

DiGiCo Quantum 225 fits the bill at Brighton's Komedia



Komedia Brighton is a venue punching well above its weight. Situated in the heart of Brighton Laines it hosts a true variety of performances, from the comedy that cemented its great reputation, to the massively popular programme of arts that it hosts now. When the time came to retire its long-standing front of house mixing desk the team knew they would need something that was up to the task. The DiGiCo Quantum 225, purchased through James Pergrande at Solotech, was their number one choice, and not just because it is a great mixing desk. Emma Henderson, Technical Manager of the Komedia Brighton, explains what they were looking for.

“Our previous console was pretty tired, and it was getting to the point where we were having to spend time explaining the features to visiting engineers, which isn’t ideal,” she says. “Having a robust, industry standard mixing desk was important. It needed to do a lot; not just sound great, but fit into our budget and have easily accessible features that would be recognisable to as many people as possible. Training is also important to us; we have a huge training programme. When we send the trainees out into the world, they’re inevitably coming across the DiGiCo family of desks, so if they have that grounding, it’s a massive bonus.”

At the beating heart of this venue is its work ethic. Completely self-funded, the team also raise money for local charities, as well as working with Komedia Productions, and by delivering projects new audiences have been developed, particularly for children and their families.

Community is at the heart of everything the Komedia team do. They believe in the power of the arts to enrich lives and it was DiGiCo's strong sense of community that was part of what convinced them to go with the Quantum225.

"The help from DiGiCo has been awesome, they're well known for their support and that's another reason that we chose the Quantum 225," says Henderson. "DiGiCo's Tim Shaxson came to train us all when the desk was brand new and I said, "Let's put the desk in! Let's do a show in three hours. Let's do it because we've got out of the box!" I think he thought I was pretty out there, in a good way I hope, but he stuck with us."

With the diverse performances and people coming through the building on a nightly basis, Komedia needed a mixing desk that would be universally recognisable, but also endlessly flexible. The DiGiCo Quantum 225 Set Spill feature is perfect for these situations. Using Set Spill allows the engineer to group faders together for easy recall at any point. It meant the desk could be up and running in record time, changing from a stand-up comedian to a club night with the touch of a button. Henderson really appreciates this feature.

"We do such a massive range of shows with incredibly tight turnarounds between each one," she says. "We're a 'disco' loadout kind of venue, so we needed something you can switch around easily. With the Quantum 225, you can swap the layouts around and you can boot sessions really easily. That means you can jump from a gig into a club really fast, and then you take it from being set up to do a gig to being set up to do comedy, which was a massive boon."

Another important factor for Komedia is space. It makes the most of its 415 standing capacity venue and any new desk would be fighting for space, so the compact dimensions of the Q225 is another handy bonus. Henderson has seen that the way acts tour is changing, and the venue is experiencing fewer touring desks coming to it, but the odd one still comes through. Usually, the touring desks are DiGiCo, too, so the advantage of being able to plug into the venue's MQ-Rack is ideal, removing the need to strike the venue's control position.

As the venue prepares for its 30th birthday, Henderson and her team know that technical upgrades are just one part of the longevity of the venue and its position in the community.

"We are an independently funded space, and we average 12 shows a week. We do a lot, even for very good team, and we make our own profit. For an art space that's amazing," she concludes. "It's very much the team that are implementing the upgrades; we pretty much do all of it ourselves. In the past year, we've done a lot of work to make this venue a really good space for people to come to. Installing the Quantum 225 is a big part of that process."