

A great night out guaranteed: L-Acoustics K3 delivers phenomenal beats at The Lofts

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Posted on June 21, 2022



The venue's primary space is the Plant Room, with a main system comprising two hangs of L-Acoustics K3 with two hangs of KS28 subs immediately behind them.

*Multifaceted nightclub becomes UK's first club to install the compact K3 line source system for a*

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*versatile and enveloping sound experience*

**Newcastle upon Tyne, UK - June 2022** - Located in the heart of Newcastle's buzzing city centre, The Lofts, which opened in August last year, has already earned a reputation for being a new 'super club,' welcoming high-profile artists and delivering some of the liveliest nights out in the city. The 1,500-capacity venue was co-founded by directors, John Dance, Marty Smith and Rob Seaman, whose extensive nightlife experiences in the Balearics and beyond drive the ethic at The Lofts. And that ethic extends to the L-Acoustics K3, which is a key part of the overall experience, designed and installed by Adlib to deliver excellent coverage and crystal-clear audio throughout the venue.



The Plant Room with L-Acoustics

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“The club’s owners approached Adlib after we’d been recommended to them by a mutual acquaintance,” recalls Nick Whitehead, Adlib’s Project Manager on The Lofts. “They came to us with an ambitious but very clear brief: they wanted the best club in the North East and knew they wanted to use L-Acoustics because of their previous experience with the brand and, as a company, are always at the cutting-edge of audio technology. We were thrilled to support them on this journey and implement an L-Acoustics system, tailor-made for the venue.”

The first conversations and initial site visits all took place at the start of summer 2021, but with the official opening planned for the August bank holiday weekend and with BBC Radio 1 legend Pete Tong set to perform on The Lofts’ opening night, the Adlib team had just four weeks on-site to complete the installation.

“There was a lot of hype and excitement around the opening, with TV advertising, banners up around Newcastle, tickets sold out, and Pete’s private jet booked. In short, there was absolutely no room for error. Everything had to be just perfect!” says Whitehead.

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The focal point of the Plant Room is the DJ booth, from which all audio emanates. Complimenting the main L-Acoustics K3 and KS28 hangs are A10 delays and X12 out-fill.

Whitehead worked alongside Project Designer Tim Robinson to design the perfect system for each of the venue's five distinct spaces.

Set across three floors, the upper floor of The Lofts consists of three large rooms: the main 'Plant Room', the New York-styled 'Harlem', and the cabaret-style 'Speakeasy', all of which have large dance floor areas and bars.

The Plant Room system comprises two hangs of five K3i with two hangs of three KS28 subs immediately behind, all end-fired and time-aligned. Delays are two A10i, with X12 as out-fill. In the bar area, there are six ceiling-mounted X8 cabinets and two KS21 subs.

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“When the brief is to do a nightclub, the default assumption might be to put a pile of point source boxes in each corner and call it a day,” says Robinson. “We were fortunate that the owners were great at engaging with us during the design stage and really wanted to improve on this. Using L-Acoustics Soundvision 3D files, we shared our ideas to demonstrate the effects of putting different cabinets in different positions, how they would interact, and what the audience experience would be.”

A key design principle was to have a focal point in each club area, generally at the DJ booth, to focus on the live-performance feel. We wanted the sound always emanating from that focal point, with subsequent cabinets delayed where appropriate. The result is a remarkably coherent experience.



The Hustle’s bar area is served by L-Acoustics X12, yoke mounted above the bar, which are reinforced by ceiling mounted KS21 subs.

According to Robinson, with one defined point and the K3 in the Plant Room in particular, “it absolutely thumps. If you’re in the DJ booth, whichever way you face, you can’t see another

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loudspeaker. Everything points the same way, is time-aligned, and works coherently.”

The same approach follows through in Harlem, an acoustically tricky space. The room is divided into two distinct areas: a dance floor with a DJ booth and a bar area. The dance floor with the DJ booth is a large, almost circular room with a glass tower and a huge floor-to-ceiling window that is almost 20m high at one end. The bar area adjoins the dance floor/DJ space through a low archway.

“We tried to design the systems so that the three spaces would interact coherently, rather than destructively. Everything starts at Harlem in front of the window with two flown arrays comprising four Kara Ili and three SB18i. As you progress into the Harlem bar, we treated it almost entirely as a separate acoustic space because there is a dividing wall above the separating arch, although the two are electronically aligned. We used two arrays of A10i, two Focus and a Wide, with four central KS21i. At the far end of the bar, there is a single X15 mounted on the back of a pillar for delay,” explains Robinson.

The 120-capacity Speakeasy features three clusters of A10i Focus and an A10i Wide, along with three KS21i.

On the mezzanine level is a more private venue, ‘The Electric’: an artists’ green room with its own DJ booth and a space where artists, staff, and management can relax away from the public. In the bar area of The Electric, four X8 are mounted above the bar following its curve to cover the audience side, with a further two X8 as dedicated stereo DJ monitors.

“One of the reasons we liked this setup is to give uniform coverage to the audience area but not have it firing in the faces of the bar staff. It’s better for their health, and also, when you stand at the bar to order a drink, you dip out of the coverage, and you can therefore communicate your order clearly” adds Robinson. The low-frequency extension is via two Syva Subs mounted in the bar area ceiling, alongside the X8.

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The Hustle's club area features L-Acoustics A10 delays.

On the ground floor, The Hustle is a bar, restaurant, and disco lounge, running the length of the building. "The bar end is both a daytime venue, eatery, and feeder bar for The Lofts, so it required a system that could go from background music to reasonably high-level foreground music in keeping with the level of the system upstairs. The other end is more of a boutique club, with both velvet seating and a DJ booth, which needed a bit more of a dance floor system," adds Robinson.

The Hustle's main system comprises two A15i on each side, with KS28 delivering low frequency, with further ceiling-mounted A10i deployed for delays further down the room. Coaxial X12 cabinets are yoke-mounted above the bar. These are all in the same plane and reinforced by ceiling-mounted KS21i subs. "In the area where the ceiling becomes a little low, we have placed compact X8 cabinets. The Snug, a small room off the bar, is served by two 5XT and its own Syva Sub," shares Robinson.

The backbone of the audio system is a cloud-manageable Q-Sys control platform, which means

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audio is moved around the venue over an AES67 network, allowing any signal to be routed anywhere. “At the beginning of the project, there wasn’t any indication from the client that audio would need to be moved from one room into another. As each room has its own DJ booth installed, why would it? But as that requirement inevitably surfaced, we were able to implement it very easily. Likewise, we can route between floors. The Hustle can take audio from any of the bigger rooms upstairs, as can The Electric. Given that The Electric is the green room, they can treat it like a radio station, listening to their friends who happen to be on stage in any room” explains Robinson.

During the installation process in The Hustle, one of the contractors was asked to install a TV system to broadcast sports matches. Their original intention was that the sound should come out of the TVs themselves. But because the Adlib team worked so closely with the contractors on site, they suggested using a Blustream IP-based AV matrix allowing audio to be routed into the Q-Sys system using Dante, and then onward to the L-Acoustics cabinets, giving much more satisfactory results.

Robinson notes that Adlib’s relationship with L-Acoustics adds value to complex installations with tight deadlines. “Our relationship with manufacturers is really important” he says. “As an L-Acoustics Certified Systems Integrator, we could draw on all the resources they offer to help get an installation across the line as quickly as this.”

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Harlem Club features two flown arrays of L-Acoustics Kara II with SB18.

Good sound is critical for a nightclub such as The Lofts since its entertainment value is almost entirely based upon sound. “It needs to be an immersive and enveloping experience. It doesn’t have to be blisteringly loud, although it can be, as it has plenty of headroom,” Robinson concludes. “We’ve had a lot of comments about the sound in The Lofts being loud but very clear and not painful or uncomfortable. It definitely achieves what it needs to. One of The Loft’s owners, Rob Seaman, visited with the venue’s resident DJ, Jonny Burn, shortly after The Plant Room’s system installation. As they walked into the room, Rob froze and stood with his hands behind his back, just listening. Finally, he exclaimed, ‘John [Dance, co-founder], has to hear this!’

“The ultimate design is the result of a great collaborative effort, and from a technical point of view, this is the best nightclub in the North East, if not the country. We feel honoured to have been entrusted with the opportunity to work on this amazing project and to bring the L-Acoustics sonic signature to this remarkable venue.”

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You can find out more about Adlib at [www.adlib.co.uk](http://www.adlib.co.uk) and watch the video at  
<https://vimeo.com/718706296>.