



Live Music

# Snarky Puppy Immigrance Tour

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*Mike, FOH*

Adlib supplied full audio production to the Glasgow & Manchester gigs on the recent UK leg of Snarky Puppy's Immigrance world tour, plus a control package – comprising two Yamaha CL5 consoles for FOH and monitors, a line system and all the associated cable and distribution infrastructure for the other UK and European dates. These included one night at London's Royal Albert Hall.

Grammy award-winning, Brooklyn New York-based multi-genre 'jam' band Snarky Puppy embraces a lively mix of jazz, pop, rock and world music. The Immigrance album dropped in the Spring of 2019 and this was part of a 7-month world tour to support the work.

Adlib was asked onboard by the Band's production manager Rosanna Freedman who has enjoyed a long, strong and very positive working relationship with the Liverpool-based company.

Rosanna first met Adlib in 2006, when she was managing popular Manchester live music venue, Band on The Wall. The production manager there at the time asked Adlib to design and install the new house PA system, for which they did "an amazing job," she recalls.

When she then started stage managing various festivals around the UK and Adlib was the audio provider, she was always confident that "We would have a smooth weekend and that our artists would be well looked after."

Snarky Puppy is a group of constantly rotating musicians (with a core of 6 or 7), so they need a reliable sound company that "understands the nature and needs of a large improvisational group," and this, plus that excellent history are two major reasons she asked Adlib to be involved in this section of the tour.

Adlib's Craig Hamilton project managed from the office, working closely with Michael Harrison mixing FOH for this leg, and Matt Reccia on monitors.

The two full audio production shows supplied by Adlib were Manchester Apollo and Glasgow Barrowlands.

Rosanna has worked with the band for six years, and advances all the shows herself, working to detailed production and technical requirements and a preferred equipment list drawn up with Mike and Matt's input and experience.

L-Acoustics K2 systems were deployed for both gigs, with 12 x K2 a side plus 8 ARCS front fills, 4 x X8 lip fills and 12 x KS28 subs in Manchester; and six K2 a side in Barrowlands together with 8 x ARCS front fills, four X8 lip fills and 12 x KS28 subs.

In both cases 12 x L-Acoustics X15 wedges made up the monitor system.

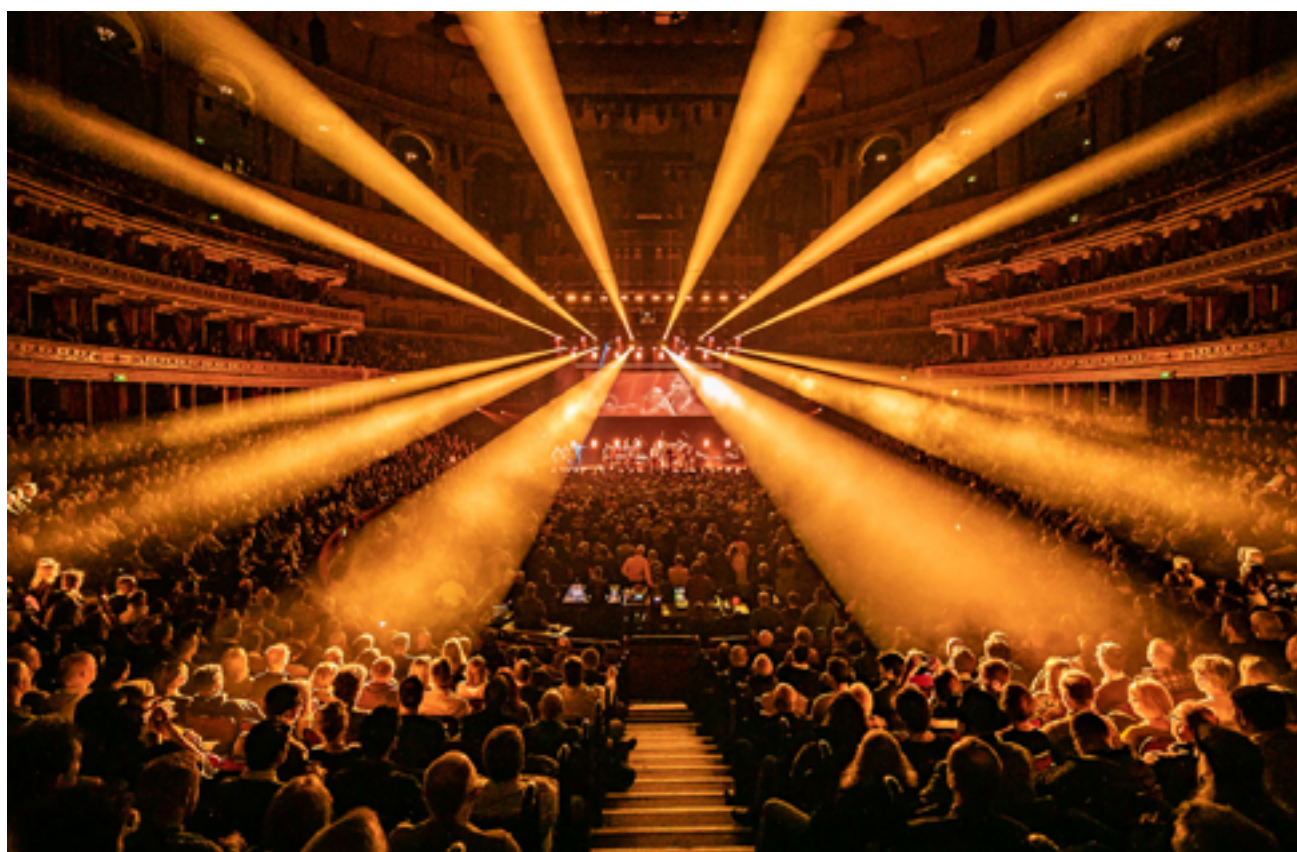
Adlib's James Coghlan and Sam Pearson were the systems engineers. They rigged and fine-tuned the PA to ensure that everyone on the Snarky Puppy team was happy and were generally "fantastic" states Mike.

The two CL5s received a 64-channel Dante input from Adlib's two Rio D3224 digital stage boxes driven by an analogue split and signal distribution, with multipin sub-snakes for quick set-up on stage.

While Matt and Mike sharing the Rio input stages between FOH and monitors made the analogue split largely redundant, it saved the day several times throughout the tour when having to interface with third-party broadcasters!

Michael has worked with the band since their first European tour in 2012 when he was the in-house engineer at their Glasgow show. Impressed with his skills, passion for sound and personality, when they returned later that year for another European tour, bandleader Michael League asked him to mix their FOH and he's been with them ever since.

Matt joined in the fall of 2013. He and his friend Lewis Brown first heard the band at a local music festival in 2009, then became obsessed with their YouTube videos for Tell Your Friends! Matt was interning at The Melting Point in Athens Georgia at the time, and Lewis was booking small shows around the city. In 2012, they staged a Snarky Puppy show together – Lewis covering the booking fee and Matt the hotels, dinners, and all technical aspects of the show. Michael League asked Matt onboard after their second show at the Melting Point (now The Foundry) in 2013, but was he already touring with another artist



and busy with the re-opening Georgia Theatre. However, when Michael (League) asked a third time, it was lucky timing, all the stars aligned ... and Matt has been with them ever since!

Michael Harrison and Matt swap places between mixing monitors and FOH.

In the US, Matt produces the FOH mix and Michael does monitors. When they are in Europe and other parts of the world, Mike takes on the FOH mix, while Matt handles monitors and stage manages – so there is never a dull moment!

The swap-over working method is mainly to give both a change from each position.

It started because when they each had a “territory” effectively, in that Harrison was the European engineer and Matt covered North America. When Matt was invited to Europe in 2014, they needed a monitor engineer, so he jumped in there. The same happened this past year when Mike came to the USA.

“It is a natural way for us to see and understand what the other is doing in each ‘world’ and has also become a way to spice up long tours!” commented Matt.

To Matt, the two roles go hand-in-hand with this band.

“With so many configurations (of musicians), you learn everyone’s preferences and adapt the stages to make all comfortable.” Aspects like riser heights and angles, keyboard positioning, pedal placements and considering sightlines so each member can see one other – or not – as they prefer are all crucial details when setting up the band’s equipment.

For Mike – who describes his mix as ‘ascetic’ – there are three essential elements in his ‘stay out of the way’ philosophy – initial capture and clean up, gain structure / dynamic control and ambient space.

At the heart of the initial capture & clean-up are microphone choices and placement, in tandem with frequency-filtering (and expansion / gating where required) at the console – to achieve the desired clarity and separation.

When it comes to gain structure / dynamic control, all the musicians express a huge range, so those dynamics need containing so the subtler nuances aren’t lost, while the louder moments don’t kill the audience with excessive sound levels ... especially when everyone gets excited onstage!

He finds that “the sensation of a really ‘loud’ sound is often more satisfying and comfortable to listen to than sound that actually IS really loud.”

Another major challenge for Mike – and obstacles to sonic separation – is the fact that the instrumentalists like to group together quite closely on stage. With a dozen monitor

wedges and approximately 40 open mics in close proximity, the process of separating and balancing is an intricate process requiring complex planning.

L-Acoustics is high on Mike and Matt's list of favourite brands, so they were delighted to be using it for the two Adlib shows.

Mike likes it for a FOH system because the mid-range frequencies are very well reproduced, specifically the low-mids, which massively assists intelligibility when instruments and environments are challenging. He also finds the upper mids less aggressive than in some speaker designs.

FOH engineer Mike comments that Adlib is "a great company for us! They treat us extremely well, are always available for any questions and there's always a solution for whatever it is we need."

Lighting for the tour is designed by Francis Clegg who has been on the tour for three years.

Adlib Client Manager commented: "Dealing with Rosanna over the last few years has been so easy. She is very organized, quick to supply information and vital to ensure the smooth running of the tour. The band are so well loved and so cool, it really is a pleasure to work for them. Until next time ..."

Photos : taken at the Royal Albert Hall, London by Justin De Souza.

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