



### Theatres & Venues

# Sound Installation at O2 Academy Bristol

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*Mickey Spillane, Technical Manager, O2 Academy Bristol*



O2 Academy Bristol is another high-profile Academy Music Group (AMG) venue to receive a complete new audio system design, specification and installation in conjunction with Liverpool based Adlib.

Academy Music Group's Divisional Manager, Helen McGee and O2 Academy Bristol's Technical Manager, Mickey Spillane worked with Adlib's John Hughes and Roger Kirby to specify an L-Acoustics KARA PA system.

The final design was based on offering all visiting artists a high specification, in-house system, as with other recent new audio installations within the Group.

The main auditorium, at 24 metres wide and 14 metres deep, has an audience area split over two levels. The balcony, while offering excellent vantage points for a standing audience, places them relatively close to the stage, making this an interesting space to fill evenly with sound.

The positioning of the main PA arrays was revised with the assistance of UK Rigging, commissioned to co-ordinate the installation of new steelwork in the roof, optimising the weight loading and bringing the main left and right arrays in to around 11 metres apart, which is a lot closer together than the original PA hangs.

These main hangs each comprise of 7 x L-Acoustics KARA speakers in optimum positions to cover the downstairs audience, along with low frequency support from four SB18's – two hung at the top of each KARA array.





Eight SB28 Subs, configured four a side, have been positioned beneath the main hangs and set into the stage, allowing prime arrangement without any compromise to audience stage sight-lines.

Low frequency delivery was also important, as O2 Academy Bristol hosts regular club nights. Two areas to the extreme left and right of stage now receive sound coverage via a pair of flown L-Acoustics ARC WIFO loudspeakers – an ARCS Focus on the top and an ARCS Wide at the bottom.

A pair of ARCS Focus elements are positioned in the centre of the venue, acutely angled downward to cover the near-field audience area in the centre of the front-of-stage barrier. A further pair of ARCS Focus's are flown directly above the front lighting truss to give coverage to the audience on the section of balcony directly above the mix position.

A total of ten Adlib AA1214 12-inch delay loudspeakers already at O2 the venue have been re-purposed, with a pair relocated to give coverage to the side balcony positions, just wide of the main arrays.

The system is driven by a combination of LA8 amplifiers, with LA4Xs appointed for the ARCS WIFO boxes, together with several Crown XTi4000 legacy amplifiers running the Adlib AA1214s.

L-Acoustics was a meticulous choice made collectively between Adlib and the team at O2 Academy Bristol after several discussions with regular touring technicians and promoters.





The decision was further streamlined to KARA, based on the best results from visiting systems.

The consultation process was very important says Adlib's Roger Kirby. "We all went to great lengths to establish the main priorities for O2 Academy Bristol, and the nuances of the environment, and listened to those who work there every day."

A new monitor system was also part of the upgrade, with Adlib's MP5 bi-amped wedge monitors and an Adlib AA215DS drum sub, together with Linea Research 44m20 amplifiers. A pair of ARCSII and SB28 subs were supplied for side-fills, again driven by L-Acoustics LA8 amplifiers.

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A complete new cable infrastructure was included, consisting of a new stage box, house racks and patch position for the monitor breakouts, plus a new 48-way copper multi, digital tie lines and fibre lines to cater for a variety of visiting productions.

Two DiGiCo SD12 consoles were specified for FOH and monitors, a decision based on the rising popularity of DiGiCo on touring riders and the hugely successful installation of DiGiCo in other Academy Music Group venues in London (the O2 Forum Kentish Town) and the North East (the O2 Academy Newcastle).

In addition to features and flexibility, the small SD12 footprint is a great advantage, leaving a comfortable amount of space for visiting tours' lighting and sound control packages.



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