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# L-Acoustics Installation at Leeds University Students' Union

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*Ryan Esson, Technical Manager, LUSU*

Liverpool, UK based ADLIB's specialist installations division has completed the UK's first live music venue installation with an L-ACOUSTICS KARAI system at the newly refurbished 1000 capacity Leeds University venue, Stylus.

Stylus is located in the basement building complex beneath the famous Leeds Uni Refectory, a gig renowned for hosting some landmark live performances in its day.

ADLIB has a history of involvement in various capacities with Leeds University Students' Union (LUSU), who run all the venues on campus, and were one of the companies asked to propose a new sound design and system for Stylus, which was compiled by ADLIB's Roger Kirby and John Hughes. Although the project funding process was initiated before his arrival in Leeds, the installation was co-ordinated for the Union by Technical Manager, Ryan Esson.

The previous Martin Blackline PA system needed replacing with something contemporary allowing the Union to stage a diversity of events from DJs and club nights to live bands. With stiff competition in the city, they want to establish Stylus on the touring circuit, and offering a top quality system spec is integral to that plan.

Whilst not necessarily the lowest cost loudspeaker option, L-ACOUSTICS is most certainly "One of the best, specifically for the room and the venue's requirements," confirms Kirby, adding that apart from the fact that it is so well respected by engineers, the lower costs of the new L-ACOUSTICS architectural 'I' series are more budget friendly.

ADLIB's proposal also included re-using selected elements of the original system, helping to bring it in on budget, and a complete refurbishment of the Blackline system, which has seen it converted into a new portable system at the Union's disposal.

When all this was considered, it represented real value for money and great flexibility.

Esson and his team already had an idea of what they wanted sound wise, and were initially considering an L-ACOUSTICS dV-DOSC system, as the original plans predated the launch of KARAI.

The KARAI boxes are similar to the dVs in cabinet format, however they offer a consistent horizontal pattern that significantly improves coverage close to the stage, explains Kirby. Stylus, with its low ceiling trim definitely also benefits from the extended low end frequency response of the KARAI loudspeakers to smoothly cover the multi-levelled floor.

ADLIB set up the two systems side-by-side for a comparative test at their warehouse in Liverpool, after which Esson and his colleagues made their choice.

There is a central well in front of the stage at Stylus and a raised platform around the edge of the room with the bar at the back. It's a good layout for an intimate gig, with the stage

itself measuring 10 metres wide by 5 deep and a somewhat challenged 4.5 metres of headroom from stage floor to ceiling!

The new system – with 6 KARAI's a side – is flown above Stylus's existing lighting rig box truss. The lighting truss assembly is 8 metres wide and extends back from the rear of the stage beyond the front of house position approximately 15 metres.

To aid the KARAI's HF patterns in being fully effective for the room, the flying points had to be positioned extremely carefully. ADLIB also provided a low profile solution to optimise the arrays due to the limited headroom, resulting in

the ADLIB installations team headed by Alex Burke, adding 4 x 3m sections of Prolyte truss, plus all the essential rigging.

"The main sonic requirements for the audio was smooth & even coverage delivered with impact for varied events," says Kirby.

Two L-ACOUSTICS 12XTis are flown as centre-stage down fills to cover the triangular area at the barrier position favoured by all 'die-hard' music fans! At the back of the room near the bar, four EV Delta Max speakers from the original system remain to cover the higher floor level positions.

To fit the 10 x L-ACOUSTICS SB18i subs beneath the stage, it was reinforced to reduce the resonance by adding multiple layers of dense materials around each of 5 sub-stage chambers which were custom built for the subs.



The SB18is, configured as five stacks, sit just below the front line of the musicians' feet in a live band stage set up.

All the L-ACOUSTICS speakers are driven by proprietary LA8 amps and can be controlled via the LA Network Manager.

The venue's existing BSS 9088 Soundweb units are used as a multi-room audio matrix across all the Union venues, so each room's DJ, FOH console, Aux Monitors and other sources are fed into this network. They retained use of this system in part, together with their existing legendary Midas XL3 FOH console.

A new BSS Blue 160 Soundweb plus a BSS Blue 10 remote in the amp rack is used for system control and management, allowing sources to be selected and levels to be set for full flexibility. The Soundweb can also be operated via a PC by the FOH system engineers.

For monitors, ADLIB supplied 12 of their own low profile MP3 15 inch bi-amped active wedges, a favourite for all live applications that can also be utilized in and around the other venues operated by the Union in addition to Stylus.

ADLIB also provided an AA215 drum fill (another ADLIB product) and two 4-send bi-amped monitor racks to drive the twelve MP3s, which are powered with Crown XTi1000 amps for the highs and Crown XTi6002s for the low frequency drivers. Five BSS Mini Drive 334T crossovers were supplied for the monitor system, configured for 8 bi-amp MP3 wedge monitor sends plus drum sub.

Monitors are operated via the existing XL3 front of house console, with a monitor console hired in 'as required' for certain shows.

The first full gigs in Stylus were staged as the new term kicked off in September.

Ryan Esson comments that he was "Extremely comfortable" working with ADLIB, having used the company for numerous projects whilst working in the rental market, "I had lots of confidence in ADLIB right from the outset, and as it has all unfolded, have built up a really good rapport with Roger and John over the last year. Great communication skills as well as the ability to design and install a fantastic sounding system were also key reasons that ADLIB was chosen as a partner!"

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