

KLANG Brings New Monitoring Tech to Lionel Richie's Classic Sound

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Monitor engineer Lorin White reveals the strategy that he used to make the DMI-KLANG card an integral part of the artist's "Sing A Song All Night Long" tour

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LOS ANGELES, California - September 2023 - It can take a while to get a group of people to embrace a new way of doing things, and it certainly doesn't help when a two-year-plus-long pandemic complicates the process. However, it *is* easier when the new way is so undeniably amazing that everyone really does embrace it. That was definitely the case when Lorin White, brought on as the monitor engineer for the precursor set of shows for Lionel Richie's current "Sing A Song All Night Long" tour, was ready to take off in 2020. The multiple Grammy Award winner and his band only managed to get one show in before the world shut down. Fortunately, White recorded that show, which became the basis for his initial experimentation with KLANG's immersive IEM mixing system.

"During the lockdown, Group One sent me a KLANG-equipped DiGiCo SD12 so I could do some test some mixes from that recording while at home, and I really liked what the KLANG system could do," White recalls. "But I was also the new guy on the team at that point. Some of Lionel's band members have been with him for over 20 years, so they've become pretty settled in their mixes over that time frame. However, I knew that the DMI-KLANG would make a huge difference in the way everyone would perceive the sound onstage. In fact, it could change the way they experience those same songs they've been playing with him for so long; it's that powerful. But you can't just walk in and say that."

Indeed, White's sensibilities are as keen as his mixing ear. The entire band had been on IEMs already and were comfortable with the system they were using; what he had to do was convey the additional creative potential that KLANG's 360-degree capabilities could bring to their stage experience.

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“There are no loudspeakers onstage at this show, so it was all about showing how another approach to IEM could provide an advantage,” he says. During some shows in Europe, with relaxed spacing between gigs, White decided to first approach Richie’s longtime musical director, Chuckii Booker, with the idea of using the DMI-KLANG on the upcoming “Sing A Song All Night Long” tour with special guests Earth, Wind & Fire. “I had developed the band’s trust in my monitor mixes, so that kind of paved the way for this,” he says. “I invited Chuckii over to my world and explained the binaural approach that KLANG uses; how that changes the perspective onstage, opens up the sound, and lets everyone hear themselves and everyone else in a new way. It was a chance to move beyond stereo.”

White had waited for the right moment, and it paid off: Booker was quickly all-in on the use of the DMI-KLANG for the upcoming tour. From then on, White focused on presenting it in a similar fashion to other key members of the band. “One at a time, the band members came by to check out the DMI-KLANG, and they all got it,” he says. “Bass player Ethan Farmer gave me a thumbs up and said, ‘You blew my mind—this opened up new apartments in my head!’”

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For the current 21-date North American tour, Sound Image, a Clair Global brand, has supplied White with a DMI-KLANG card-equipped DiGiCo Quantum7 console, while FOH engineer Gordon Mac is mixing the shows on a Quantum3³⁸. As expected, the introduction of the KLANG platform has led to a few subtle but significant dynamic changes to arrangements of some classic songs as the band have begun to experience them and each other in a completely new way.

“The monitor mixes are no longer on just a stereo plane; things can go up and down as well as left and right,” White adds. “The whole 3D aspect of KLANG has brought a new level of clarity onstage, while simultaneously helping to lower the overall IEM levels. It’s not an exaggeration to say that DMI-KLANG has changed everything for the better.”

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Lionel Richie's "Sing A Song All Night Long" tour with special guests Earth, Wind & Fire kicked off in Minneapolis, Minnesota on August 4 and wraps up in Highland, California on September 16. The run will be followed by a six-show October residency at Wynn Las Vegas' Encore Theater. For more details on Richie's upcoming shows, visit www.lionelrichie.com. Sound Image can be found online at www.sound-image.com.