London’s New 3,800-Capacity British Airways ARC Opens with a Rider-Ready L-Acoustics L Series Concert Sound System

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L-Acoustics Certified Provider Solotech brings touring know-how to a compressed installation schedule at AEG Presents’ purpose-built Olympia venue

London has a new mid-sized music venue. British Airways ARC, a purpose-built, 3,800-capacity live music and events space operated by AEG Presents, opened in June at Olympia in West London. It is the first venue of its size to be built from the ground up in the capital in more than a decade. Self Esteem played the two opening nights, with McFly and Zac Brown Band following in the venue’s first weeks.

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A rider-ready L-Acoustics concert sound system for London’s new 3,800-capacity British Airways ARC

The venue sits above the West Hall of the Olympia exhibition centre, a site with almost 140 years of event history and a musical past that includes Jimi Hendrix, Rod Stewart, The Cure and The Chemical Brothers. It forms part of Olympia’s £1.3 billion transformation, which also brings a 1,575-seat theatre, two hotels, offices, bars and restaurants to the estate. With those neighbours

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close by and a diary expected to run to around 200 events a year, British Airways ARC needed a house system that touring productions would welcome and that keeps sound inside the room. The L-Acoustics L Series answers both.

L-Acoustics L Series gives visiting productions a house PA they already trust

AEG Presents turned to Solotech, an L-Acoustics Certified Provider and a global technology supplier to AEG, to deliver the venue’s technical infrastructure, including a permanently installed L-Acoustics L Series concert sound system. For audio, the priority was a rider-friendly house PA that visiting engineers would recognise, trust and choose to mix on.

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“A room of this size has to earn its place on a tour schedule, and the house PA is a big part of that,” says Dan Seal, Head of Integrated Sales at Solotech. “We wanted a system that is already on the rider before the trucks are loaded, so a production can walk in and get straight to work.”

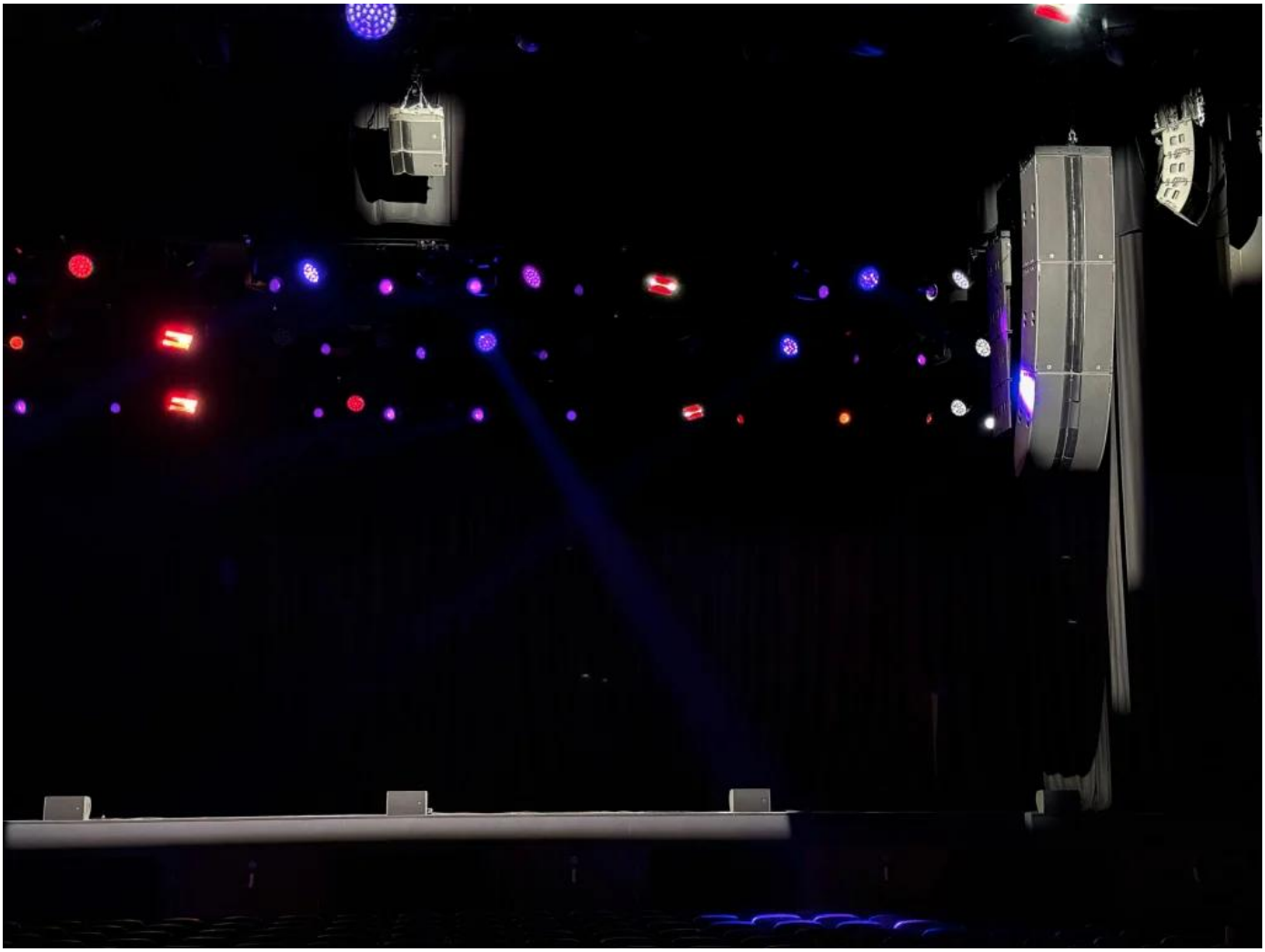
L2 integrated cardioid directivity keeps energy on the audience and off the neighbours

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The system was modelled in L-Acoustics Soundvision with Kyle Durno, Regional Application Engineer, Install at L-Acoustics, providing design support to the Solotech team throughout the project.

The design had two challenges to meet. The first was consistent coverage for every member of the audience, on the floor and in the balcony. The second came from the venue’s position at the centre of a busy mixed-use development, where sound travelling beyond the building matters as much as sound inside it.

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Solotech delivers the L-Acoustics system for British Airways ARC to a compressed installation schedule

“A new venue in the middle of a live development has two audiences: the one in the room and the neighbours outside it,” says Durno. “Using a cardioid solution like L2 enabled maximum efficiency within the audience coverage, whilst controlling unwanted propagation to areas outside.”

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Solotech builds the L Series system at touring pace

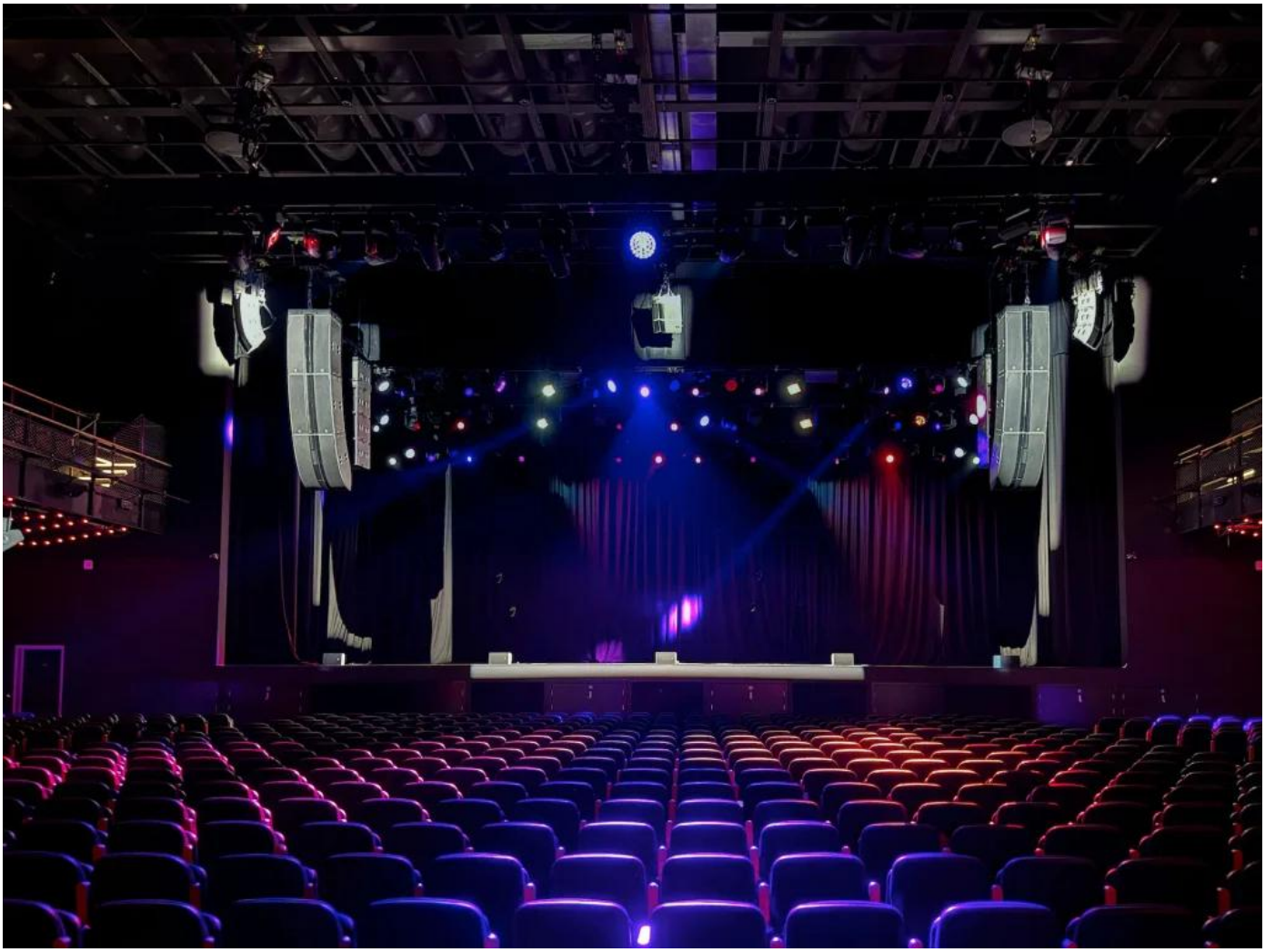
The installation window was short. Solotech drew on its rental and touring experience and approached the job much as a visiting production approaches a load-in, bringing the preparation and pace of a tour to a permanent system.

“We planned it like a show day, just a much longer one,” says Seal. “Our crews take systems like this in and out of arenas every week. We prepped ARC as a touring build and then made it permanent, and that is how you hit an opening night that is set in stone.”

L2, KS28 and A10i cover the room from the front row to the back of the balcony

The main system comprises left and right hangs of two L2 and one L2D per side, each accompanied by four KS21 subwoofers deployed in cardioid configuration. Five KS28 subwoofers beneath the front of the stage add further low-frequency reinforcement. Out-fills of two A10i Focus and one A10i Wide per side, together with a centre hang of one A10i Focus and one A10i Wide, complete the coverage across the room. Eight X8 enclosures across the front of the stage. Two X12 loudspeakers are installed in an exclusive VIP bar behind the stage.

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L-Acoustics Certified Provider Solotech brings touring know-how to AEG Presents’ purpose-built Olympia venue

The system runs on a Milan-AVB network. A DirectOut PRODIGY processor feeds nine L-Acoustics LA7.16i and two LA12X amplified controllers over AVB, plus a further three LA12X for monitors, giving visiting productions a familiar point at which to hand over their signal. “Milan-AVB is what the touring market recognises,” adds Durno. “An engineer can walk in, see how the system is fed

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and know exactly where they stand.”

L2 and KS28 give ARC a sound that reviewers rank above its peers
Since opening night on 16th June, British Airways ARC has drawn positive reviews, with the sound quality of the room singled out for praise, with London x London’s, Julianna Barnaby saying, *“The venue sounds like a serious step up from most rooms of this size in the capital.”*

“The best compliment a house PA can get is a touring engineer putting their desk on the end of it and asking for nothing else,” concludes Seal. “When the reviews of a brand-new venue lead on how good it sounds, you know the system is doing its job.”

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