

FOH ENGINEER, FABIO VENTURI, TALKS TO TPI ABOUT THE L-ISA



Fabio Venturi, FOH Engineer for legendary composer Ennio Morricone, gives his personal experience of the L-ISA system, following its deployment at a pair of Italian shows in December 2017.

Venturi began: “L-Acoustics is my favourite PA system. I have always used it for Ennio’s concerts when I can, as well as with Nicola Piovani’s Filarmonica della Scala (Milano Opera Theatre Orchestra) and many other symphonic concerts for big audiences.

“I was asked if I wanted to use L-ISA by Scott Willsallen, who system designed last summer’s opening and closing ceremonies in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) for AIMAG (Asian Olympic Games), where I was involved as FOH Engineer in Agorà’s (audio and lighting supplier) team. I was invited to L-Acoustics’ studio in London to see the L-ISA system with Sherif el Barbari, Head of Application at L-ISA, and was immediately impressed: I continued my training in Italy, making a setup in Agorà’s HQ.

“Thanks to the virtual sound check, I was able to prepare a new session on a DiGiCo SD7 console and the L-ISA software, working with Antonio Paoluzzi and Domenico Cerqua, PA Engineer and System Engineer, respectively. My only requirement in using L-ISA for the first time was to have both systems - L-ISA and a stereo K2 system - in place for the first concert. My main concern was not having enough headroom to reach the right level for the concert, since the concerts took place in big arenas (Bologna Palamagutti and Milano Forum di Assago). In that way I had also the rare chance to make an A-B comparison of the 2 systems. It confirmed my initial excitement and I realised there were no problems with headroom whatsoever!

“Morricone’s music is recorded mostly as film soundtracks and, like all soundtracks, it is ‘designed’ to be heard in a theatre with a multichannel PA system during film projection. Re-creating the same feeling into

live performances it was always my goal. We normally use a central cluster - we even did some experiments in multichannel PA before - so using an L-ISA system was a dream come true.

“We set up the L-ISA system with 2 processors, one as the backup. We feed each one with the two different engines of the DiGiCo SD7 and send the signal to LA8 and LA12 amps via the Dante system, and also using analogue wire as backup. The PA is controlled with LA Network Manager software, using internal DSPs for EQ, delays and so on. I used 117 mics for a total of 112 input lines; a mix of Schoeps, AKG, DPA and Neumann, plus some direct signals from the band. Luckily, I didn’t have to alter my preferred mic package to accommodate to the L-ISA system. We also had a set of 45 monitors and headphones managed by Andrea Tesini, our monitor engineer.

“The PA was made up of 7 clusters of 12 KARA, plus front fills, sides and delays when needed, while the subs consisted of 8 pieces of KS28 in an end fire cardioid fly configuration.

“Some of the key strengths of the L-ISA system are the high flexibility and quality of multichannel management it offers. In particular, the panorama features, which include depth and height, which allowed me to reach an amazing level of immersive sound, something that I have always searched for both in the recording studio and in live concerts.

“Morricone is always searching for new sounds in his compositions, special timbres with an unusual mix of classical and electronic instruments. The L-ISA system allows me to open the sound more than I usually can with standard systems; in so doing, all instruments coexist in a much bigger space than in a traditional PA system.”

TPI

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