with before their performances. Its M400 and the new M380 digital mixers, with full digital snakes systems, will be used for the performance stages.

RSS' M-48 live personal mixer provides control over 40 audio sources managed in 16 assignable stereo groups. Level, pan, solo and three-band eq are featured on each group as are built-in reverbs and an ambient mic for communication with band members. Other features include physical inputs and outputs for multiple headphones, wedges and powered monitors; interfacing with iPods; metronomes and external recording devices.

Roland's Ethernet Audio Communication (REAC) Cat5e protocol is integrated into the design of the new system to provide clear sound quality, while power to the M-48 is provided via the RSS S-4000D Splitter and Power Distributor.

All M-48 settings and configuration can be saved from an M-400 V-Mixer or PC (when using RSS Digital Snakes with other consoles), and it is easily integrated with other digital or analog consoles using a choice of RSS Digital Snakes and included PC software.

Used by the numerous rental companies for some of the world's biggest festivals, Soundcraft's Vi series of live digital mixing consoles offers a number of features designed to address the needs of big festival systems. While the Vi6 and Vi4 will be found controlling FOH on main stages, the latest addition to the series – the Vi1 – has been introduced as a monitor solution for bigger stages and as a FOH and monitor package for smaller stages and tents. The new console can be used as a standalone package with 32 channels of analog input to 27 analog outputs, in addition to six digital inputs, four Stereo FX Returns and six digital outputs. Features also include a 46-channel input to mix capacity. Its simultaneous channel count can be increased 64 channels by adding a stagebox (compatible with the existing Vi racks) and channels are routable to 24 multifunction busses, plus L/R and Mono Mix busses.

The new fleet of festival gear houses technologies to address the many limitations imposed by the festival guidelines.

In order to offer the same user-friendly control as the other Vi consoles, the Vi1 features a new widescreen Vistonics interface. This screen displays all parameters for 16 channels side by side, on a single 22-inch Vistonics touch screen. The upper half of the screen handles the Output section control as well as Cue List or Menu displays. Parameter control is managed via two rows of 16 rotary encoders. Exactly the same channel functionality as the Vi6 and Vi4 is available, along with all the same core snapshot, talkback and monitoring facilities.

The desk is compatible with Vi4 and Vi6 show files through the Virtual Vi offline editor. A full report on the new board will be featured in *Audi Pro*'s June issue.

Yamaha is no stranger to the festival circuit as its boards are featured in many high-profile festivals. According to the company, its new M7CL-48ES digital mixing system was developed partly in response to the popularity of its SB168-ES EtherSound stage box. The M7CL-48ES replaces the 48 internal mic pre-amps with two EtherSound ports, which keeps the three MY card slots free for other uses.

A third port is also integrated on the board to allow permanent connection of the console to a computer while using EtherSound in 'ring' mode. Upgraded, Version 3 software provides new enhancements, including Sends On Fader for M7CL V3 Editor, which is operated independently of the console and allows for remote adjustment of setting via a tablet PC. Direct access of Sends on Fader from the M7CL knobs is also now possible in Sends on Fader mode.

Additional improvements include enhanced VCM effects with an enhanced user interface, and a number of new parameters for Recall Safe. ST IN 1-4 (OMNI IN 1-8) can now be used for talkback, and there are new default settings for Rack 5-8, Output Patch and User Defined Keys.

DiGiCo has also introduced the new SD9 console, with features that make is well suited for smaller festival stages and monitor use (*see page 22 for an in-depth feature*).

To add further value to a band's festival appearances and provide an additional means of accumulating tour revenue, JoeCo has introduced the Blackbox Recorder (BBR), a multi-track recording device designed to capture high-definition live audio tracks. With the ability to record up to 24 channels directly to a USB2 drive with 24bit/96kHz conversion, BBR plugs directly into any standard live mixing console via the normal insert points.

Blackbox records to standard external USB2 disks formatted with FAT32 in Broadcast WAV file format (BWAV), thus allowing any material to be used in a DAW without conversions or transfers.

There are several option available for the Blackbox, such as the BBR1-B, which offers balanced I/O to capture live audio from a console with balanced audio insert points or balanced group outputs. It uses the lower three 25-way female D-type connectors as balanced inputs and the upper three 25-way female as balanced outputs. The BBR1-A features ADAT I/O and adds the ability to record from a board supporting ADAT Lightpipe (TOSlink) inputs and outputs, or directly with any of the high quality A-D converters which incorporate ADAT Lightpipe outputs. Three eight-channel Lightpipe inputs can be connected from the console and three Lightpipe outputs can return the signals back to the mixer.

The BBR1-D provides the ability to record with AES/EBU inputs and outputs. Three 25-way female D-type connectors, each carrying eight channels of inputs and outputs, can be connected directly into a digital mixing console to effectively capture and return the signals without the need for any additional A-D conversion.

Tannoy's VQ Live loudspeaker system will be used in Glastonbury's 'The Igloo' tent for the third year in a row. Part of the Dance Village, the Igloo is a unique immersive 360-degree projection environment designed to provide a 1,400-capacity audience with live video mixing and audio. Last year's tent utilised a single stack per side, comprised of a VQ Net 60 Live cabinet above an accompanying VNet 218DR Live subwoofer.

VQ LIVE 60 is a full range, three-way point source loudspeaker system designed for live touring sound applications. DSP, network control and dual channel Class D Amplification are found integrated with the speakers. With low frequency extension to 90Hz, the VQ Live 60 can be combined with the VQ LIVE 218 twin 18-inch direct radiating subwoofer and VQ LIVE 215 horn loaded subwoofer cabs for extended bandwidth down to 24Hz.

Glastonbudget's tribute acts will warm up with RSS M-48

Igloo Vision's Colin Yellowley explains: "Tannoy's VQ system allowed us to provide amazing clarity of sound at a high impact level that left DJs clamouring to use the system. This, combined with the 360-degree projections of the Igloo, created something that was considered by some to be the best offering in the Badlands area."

Alcons Audio has announced its foray into the touring and festival sector with the launch of the LR24 system. The new line array system was designed to deliver the same SPL of equivalent products in the mid-size line-array category, but with 15dB less distortion.

The LR24 system is a complete package, comprising line-array, line-array bass, ground-stacked subs, multi-channel amplification and processing. All parts of it have been developed from the ground up, including the LR24 mid-size three-way line-array, featuring an all-new pro-ribbon mid-high transducer platform; the LM24 low-frequency array-extension; BQ211 high-impact sub; BC543 self-contained cardioid sub and the ALC Sentinel, a four-channel DSP-based controller with full Class D amp stages onboard.

Funktion-One recently released the Resolution 3 loudspeaker, a new all-in-one three-way enclosure comprising a special horn loaded 18-inch bass loudspeaker with five-inch voice coil and a new Axhead loaded ten-inch loudspeaker for midrange and one-inch compression driver for HF. The company states that the Res 3 punches well above its weight and delivers exceptional SPLs for its size with very convincing bass, rendering additional sub bass unnecessary. The mid high section can be rotated to facilitate horizontal installation

F-1 also offers the ASPC1 audio system polarity checker for live sound and installation engineers to ensure the optimisation of high performance audio systems.

Ohm's latest addition to the Planet Suite, Ersa Major is a new integrated line array system intended for large-scale concerts, festivals and sports events. The system is run in four-way active mode with the amplifiers flown in the array, while a matching dual 18-inch PUKK sub-bass units can be flown or ground stacked.

The mid/high cabinet has dual Ohm ten-inch midrange woofers with a two-inch, plus one-inch coaxial compression driver mounted on a proprietary horn flare. The mid range drivers are mounted at the rear, which creates a fully horn-loaded cabinet with a compact size of 700mm wide, 600mm deep and 300mm high. The cabinet is three-way active with an impedance of sixteen Ohms and has a flat frequency response from 100Hz to 20kHz, with a maximum SPL in excess of 140dB.

EAW's new KF740 line array system is a three-way full range system with dual 62mm voice coil HF compression drivers and dual eight-inch Concentric Summation Array (CSA) loaded MF transducers integrated through a common horn that occupies the entire face of the enclosure. Its pattern control offered by this configuration is extended even further (down to 160 Hz) as the MF devices are transitioned to a spaced array of four 2.5-in voice coil ten-inch woofers.

The pair of LF devices integrated within the MF/HF horn combined with the pair of side-mounted devices provides up to 18 dB of off-axis rejection.

In order to crowd surf, stage dive and generally jump about on stage like a wild animal, performers have the choice of several new wireless mic options. Shure's PSM 900, Sennheiser's G3, dBTechnologies' DWS800, Line 6's XD-V70 (*see new products pages 40 and 41*), Trantec's S6 and Neutrik's Xirium are among the latest offerings in wireless microphone technologies.

Neutrik's Xirium professional multichannel wireless system is the first product to operate on a new system of wireless technology developed by the firm, known as DIWA (digital data transmission without data compression)

Reidel's RockNet 100 is a digital snake solution that provides up to 80 digital audio channels over a single counter-rotating CAT-5 ring. Its technology and user interface is designed for real-world live sound applications, which enables quick set-up without a computer. The system is auto-addressing and can be configured via the front-panel or via the RockWorks software available for Windows and Mac OS X.

Crown has introduced the VRack, a complete amplifier management rack system featuring three built-in Crown I-Tech 12000HD amplifiers, providing a plug-and-play solution that eliminates the need to build amplifier racks.
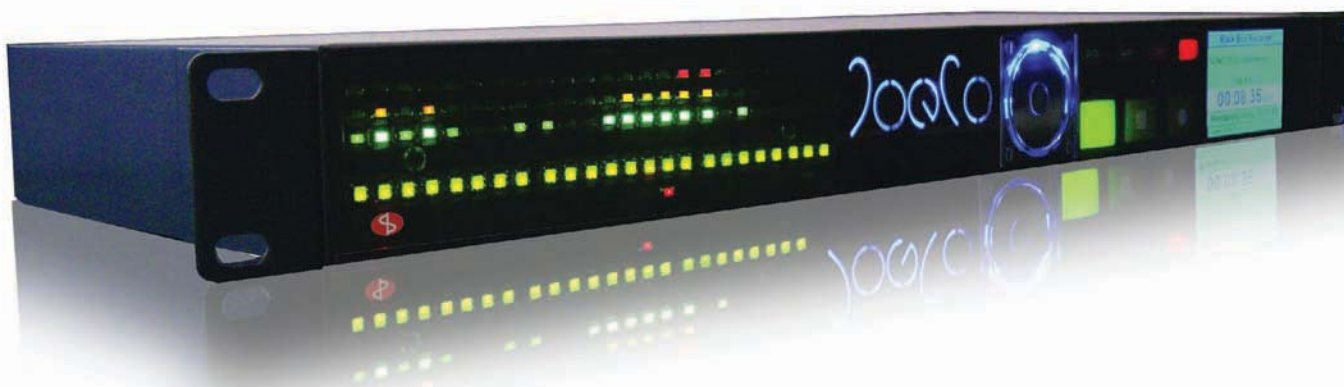
Designed to work in conjunction with JBL VerTec, VRX, and AE series loudspeakers, VRack's modular design is scalable to meet the needs of both small and large sound systems. It features an input panel with AES, analog, and network inputs for multiple connection options, with rear-rack lighting to aid in making adjustments.

Prolight+Sound saw the introduction of Lab.gruppen's new flagship of the acclaimed PLM Series of Powered Loudspeaker Management systems, the four-channel PLM 20000Q. The new amp provides 5,000 Watts output per channel with all channels driven into optimum impedance interval of 2.2 – 3.5 Ohms. Output per channel into four Ohms is 4,400 Watts, all channels driven. Peak output voltage is 194V, while THD +N at 1 kHz and 1 dB below clipping is <0.04 per cent.

> *"Tannoy's VQ system allowed us to provide amazing clarity of sound at a high impact level that left DJs clamouring to use the system*
> **Colin Yellowley**
> *Igloo Visions*

Neve's Genesis console is one of a new breed of analog/digital hybrids

Board members

Despite the current penchant for mixing in the box, your local frontman-come-band manager knows that his demo will sound better through a big analog thingy. **Rob Hughes** helps you pick a new board...

I use the paragraphs of this intro section to draw vague but, hopefully, amusing comparisons between the market in question and whatever happens to be going on in my very modest extra-curricular (semi) pro audio activities. But this month, I'm at a complete loss because all that stands between me and an 'in the box' type of setup is one small and humble, albeit pleasant-sounding mixer. I'm also rather upset that I don't own a API 1608, so in a mild tantrum, I decided to leave this month's market assessment to Keith Malin of KMR Audio, a man who has probably seen more studio consoles than the Lord-Alge brothers.

"It's amazing," remarks Malin. "Who would have thought that analog consoles, especially at this price point, would still be selling in good healthy numbers and still be the centrepiece of a modern studio? Who would have predicted that ten years ago? But it is the case; an analog board is still absolutely necessary if you want a successful commercial facility. It's the marriage of the digital recording system and an analog console, which brings it all together. It is the modern way. In fact, the market is growing, without a doubt. More and more consoles are being sold all the time and we're growing year on year because of it.

"We sell all sizes of consoles from very small models, right up to the API legacys and SSL Dualitys. They're all selling and selling in good numbers. The bestsellers though are the small-format boards – the API 1608s, SSL AWS 900s and Neve Genesys. The project studio is the way things are going;

budgets are squeezed, the major studios are very expensive and you can do a lot of good quality work at home or in a small facility. These consoles have a very small footprint so you can put them in a spare room or a garage. And then there's the price, you don't need to get a mortgage like you did in the days of yore when you had to shell out 300 grand for an analog console of any quality. These days you can spend 30 and, if you're a successful musician or producer, that isn't unthinkable. It's also an investment, these boards will last 20 or 30 years and you can do a lot of work on one.

Price versus performance – it's what people have been asking for, for a very long time. And these manufacturers are satisfying the demand."

API

API is without a doubt the console of choice among the premier league of Southern State studios that cater to the thriving and hugely profitable country music scene in Nashville, Texas and so on. Perhaps it's for this reason that that the firm still enjoys plenty of success with its custom-built, large frame Legacy and Vision consoles. Although more of a rarity in Europe, these are, where present, definitely an indication of considerable success. You'll struggle to find a bad word on the sound of these consoles.

If you're a reasonably successful musician or producer who hankers for this sound but doesn't have six figures to blow on a bespoke effort, the company's off-the-peg (for want of a more appropriate phrase) offering is the 1608. This small format recording console is based on the vintage API 1604 console,
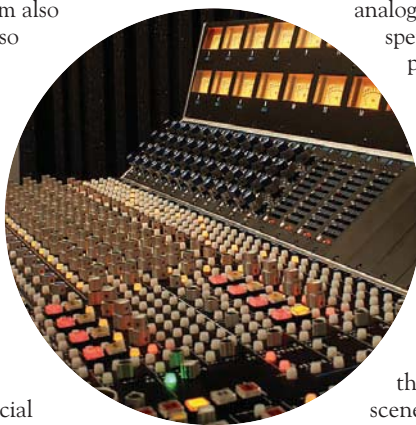
> *If you're a successful musician or producer, 30 grand for a quality analog console is not unthinkable.*

which has held its demand and value for over three decades. Its successor provides all of the advantages of the 1604, but adds modern features that should prove valuable to contemporary engineers.

The 1608 is built to the same standards as the Vision and Legacy and features 16 548B input channels, each with mic pre and equaliser (it accepts API 500 series equalisers and a standard fit would include 12 550A and four 560 equalizers), eight main buses, eight auxiliary buses, one stereo bus, eight echo returns with main and stereo bus assign, full centre section control with 5.1 monitoring, and analog metering. It's a modular system and can be expanded as required with the 1608EX, which is essentially the board without its centre section.
> **apiaudio.com**

AMS NEVE
Neve's claim that the 88RS is the ultimate analog console is, of course, a subjective one. But as the board of choice at Abbey road and for engineers such as Haydn Bendall and Al Schmitt, even the most die-hard SSL fan would probably agree that this statement, however brazen, is, at the very least, not far off the mark.

If you fancy commissioning the firm to build you one then money had better be no object, or else you'll be looking at remortgaging your house to the tune of £170k minimum. If you're full of bespoke ideas, who knows, you could probably spend twice that. However, if you are in the rarified position of being able to acquire one, expect 100kHz bandwidth, surpassing 192khz digital recording quality, comprehensive surround capabilities, two faders per channel, fully linear design, pure signal paths devoid of VCAs and a sonic quality that even Leslie Ann Jones calls 'unbelieveable'.

For those of us in the real world, Neve's new Genesys console, scalable from an accessibly priced 16-channel configuration, up to 60 channels, straight or with wedges, is a little more feasible. Genesys is a hand-built analog recording console with the renowned Neve mic preamps and circuit design, yet also offers DAW control. Digitally controlled eq and dynamics, with 1084 eq circuitry and 88R style compression and mastering-grade 192kHz A/D and D/A converters are just some of the other specs.
> **ams-neve.com**

RUPERT NEVE DESIGNS
While AMS Neve continues to build consoles without input from the man who started it all, Rupert Neve himself, until recently, hadn't designed and built a fully discrete mixing console in over 30 years. This has now changed with the launch of Rupert Neve Designs' 5088, an expandable 16-channel line mixer which, as a basic foundation on which users can build an analog console to satisfy their own particular requirements, provides eight group busses, eight aux sends, four stereo effects returns and a stereo output buss. Bespoke versions can include additional channels, mic preamps, equalisation or dynamics processing from the RND Portico line of modules, as necessary.

Like the company's Portico range of modules, the 5088 console continues Mr Neve's philosophy of incorporating custom-designed transformers and single-sided amplification as standard. The firm notes that, in order to meet attractive price points yet incorporate feature sets that might appeal to the widest possible range of users, many medium and large format mixing console designs suffer from compromised audio quality due to their reliance on integrated circuits. When designing the 5088, audio quality was prioritised and unnecessary bells and whistles removed so that single-sided, high-voltage, discrete op-amp cards could replace integrated circuits throughout the mixer. These amplifiers provide ten dB

more dynamic range than any previous console design from Rupert Neve.

"The dynamic range is actually extended downwards to encompass the extremely small, often out-of-band signals, usually ignored, that go to complete our listening perspective, making sounds warmer, sweeter and fuller, apparently affecting the low and mid frequencies," explains Neve. "The significance of this enormous dynamic range and the frequency response that extends comfortably towards 100kHz, lies in the ability of the 5088 to source, retain and mix the microscopically tiny signals that are essential to retention and even enhancement of the full soundscape."
➤ **rupertneve.com**

TL AUDIO

At the top end of TLAs mixing desk range is the VTC (Valve Technology Console). Available in configurations from 16 to 56 channels, with optional bar graph meterbridge, the VTC is a fully modular in-line multitrack mixer that offers all the benefits of the compact eight-buss/multiple tape output format, but with the advantage of TL Audio's acclaimed valve circuitry, which brings the warm, vintage valve sound to a desk that addresses the demands of modern music production.

The inclusion of valves in the VTC is not just a token addition. They form an essential part of the signal path at several key points within the console: every channel and mix B preamp incorporates an ECC83/12AX7A valve stage, as do the group, mix B and stereo master mix amplifiers. This means that when recording to tape via a group, the signal passes through two valve stages (channel and group), plus two more stages on mixdown (tape return and stereo buss), giving a total of four valve stages in the signal path.

For a more affordable and/or compact valve mixing solution, the firm's M4 provides the same sound and some of the same features as the VTC. It is available in 16, 24, 32, 40, and 48 channel versions, with optional ADAT output for easy digital connection to your recording device and software.
➤ **tlaudio.co.uk**

TOFT AUDIO DESIGNS

While Trident Audio Developments' Series 80 console, which was inducted into the TEC Hall of Fame 2008, has long since gone out of production, its spirit lives on it Toft Audio Designs' ATB line of studio consoles. Malcolm Toft, founder of Trident Audio Developments and designer of the Series 80, has recreated the board that helped produce numerous hit records over the decades and is revered as one of the best analog recording consoles ever made. It's unlikely that you'll ever come across a genuine Series 80 desk (and if you did, you'd likely be in maintenance hell) but you can buy a brand new ATB console that remains faithful to the original, save

for a few functional and build quality upgrades made possible by modern developments.

Not surprisingly, the Toft ATB console sports the same powerful equaliser that was used on the Trident Series 80, which was one of the original board's standout features. Toft claims that this four-band eq is one of the best sounding, most musical equalisers on the market today.

Other features include eight mix busses with outputs, direct outs on each channel, inline monitoring for every input, additional eight monitor returns in group section, six aux sends for each channel strip, eight fully-dedicated stereo aux returns, accurate 12-stage LED meter and fully balanced outputs. The console is available in 16, 24 and 32 channel formats, with optional meter bridge and ADAT/SPDIF digital output.
➤ **toftaudiodesigns.com**

SOUNDCRAFT

Soundcraft offers just one dedicated analog recording console – the Ghost LE, an eight-buss mixer that comes in frame sizes of 24 and 32 channels. However, the firm does offer a number of other multipurpose mixers, such as the LX7ii and GB2R that are perfectly suited to studio use.

Handily, the Ghost LE features a mix B path as well as the signal path on each channel strip. The secondary path is so named, as opposed to 'monitor', because the architecture of the signal routing is much more flexible than the term monitor suggests. Mix B path actually offers many of the features normally only found on the main input channel, such as muting and eq. This means that the 24 and 32-channel versions effectively provide 56 and 72 inputs respectively at mixdown. In addition, by taking advantage of the 24-channel expander unit, a further 48 inputs are possible.

Ghost LE's inputs feature Soundcraft's ProMic preamps, which offer smooth control over a wide gain range (up to 60dB). Soundcraft claims that these preamps are very quiet and give excellent noise performance in the mid-gain region with enough headroom for drum kit peaks and extremely low distortion figures.

Another standout feature of the Ghost LE is the eq section, which comprises two overlapping, fully parametric mid bands with shelving high and low filters. Soundcraft calls this a 'classic British eq' and compares it to those found on its acclaimed Europa and 3200 consoles.
➤ **soundcraft.com**

AUDIENT

For large format requirements, Audient offers the ASP8024, an in-line console which features 80 inputs (on the 36-channel version, 24-track routing, splittable equalisers, 14 auxiliary busses, integral compressors on stereo bus and option for main plus three alternate control room speakers. It's a delight, but you do need considerable space for it.

> *The small, out-of-band signals, usually ignored, go to complete our listening perspective, making sounds warmer, sweeter and fuller.*
> **Rupert Neve**
> *Rupert Neve Designs*

Those looking for a more compact alternative, should view the Zen mixer with DAW I/O integration, transport control and analog circuits based on the the the ASP8024. The mixer also has two inputs per channel and a stereo compressor.
> **audient.com**

ALLEN & HEATH
At Prolight+Sound this year, Allen & Heath offered a (very) sneak preview at what will become its brand new studio console later in the year. There is currently very little info available on the console, except that it will be named the GS-R24. The final spec is not yet decided and it won't be shipping until late summer at the earliest.

In the meantime, if you're looking for an A&H board for your studio, your best option is the Zed-R16, Allen & Heath's first true recording mixer for over ten years and the winner of the 2009 MIPA award for best studio console.

The Zed-R16 includes the best preamp in Allen & Heath's entire range, boasting a symmetrical, ultra-linear circuit, the best epitaxial low noise transistors for the front end and active feedback employed in both phases before the differential amplifier. This results in super-low distortion, while maintaining low noise (-128.5dBu EIN). A&H calls it 'a transparent and beautiful sounding pre-amp.' The mixer also features an internal soundcard with 18 FireWire I/O plus 16 ADAT I/O and offers, the firm claims, the most extensive eq of any mixer at this price point (or even twice the price), complete with two swept, fully parametric mids, and high and low shelving eq.

"The Zed-R16 is stuffed with quality electronics," enthuses Allen & Heath's Mike Griffin, who designed the new board. "The 16 mic amps are the best we make and the eqs have five op-amps each, just for the mids – and that's just the analog side."
> **allen-heath.com**

MACKIE
While the popular D8B and Digital X-Bus studio consoles are no longer in production, analog Mackie fans will be pleased to know that the Onyx range of multipurpose mixers is still going strong.

The best example in the range is the Onyx 1640i, a 16-channel recording mixer, which, in addition to its pro-standard 24-bit/96kHz FireWire recording interface, offers professional analog features such as boutique-quality Onyx mic preamps, British-style, four-band, dual sweep Perkins eq on every channel and six pre/post assignable aux sends, all of which can be flexibly routed via the integrated FireWire.

The Onyx 1640i is compatible with all major DAWs including Pro Tools 8 and Logic 9 and its compact size allows it to be rack-mounted. To facilitate this, the mixer features Mackie's flexible RotoPod design, enabling it to be housed in any configuration, including custom studio furniture.
> **mackie.com**

ORAM
Oram offers an extensive range of dedicated studio consoles, from the rack-mountable S100, right up to the Pro24 5.1 series, which, with frame sizes of up to 72 inputs and optional automation, would seem to be the kind of desk that would compete with some of the most prestige options out there.

John Oram himself certainly isn't short of know-how when it comes to building consoles and, as a former engineer for Trident Audio Developments, helped develop circuits for the aforementioned Series 80 console. 2009 marked his 45th year in the business and with it came the X-Dream series of consoles, which was among the nominees for Outstanding Technical Achievement in Large Format Console Technology at the 2009 Tec Awards.

The X-Dream features line amps with selector enabling mic and line to function together, dedicated monitor path, five aux sends, classic eq with extra mid band, routing with pan to three stereo busses (six mono), pre/post direct outputs, balanced inserts on every channel, Sonicomp compression on every channel, phantom power and phase reversal.
> **oram.co.uk**

SSL
Just over three years old now, SSL's flagship large-frame console, Duality, is very similar in terms of its analog design to the firm's former large-format offering, the XL9000K. However, the Duality – as you might have guessed from its name – also offers digital functionality with hands-on control of all the major DAWs, using HUI and Mackie Control Universal protocols.

As I'm sure you'll agree however, $275,000 is a hell of a lot of money to shell out on a control surface and, while this aspect of the board is certainly handy, it is undoubtedly the analog credentials that will have attracted most of those lucky enough to own one. The Duality boasts a combination of some of the best components from the E, G and K series and even the C series broadcast consoles. This includes the SuperAnalogue circuit design from the XL9000K, E series eq and G Series dynamics (including the famous master bus compressor). There are also brand new features such as the Variable Harmonic Drive (VHD) circuit, which introduces controlled second or third order harmonic distortion to add warmth or grit.

Considerably cheaper (and smaller) – although still well out of reach for many at little under £50,000 for 24 channels – is the AWS900+. This desk was launched in it's original incarnation in 2004 and subsequently lent much of its control surface design to the Duality, which, in many ways, it can be considered a scaled-down version of. The AWS900+ also offers DAW control and eq and dynamics processing taken the from E and G series.
> **solidstatelogic.com**

> *The 16 mic amps are the best we make and the eqs have five op-amps each, just for the mids – and that's just the analog side.*
> **Mike Griffin**
> *Allen & Heath*
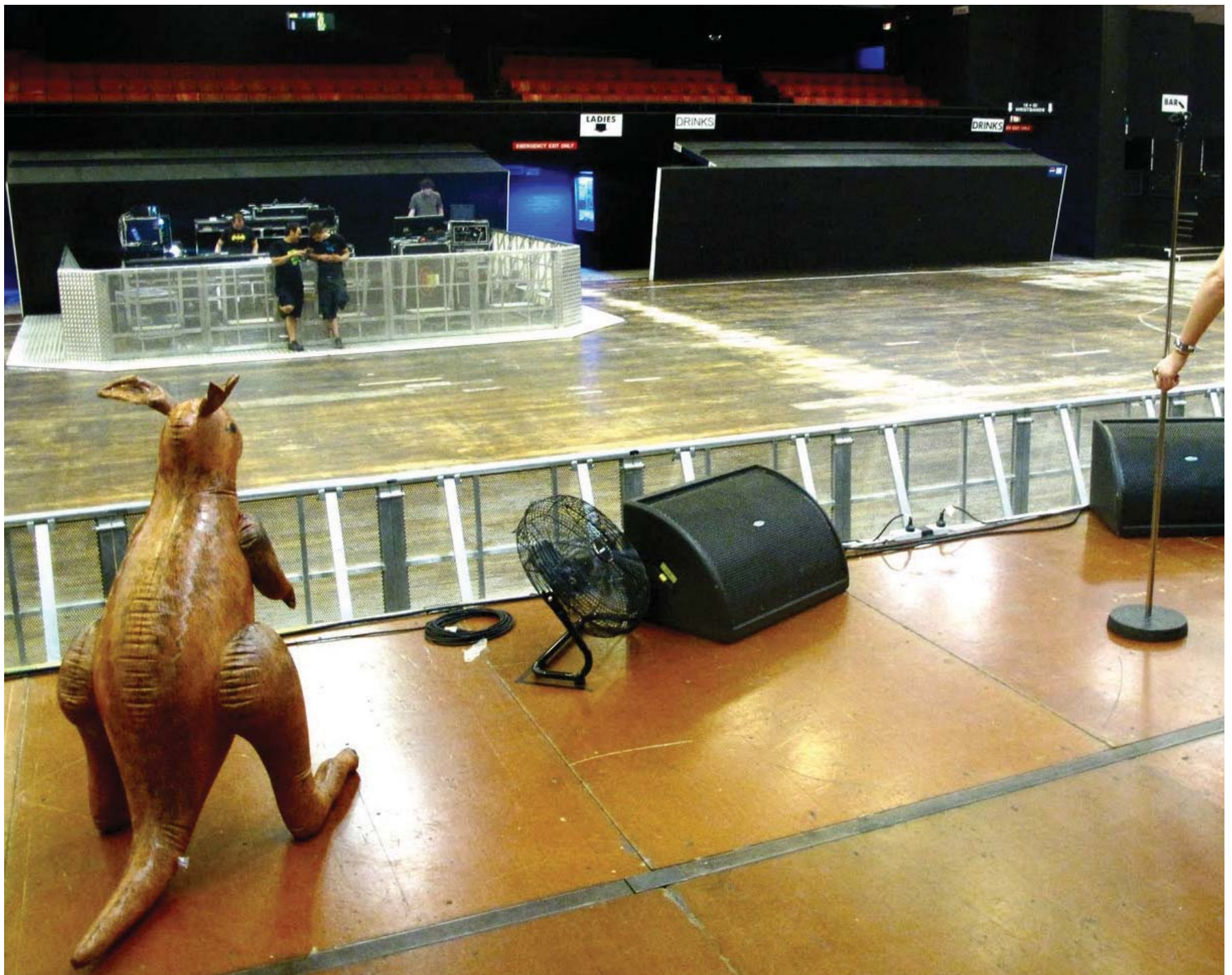
Acoustic **energy**

Dave Swallow's passion for audio quality and intellectual approach to mixing has made him a highly sought-after FOH engineer. **Andrew Low** talks to Swallow about working with La Roux, Seasick Steve and Amy Winehouse...

Dave Swallow has had his share of unusual live mixing jobs. From the midi-controlled electronic sounds of La Roux to the minimalist set-up of Seasick Steve or the vintage sound of Amy Winehouse, Swallow brings his own ideas to live shows to let the artists sound like themselves "plus ten times the energy".

During his career, which started in Chinnerys in Southend-on-Sea, UK, Swallow has found that sometimes less is more. This was particularly evident when working with Seasick Steve. He explains: "These days people forget what they are mixing. Most albums are over-produced and laden with compression, so if you tried to recreate that live with someone like Seasick Steve it would mean a totally different thing to him. It is a case of thinking about what you are mixing and what comes across.

"I took a completely different stance when mixing Steve, so rather than going in and sorting the PA out so it was perfect, I just left it the way it was observed how the band reacted with the audience, and it worked very well. Because there were only two of them on the stage, they interacted a lot with each other and also with the audience.

"It was similar to mixing a jazz band, because I let the musicians eq their amps, tune their instruments and I let them have their space and separated the mix until it was all driving in the right areas.

"For his tour I only used one mic on Steve's Roland Cube 30X amp and minimal drum miking. If you heard it separately, every single bit on its own sounded rubbish. The amount of times I had guys in the OB trucks saying, 'Do you want to leave it like that?' I had to insist to leave it be and promise that when the whole mix was heard together it sounded great.

"The kick drum was an old marching drum with old pigskin on it and it cost £400 to re-skin. It sounded like slapping a wet fish against a cow's stomach, but put in context with the rest of the drum kit and what Steve was doing, it all made sense. I didn't gate anything. The only two things I compressed were his vocal and his guitar. I ran his vocal though the Avalon 737 preamp and put a Distressor on his

Swallow took a very minimalist approach to mixing the Seasick Steve shows

> **I let the musicians eq their amps, tune their instruments and I let them have their space. Then I separate the mix until it's driving in the right areas.**
> **Dave Swallow**

guitar and really cranked that up so it was hitting the input peak and that guitar came to life."

Mixing electro 80s' throwback singer La Roux is a very different scenario to the dirty blues of Seasick Steve, as midi controllers loaded with samples from the studio album are used as instruments. Swallow found that trying to recreate the album was just not possible. He also found that, although the music was totally electronic, he could still add an organic feel to the mix. "We had to make the decision of whether we were going to try and hide behind that fact that it is electronic and run backing tracks and try and make it sound live, or embrace the fact that we can make it sound real," he explains.

Budgets for La Roux's European tour did not permit Swallow to bring a desk or PA on the road, so he carries a tool chest containing a TC Electronic D-Two multitap rhythm delay, which is all programmed up for various songs, a TC M2000 effects processor, and a computer running Logic, also programmed for specific songs, and an Alesis HD24 on stage. "Everything is bounced on to HD24 on stage because we are very cautious of computers running any form of major processing live. I have never had an HD24 crash on me yet. We run ten channels from that, which is kick drum, snare and hat line, an extra bass, channel, a melody line and two percussion lines. And then we have two rhythm key lines and then just an extra backing vocals," he states.

Swallow found that Amy Winehouse's tour was similar in terms of restrictive budgets, meaning that he could only bring Avalon 737 preamps and a BSS Audio DPR-901 eq for vocals along with him. But when he does have his choice of gear, he has his favourites. Although while touring with La Roux in Europe he has been finding his way around the newest gear every night, he's realised that these have remained the same – Funktion-one and Midas consoles, with a caveat that DiGiCo's integration of multiband compression is "the

future". This means that La Roux will be heard through a Midas Pro 6 and Funktion-One for her UK dates.

"I think Funktion-One is the best PA in the world. The first time I used it was during Winehouse's main stage set at Glastonbury. For the first time in I put everything through that PA system and immediately thought 'bloody hell, this sounds great'. I could hear everything, but I wasn't fighting for space. Her set required 29 channels of live mics on the stage. Everything on stage was nicely separated and we had a Digidesign Venue at FOH, so I loaded up my session, pushed the faders up and the vocal was immediately in my head; it wasn't at the stage, it was in my face. If something was a bit too loud I only needed just pulled the fader back and it sunk back into the mix, but it didn't disappear.

"Tony Andrews goes on about transients and how important they are in any form of mixing PA system. He stuck to his guns with this and made a PA system that responds and reacts to everything that you are doing. So whether you are pulling out frequencies, adding them or pulling faders up or down, you can still hear everything. Some other PAs seem to have their own sound and you might need to add gain on a particular channel to hear it properly because there is so much processing going on in the background. For me, it has become very apparent that PA system manufacturers may make a great sounding speaker, but because of the way it is hung it or how the boxes are phasing with each, other they have had to use corrective measures to combat those problems, which has led them on to something else that they need to fix and additional processing is needed. I am thinking specifically of the Nexo Geo. I find that system to be completely over-engineered and over-processed, whereas the F-1 stuff sounds completely organic and open, and the stereo imaging is amazing. It is not like line array where you are panning things hard left or right to make an actual difference.

"Processing for La Roux's UK tour will be run on the Pro 6. I will have my external effects because they are already preset, but I probably won't run Logic because, since the sound goes into the computer and then back out again, there is a slight issue with latency. It's not noticeable in a noisy room, but you hear the slight delay on the effects in a dead room. So I just program into the Pro 6 all the things I'm doing in Logic. It's the best way, because you just don't know what you are turning up to at each gig."

BEHIND THE BOARD WITH... **MIKEY GIBBARD**

Brit Row engineer Mikey Gibbard tells **API** about what he gets up to when he's not annoying his girlfriend...

Which band/project are you currently working on?
Leftfield.

Where are you at the moment?
Realworld Studios.

What audio console are you utilising? And how many channels?
I'm currently using a Digico SD8 and around 56 channels.

What decision process was behind the choice of this audio console?
We are touring the monitors system for festivals this summer, so I needed a desk that came in on budget, had as small a footprint as possible, but didn't sacrifice on sound quality.

Do you utilise any outboard effects/eq, and if so, what are they used on and why?
I'm not currently using any outboard at the moment – everything I need is on the SD8.

Favourite console?
I couldn't give you one, but if I have either a Digico or a Midas (analog or digital) in front of me then I'm a happy man.

Favourite PA or monitoring system?
For FOH it's got to be the L-Acoustics K1 or D&B J-Series. For monitors I would say the D&B M2s. I'm looking forward to hearing the new Turbosound wedges and I'm hopefully taking them out on our forthcoming tour.

Favourite venue/festival/studio?
Venue: Brixton Academy or Manchester Apollo. Festival: Rock Werchter or Glastonbury. Studio: Real World.

Best toy you take on tour or have in the studio?
Boring I know, but probably my laptop.

What's been your worst professional experience to date?
Tearing the cartilage in my knee at the start of a tour.

What's been your career highlight?
The Verve 2008 headlining Glastonbury was the most amazing experience.

What really pisses you off when you're working?
Shitty sounding drums.

What makes you happy when you're working?
Phat sounding drums.

With hindsight, what job would you have chosen for yourself?
I couldn't see myself doing anything else really. I got into sound from an early age and always knew I was going to do something within the audio world.

And if you weren't working now, you'd be?
Probably annoying my lovely girlfriend.

"I got into sound from an early age and always knew I was going to do something within the audio world."
Mikey Gibbard

Studios:

People and equipment behind studios in the UK and around the world…

Rooms: Control rooms 1 and 2, live room, two iso booths
Consoles: 32-channel API 1608, Soundcraft 1600
Mics: Neumann, Royer, AKG, AEA, Pearlman, Josephson
Outboard: Tube-Tech, Neve, Valley People, Purple Audio, API, Manley
Monitoring: Barefoot, Yamaha

Rooms: The Big Room, The Tower, live rooms
Consoles: 48-channel SSL 4000G+
Mics: Neumann, AKG, Sanken, SE, Blue, Audix, Soundfield, Telefunken
Outboard: Chandler, Tube-Tech, Pultec, Manley, GML, Neve, Avalon
Monitoring: Dynaudio, Chord, Yamaha, Quested, Genelec

Yellow Dog, Texas

ORIGINALLY FOUNDED in Tulsa, Oklahoma by David Percefull in 1996, Yellow Dog was relocated in 2008 to Austin, Texas where the studio is currently located in the SoCo entertainment district. Yellow Dog bills itself as a modern classic studio with a focus on vintage tonality, with the speed and flexibility of modern recording techniques. The facility offers its clients the ability to record fully analog or fully digital recordings, or a hybrid of the two using CLASP, which seamlessly integrates Pro Tools with a two-inch tape machine.

Yellow Dog has two control rooms, both with excellent analog front and back end, as well as Apogee conversion and clocking. Studio One features an API 1608 console with 32 inputs, Pro Tools HD3, Endless Analog CLASP system and MCI/Sony JH24 two-inch analog recorder. The room has a decadent array of boutique outboard gear and monitoring options including Barefoot Micromain 27s. Studio two features a modified vintage Soundcraft 1600 console with Pro Tools HD, tube eq and compression.

Both control rooms share an ample 400-plus square foot live room with a 16-foot ceiling height and two additional isolation areas. The live room is even better equipped than the control rooms and boasts the kind of vintage instrument and backline collection that a teenage indie kid would wet his pants over. Clients will have the use of pieces such as a 1923 Steinway Model O, 1966 Gibson ES330, Martin 000C, Gretsch Catalina drum kit, 1967 Fender Super Reverb and 1969 Marshall four-by-12s.

Yellow Dog studios can claim a diverse list of clients including Bowling for Soup, Hoobastank, David Cook, Zac Maloy, Caroline's Spine, Brandon Jenkins, Jason Boland, Stoney Larue, Mike McClure and Cody Canada. Its services have also been employed by record labels such as Atlantic and Sony Music Group, while feature films as successful as *Dukes of Hazzard* have benefited from its facilities.

For relaxing in between sessions, the studios also feature a lounge area and bar, where some of its most eclectic instruments can be played at leisure. If this isn't enough, there are literally dozens of restaurants and nightclubs in the local area, including the legendary Continental Club.

The live room boasts the kind of vintage instrument and backline collection that a teenage indie kid would wet his pants over.

Telephone: +1 512 551 3755 **Web:** www.yellowdogstudios.com

The Chairworks, Yorkshire

LOCATED IN Castleford, West Yorkshire, The Chairworks boldly claims to be the North of England's newest, largest and finest residential recording studio complex. It comprises two studios, the Big Room and The Tower, accommodation for up to ten people and sports one of the most envied collections of recording equipment in the UK.

With its 500 square-foot control room and 1,250 square-foot live space, the Big Room is The Chairwork's primary facility. The centrepiece of the Big Room is a 48-channel SSL 4000G+ with flying faders, total recall and Ultimation. This is complemented by a Pro Tools HD3 Accel system and Prism ADA-8XR conversion. In the racks sit processors by the likes of Pultec and Chandler, while over in the live room can be found the ubiquitous Hammond organ complete with Leslie cabinet and even a Mellotron.

The Tower studio features a 450 square-foot control room based around a Trident Trimix Series 70/80 console, Pro Tools 8 and Logic Pro 8. More of a digital setup than its bigger brother, the Tower doesn't have as big an array of outboard; however it does offer an extensive plugin selection running off a Mac Pro. This includes software by the likes of Bomb Factory, Moog, PSP and Digidesign. Musicians needn't come too laden with gear because already in the live room sits a selection of instruments including a Mapex drum kit, Fender Jazz bass and Taylor T5, along with an assortment of amps, cabs and pedals.

The Chairworks is staffed by Simon Humphrey, who has worked as a recording engineer for over 30 years. Starting in 1973 at London's prestigious CBS Whitfield Street studios, Humphrey gained a grounding in recording techniques at the highest level in all styles of music, working with classical artists John Williams, Daniel Barenboim and the English Chamber Orchestra, jazz singer George Melly, show singers Michael Crawford and Bruce Forsyth. He went on to work with acts as successful as The Clash, Culture Club and Hans Zimmer.

Recent Chairworks clients include N-Dubz, Gavin Friday, Yann Tiersen, Shed Seven, Edens Bridge, Chris Helme (ex Seahorses) and Chumbawumba (yep, they're still going).

Telephone: +44 (0) 1977 556868 **Web:** www.thechairworks.co.uk

//

To have your studio featured in this section, please send all details to: *andrew.low@intentmedia.co.uk or call +44 1992 535646*

Rooms: Mastering room, mixing and proofing room
Consoles: IJ Research K-1 mastering transfer console
Converters: Weiss, Mytek
Outboard: AnaMod, Summit Audio, API, Cranesong, Pendulum
Monitoring: Revel, Lipinski Sound, JL Audio

Digital Domain, Florida

DIGITAL DOMAIN is the studio of Grammy award-winning mastering engineer Bob Katz and can be found in Altamonte Springs near Orlando, Florida. The facility comprises two studios, A and B, which are used for mastering and mixing/proofing, respectively.

The facility is best known for its mastering and boasts one of the most unique rooms in the industry. In the place of a desk is a well-worn and clearly very comfortable leather sofa on which sit both Katz and his clients. The studio's acoustics are said to be excellent, in part due to the sloping cathedral ceiling that starts at 12-foot high at the front and goes up to 20-foot high at the rear. Three out of four walls are concrete block with one overlayer of sheetrock, while the back wall is double reinforced sheetrock. The walls are selectively treated with Sonex located at precision points to remove flutter echo. Digital Domain reports that its clients have remarked that they can hear details in this room that they didn't know were on their tapes.

Stereo monitoring is on a pair of Revel Ultima Gem 2s, which sit atop 52-pound stands mounted on a concrete slab. Driving the Revels are a

pair of Lipinski Sound amplifiers, designed by renowned recording engineer and producer Andrew Lipinski. Each amplifier is a dual monoblock with 2x350 Watts of power. The centre and surround speakers are also by Lipinski and are augmented with two JL Audio 12-inch Fathom subwoofers, crossed over at 65Hz, 24 dB/octave. Each sub has an integrated 1,000W power amplifier. DD notes that the mating of satellites and subs is seamless and perfectly calibrated and, because of the headroom and response accuracy of this system, results translate to the widest variety of playback systems.

Katz believes that a short, clean path between the analog tape and digital conversion makes for the most transparent, dynamic master and, to this end, all analog equipment at Digital Domain is custom-built. This includes the 'Stampex', a unique hybrid of a Studer C37 transport with custom-made, extended response half-inch head, connected to very customised Ampex MR70 recorder, the tape machine that was specifically designed to dub Beatles masters for the American market.

The studio's acoustics are said to be excellent, in part due to the sloping cathedral ceiling that starts at 12-foot high at the front and goes up to 20-foot high at the rear.

Telephone: +1 800 344 4361 **Web:** www.digido.com

Rooms: Control room, live room, isolation booth
Consoles: API 28 x 24 with 550/550A eqs
Mics: Neumann, AKG, Coles, Sennheiser, Shure, Royer, Audio-Technica
Outboard: Manly, Neve, Avalon, Chandler, Al Smart, Universal Audio, Little Labs
Monitoring: ProAc, Yamaha

Matchbox Studios, Texas

OWNED AND MANAGED by multi-talented producer, engineer, songwriter and musician Dwight Baker (*pictured*), with studio assistant Ted P Robertson on hand, Matchbox is located on South Madrone Trail in the Texan city of Austin.

The studio was purpose-designed and built with floating rooms for exceptional acoustics and great sound isolation.

It features a spacious 343 square-foot control room which houses a 32-channel API 1608 console, Pro Tools HD3 and an extensive collection of outboard gear, encased in wooden racks. Hard drives and tape machines are stowed in the neighbouring machine room to minimise ambient noise.

With optimum lines of sight back to the control room, the 45 square foot isolation booth and the 357 square foot live room are well equipped for the empty-handed musician, with an array of guitars, keyboards, amplifiers and a particularly extensive percussion collection (Baker has drummed for acts including Heart and Enrique Inglesias). The rooms both have dimmer switches and adjustable temperature controls.

Once the tracks have been laid down, visitors can relax outside in the designer swimming pool and hot tub.

API's 1608 console is a new addition at Matchbox and was purchased by Baker – whose songwriting credits include Kelly Clarkson – when his original API 2244 went down. The studio was so busy at the time that waiting for it to be repaired proved uneconomical, as Baker comments: "There is a shortage of good techs here in Austin and we have a full calendar of both up-and-coming bands and big ticket acts like Kelly Clarkson, which means that down time is absolutely disastrous for us. The new API 1608 proved to be the perfect solution.

"I put some Avedis MA5 pres in the open slots so I can inject some Neve tone here and there," he adds. "It's cool, and a little weird, to have other colors on an API console."

Since its arrival, Drive-Thru Records artist Halifax, and Universal Records artist Bob Schnider have been able to take advantage of the new console, both having recently recorded their latest projects through it.

"I put some Avedis MA5 pres in the open slots so I can inject some Neve tone here and there. It's cool." **Dwight Baker – owner and manager**

Telephone: +11 12 394 1249 **Web:** www.matchbox-studios.com

✥ **PRODUCT**

NEW **GEAR**

➤➤ Recent releases in audio technology

1

RCF P8015-S subwoofer

THEY SAY: Specifically designed to reinforce sub bass frequencies in P Series speakers array systems.
SPECIFICATIONS: The P8015-S is a weatherproof bass reflex subwoofer equipped with a 15-inch low frequency neodymium transducer with four-inch voice coil.

The cabinet is a single piece, rotational moulded in medium density polyethylene, fully UV protected. It is equipped with 12 x M 10 brass inserts, a stainless steel U-Bracket and pair of spacers for 90-degree mounting. Its Max SPL is 132dB.
➤ **rcf.it**

2

APG SMX15 monitor System

THEY SAY: SMX15 heralds the launch of a range of new technologies from APG, including all-new coaxial technology.
SPECIFICATIONS: The SMX15 is a coaxial loudspeaker offering SPLs down to 60Hz. The LF section comprises a neodymium 15-inch cone speaker mounted in a ported enclosure; its HF section comprises a 1.4-inch neodymium compression driver with a frequency extension up to 20kHz.

It includes APG's Aiming Tuning System (AST), enabling five tilted angles with three integrated handles and an optional rigging system.

Its directivity at -6dB is 85-degrees conical, with a nominal impedance of eight Ohms, while featuring a continuous dB SPL level of 132 at 1m and a dB SPL max level at of 136 at 1m. Its dimensions are (H,L,P) 460 x 730 x 367mm and 64lbs (29 kg).
➤ **uk.apg.tm.fr**

3

DPA 4099B and 4099C clip mics

THEY SAY: The 4099 mic clip series offers a sound that is considerably more natural than an internal microphone or pick-up, as well as several excellent placement possibilities.
SPECIFICATIONS: The 4099B and 4099C clip mics were designed with mounting accessories made specifically for bass and cello,

All 4099 are pre-polarised condenser microphones with supercardioid polar patterns. They feature a frequency range of 80Hz – 15kHz at ± 2dB, 20 cm (7.9 in) distance, with 2dB soft boost at 10 – 12kHz; first-order low-cut filter at 80 Hz with DAD4099.

The mics offer a dynamic range of 100dB and a Max SPL, peak before clipping of 142dB.

A versatile gooseneck provides stable positioning and the mics can be unclipped, repositioned or moved.
➤ **dpamicrophones.com**

4

Focal CMS 40 monitor

THEY SAY: CMS 40 guarantees ultra-realistic voicing, whilst offering optimum acoustic integration in a small room.
SPECIFICATIONS: The CMS 40 is a compact monitor that permits a listening position from 16 inches.

Its frequency response is 60Hz to 28kHz (+/-3dB), with a maximum SPL of 97dB SPL (peak @ 1m).

It features a woofer with a four-inch Focal drive unit and a polyglass cone and an aluminum/magnesium inverted dome Focal tweeter.

The monitor is constructed from a reinforced and damped die-cast aluminum cabinet.
➤ **focalprofessinal.com**

5

Dynacord D8A active PA speakers

THEY SAY: This smooth and natural sounding, high frequency driver is aimed at the budget conscious builder.
SPECIFICATIONS: The D8A is ideally suited to the creation of active three-way high powered systems in combination with active subwoofers

Dynacord's D8A is the powered version of the D8 system from the D-Lite series. It is equipped with a 2 x 400W Class D power amplifier, an electronic crossover and loudspeaker eq.

It features a DND8200-8 neodymium chassis for the bass and midrange. The symmetrically radiating, constant directivity HF horn with its 90 x 90-degrees nominal coverage pattern and CAD optimised integration into the baffle is equipped with the DH3 driver from Electro-Voice.
➤ **dynacord.com**

6

Crown VRack

THEY SAY: VRack is an 'out-of-the-box' touring amp solution developed for VerTec systems.
SPECIFICATIONS: The VRack is a complete amplifier management rack system featuring three built-in Crown I-Tech 12000HD amplifiers.

Designed to work in conjunction with JBL VerTec, VRX, and AE series loudspeakers, VRack's modular design is scalable and features an input panel with AES, analog, and network inputs for multiple connection options
Its captive suspension system offers the capability for the rack to be flown in the same manner as a line array system. It also features a globally universal power distribution system that can be set to meet the requirements of both US and international power standards.
➤ **crown.com**

7

Line 6 XD-V70 digital wireless microphone

THEY SAY: Exclusive Line 6 digital technologies deliver unmatched wireless performance.
SPECIFICATIONS: The XD-V70 digital wireless system includes a handheld cardioid microphone transmitter; XD-V70L includes a beltpack transmitter and professional miniature condenser lavaliere microphone. Both systems offer 12 channels, 100-metre ranges, and heavy-duty cast metal 1/2U rack receiver units.

XD-V70 and XD-V70L broadcast in the 2.4GHz band. DCL (Digital Channel Lock) technology provides an encoded digital transmission that governs against AF interference and audio artifacts. New PDP (Proprietary Data Placement) technology delivers frequency diversity, which ensures reliable operation.
➤ **line6.com**

8

Audio-Technica In-Ear Monitor Combiner

THEY SAY: The MCB4 allows the signals of up to four Audio-Technica M3 wireless IEM stereo transmitters to be combined onto a single transmitting antenna.
SPECIFICATIONS: With a broadband 470-865 MHz range, the MCB4 is designed to complement Audio-Technica M3 systems, but it is also suitable for many other in-ear wireless systems (with external BNC antenna connections). It provides one output and four isolated transmitter inputs. All RF connectors are BNC-type and passive antennas may be used.

Four jacks on the rear panel of the unit (controlled by the unit's power switch) provide 12V DC (centre positive) to power up to four transmitters operating on 12 volts at up to 500mA each.
➤ **audio-technica.com**

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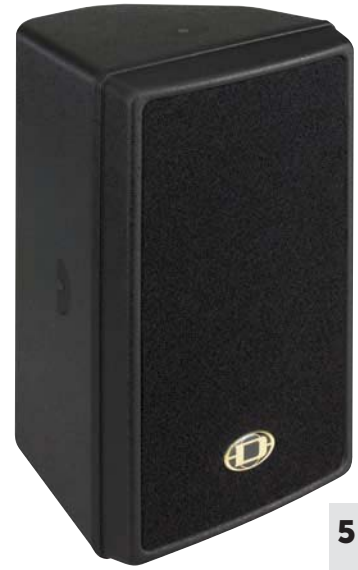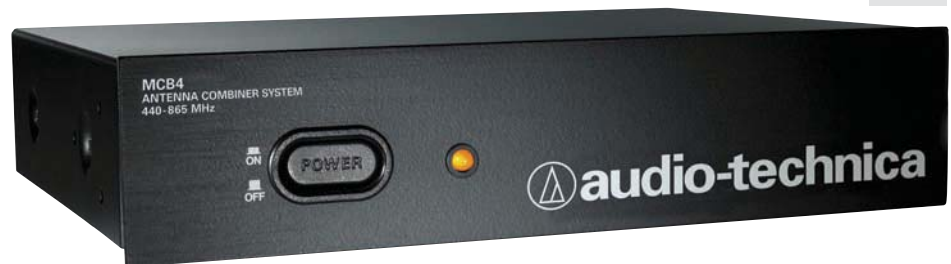
✈ **PEOPLE**

NUMARK has handed the role of international sales manager to Sarah Yule. She will be responsible for a number of important accounts, as well as helping to expand the business.

Yule has been involved with music from a young age and left Liverpool's Institute for Performing Arts with a BA in Sound Technology. After graduation, she began working for Dolphin Music Enterprises, as the retailer was experiencing immense growth.

This led to her moving to TL Audio, a long established manufacturer of pro audio equipment. Here she was required to expand and organise the distribution structure, as well as helping to re-brand the company and the Fatman brand. Her success in these areas caused her to become sought after across both industries, Numark Industries was established in 1971 and is recognised as a global leader in pro DJ and audio equipment.
➤ **numark.com**

L-ACOUSTICS has appointed Marc Bénard to the newly-created role of technical support manager, amplified controllers.

Bénard joins the company with ten years of experience in the pro audio industry, working mainly in digital product management and technical support. His new role will be to educate and support touring and fixed installation clients in the use of L-Acoustics' amplified controllers and LA Network Manager.

"I am proud to be part of L-Acoustics, whose extremely talented team continues to innovate in the development of the best-sounding professional sound reinforcement solutions," comments Bénard. "I am thrilled to embrace the role of product specialist.
➤ **l-acoustics.com**

Digico strengthens UK sales support team

James Lawford now sales executive for the UK

" *JJ's appointment will have a direct benefit to the UK market.*
James Gordon

DIGICO HAS appointed James 'JJ' Lawford as UK sales executive.

In his new role Lawford will provide additional support for its UK operation and work closely with Digico's UK dealer network, helping to further strengthen commercial development in the UK market and provide a dedicated point of contact for both Digico's UK dealers and its end-user customers. He has considerable technical knowledge and will provide product demos and help to increase product awareness throughout the UK.

"The Digico team is already very strong," said marketing director, David Webster. "However, we have a real desire to provide the greatest possible level of support and backup to our customer base. JJ's appointment will have a direct benefit to the UK market."
➤ **digico.biz**
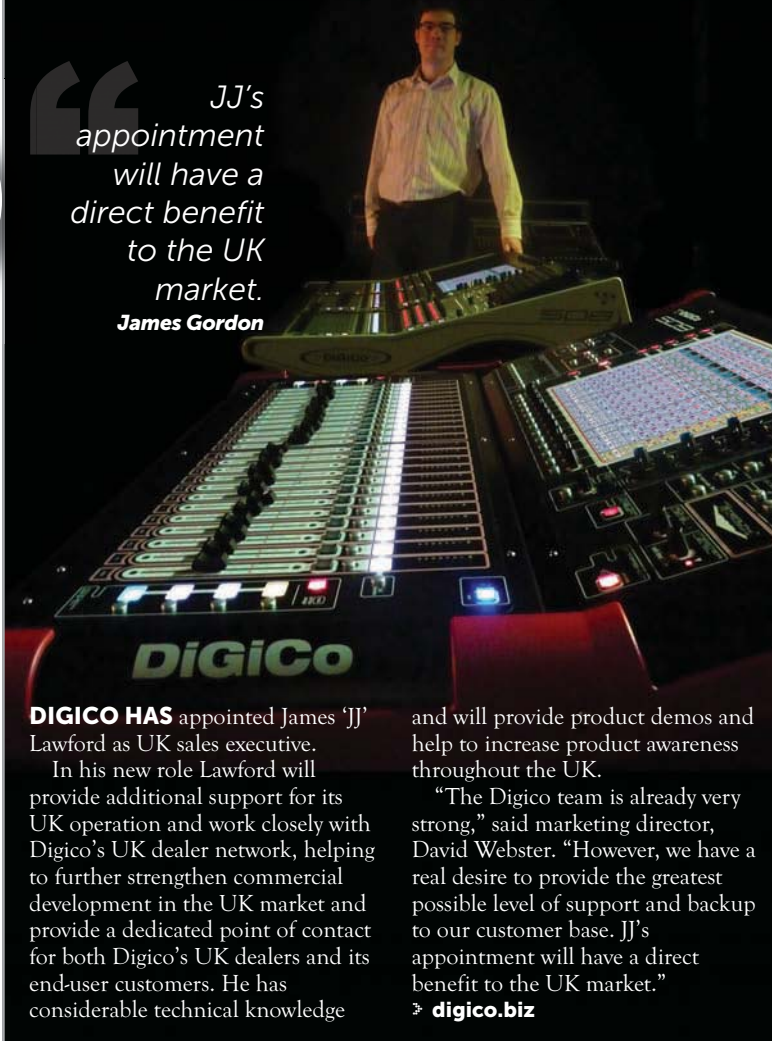
Paine joins Miloco

Ex-Olympic, Cream and Strongroom employee signs on as studio manager

MILOCO STUDIOS has hired Siobhan Paine to take the role of studio manager.

Paine is an industry veteran who has vast experience in many of the UK's top recording studios, including Olympic, Cream and Strongroom.

The company feels that she will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Miloco group and play a key part in the group's day-to-day operations and future plans for expansion in other areas.

"I have been very impressed with the operations at Miloco, it really is a great team here. There is a fantastic choice of studios that can cater for any project and budget, from basic programming to the most luxurious overseas residentials," Siobhan stated.
➤ **miloco.co.uk**

Renkus-Heinz expands its engineering staff

Award-winning designer Derrick Pierce joins the team

RENKUS-HEINZ has expanded its engineering staff with the recent appointment of Derrick Pierce to the position of staff loudspeaker engineer.

The California native returns to the state after more than a decade in design engineering and product development with loudspeaker manufacturers JL Audio in Florida. A designer of several award-winning products, Pierce has also held high-level engineering positions with Niles Audio and Menlo Scientific, and contributed to the development of several patents.

"I'm really pleased to be joining a company as forward thinking as Renkus-Heinz," Pierce commented. "For me, this is truly the ideal opportunity to maximise the skills I've acquired through my years of loudspeaker design and take things to a whole new level.

I'm looking forward to taking on the challenge of designing the next generation of Renkus-Heinz loudspeakers."

"We're thrilled to welcome Derrick to Renkus-Heinz," added Ralph Heinz, the company's senior vice president. "Renkus-Heinz is proud of having a long history of innovation and that's largely due to the very talented and creative people who work here. Derrick's background and expertise make him a perfect fit and we're pleased to have him on our team."
➤ **renkus-heinz.com**

EAW signs exclusive deal with Trius

New distribution agreement made at this year's Prolight + Sound tradeshow

Pictured from L to R: Tony Williams, Sean Martin, Kai Boeckmann, Jeffrey Cox, Hubert Dierselhuis and Alex Nelson

EAW HAS announced the appointment of Ibbenbüren-based firm Trius Vertrieb as its exclusive German distributor.

Effective immediately, Trius will handle distribution for EAW in co-ordination with its European sales director Sean Martin, application support group EMEA representative Moray McMillin and other key members of the European team. The announcement was made by Jeffrey Cox, VP pro audio at Prolight + Sound in Frankfurt.

For over two decades Trius has been a German distributor for the live sound, touring, installation, recording and MI markets. The Trius organisation has respective specialised departments for sales and support, service and technology, marketing and IT, and logistics.

Kai Boeckmann, Trius managing director, stated: "Trius has been a German market leader for several decades, having built successful business relationships throughout the region, and we look forward to using our experience and contacts to lead EAW's sales initiatives in Germany.

"EAW produces high-quality products, and with their manufacturing facilities and European warehouse, they are in a position to offer highly price-competitive speaker models with a short delivery time. For these reasons, EAW fits perfectly in our client portfolio and will help Trius maintain our status as a go-to, full-line supplier, both for rental companies and installers."

"Trius is one of Germany's largest and most prestigious distributors for pro audio products and we are excited to have them exercise their top-tier position in the region's marketplace and act as a key member of our EAW team in Germany," stated Sean Martin.

"With several new and innovative EAW products hitting the market this year, we look forward to utilizing Trius' expertise in Germany's pro audio market to enhance and expand EAW's presence in the region."
➤ **eaw.com**

Vicoustic appoints Røde

VICOUSTIC has announced that Røde will distribute its products in the US and Australia.

The distribution agreement follows Vicoustic's recent company restructuring into three separate divisions – music and broadcast, hi-fi and home cinema and industrial. Within the designated territories, Røde will initially focus on the music and broadcast, and hi-fi and home cinema market sectors.

For Vicoustic CEO Cesar Carapinha, the new partnership with Røde is a strategic move that aims to bring long-term benefit to both companies.

"We are delighted to be working in partnership with Røde. Not only are they one of the top microphone brands, they also occupy an established and respected position within the Australian and US music and audio retail markets, which will be our prime focus initially. It's a win-win situation and I'm looking forward to some exciting times ahead."

Damien Wilson, Røde Microphones' global sales and marketing manager, added: "As one of the world's premier pro audio manufacturers, Røde Microphones is incredibly excited to commence this partnership with Vicoustic. Our strong distribution presence in the US and Australian markets combined with the complementary nature of the products will ensure that all musicians and creators have access to premium recording and acoustic solutions."
➤ **turbosound.com**

Full Fat Audio expands in Europe

UK amplifier manufacturer adds three new dealers in bid to grow sales and distribution network

FULL FAT AUDIO has announced three new distribution partners. Delta Production will handle Belgium, while P&B Audio and F1 Dystrybucja will cover Poland.

Once a small boutique amplifier manufacturer, the UK-based company has been making big strides in the industry after setting up a new HQ in Hitchin, UK.

Sylvain Vandenbussche of Delta Production SPRL became aware of the British-made FFA amplifiers through the firm's French Distributor, Chris Hawkes. "We are very pleased with this new

appointment," said FFA's MD David Millard. "We very much look forward to this year's business."

Full Fat Audio has also signed exclusive deals with P&B Audio and F1 Dystrybucja Polska to expand its European distribution network.

Full Fat Audio began working with P&B Audio's owner Michel van de Beek six years ago when the company specified a pair of Full Fat's FFA-5000s for a nightclub installation. The Dutch pro audio distributor has since established itself as a major force in both the nightclub and live sound markets.

F1 Dystrybucja Polska is a distributor of professional audio equipment in Poland, and the distributor for Funktion One systems in the territory for live sound systems and nightclubs, bars and other leisure venues. FFA's Dave Millard has known the company's owner, Matthew Bate, since the late 90's when they worked together at BSS Audio UK.

Full Fat Audio is actively seeking new partners for its sales network and is encouraging interested parties to get in touch.
➤ **fullfataudio.com**

bringing brands together

❧ MARKETPLACE

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT

Eyecote International

WITH OFFICES in Monmouth UK and Lake Forest California, Eyecote International was incorporated more than 25 years ago when its core business was the purchasing of quality pre-owned CD/DVD manufacturing equipment, which were eventually installed at sites across the Europe and USA.

This business has continued to the present day and, in association with a specialist engineering company, Eyecote provides turnkey packages to both established and start up companies alike, therefore embracing mastering, replication, printing and packaging of all optical discs products.

From this section of the company has evolved related items, in particular a range of products which is specifically designed to provide recording studios, duplicators, software publishers and archival companies alike the benefit of a cost-effective and accurate means of verifying the quality of their product in order to maximise customer satisfaction and avoid problems.

The flagship of this product line is the DVX-3 High Speed CD/DVD Analyzer, which is regarded as the fastest, most convenient and cost-effective test system on the market today.

The DVX-3 is a stand-alone system employing a touch screen that needs no PC, keyboard or mouse, and, weighing in at 4.5 Kg, the unit is very portable – it also comes with the Analogue Measurement Module, Jitter check and the 'Quick-Scan' feature as standard. With the new QuickScan feature, it can test a DVD-5 in as little as 38 seconds. DVX can also perform bit-for-bit comparison of two discs of any type, like video, audio or data.

Eyecote also supplies a range of on-demand disc publishing equipment to produce customised CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays. Eyecote has systems to suit every budget and every application, including duplicators for memory cards, USB sticks, SD cards and Compact Flash cards.

The policy of Eyecote International is to maintain its position as a dedicated supplier of technology and support to the optical disc industry in all its many aspects from original manufacturer to the ultimate user of CDs or DVDs alike.
➢ **eyecote.com**

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audio**PRO**
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The last word in Audio Pro

PIC OF THE MONTH

PUT A LID ON IT!
Audio Pro designer Claire Brocklesby (AKA Lady Brock) took to the studio this week alongside Oliver Passey (AKA Double T) and the world famous DJ Kurt to knock out a new dubcore number in time for their upcoming bank holiday event in Brighton. Bangin!

FANTASTICATION
This *Alice in Wonderland*-esque figure is welcoming thrillseekers to Italy's biggest theme park, Miragica, in celebration of several new sound systems by local loudpseaker designer, Outline. This is the latest in a string of theme park installations for the Italian manufacturer.

HAS ANYONE GOT ANY GAFFER TAPE?
Grammy winning producer and engineer Jason Goldstein appears to be coaxing his mic stand into staying straight under the weight of an AKG Perception 820 tube mic. Actually, that looks like a pretty solid stand so he's probably just attaching a pop shield. We at *Audio Pro* have experienced many a drooping mic.

AUDIO FISH OF THE MONTH

Nick Boggon of Sound Technology sent us this shot of a cracking perch that he caught on the coast of Langkawi, Malaysia. Do not be fooled by the apparent microscopic nature of this aquatic beast — Nick actually has an enormous right hand. Boggon will tell you it's an affliction, but it clearly benefits the giant perch fisherman. Send us your pictures, however small, err, I mean, big to andrew.low@intentmedia.co.uk

audioPRO mixdown

>>

EMPTY ROOM OF THE MONTH

Royal Albert Hall

A stunning empty room of the month, I'm sure you'll agree. This action-packed shot was taken during rehearsals for Raymond Gubbay's Classical Spectacular. Fortunately, the musicians were somewhere else. Lovely Synco arrays.
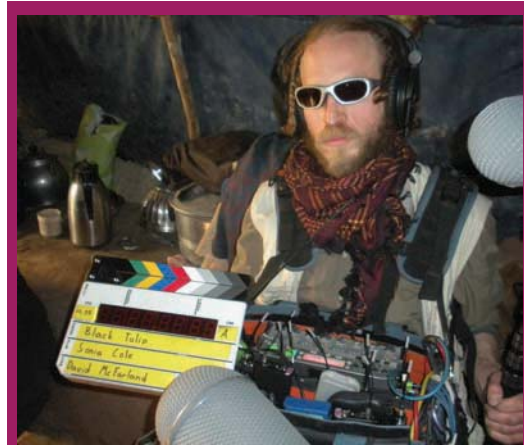
STRICTLY SOUND

Dan McGrath and Josh Phillips kick back for a moment while working on the audio for *Strictly Come Dancing*. The pair insisted that their much-loved sE reflection filter should be the star of this shot.

AND... ACTION!

Jon Tendrich of Tiger Sound was recently called upon to handle audio for the film Black Tulip. Tendrich opted for two Sound Devices 442 mixers, a 788T digital recorder and a CL-8 controller to handle the project.

GURN OF THE MONTH

This is overnight sensation Saint Lu, the latest endorser of EV products. Lu is said to be on the verge of a major breakthrough, with 'a powerful mixture of rock and blues that at once evokes memories of Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Janis Joplin'. With passion like that, she'll surely go far.

To discuss **advertising** contact Darrell Carter on 01992 535647 *darrell.carter@intentmedia.co.uk*
For **editorial** enquiries email Andrew Low *andrew.low@intentmedia.co.uk* or call 01992 535646

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