

London's Royal Albert Hall puts DiGiCo at the centre of its audio universe

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The Royal Albert Hall in London is an iconic venue, hosting diverse performances every night of the week. Famous for its striking looks, the 153-year-old building had challenging acoustics when amplifying modern music for the almost 6,000 capacity auditorium. This led to huge investment into the Hall's audio equipment, with all sound requirements being brought in-house in 2018. DiGiCo consoles are at the centre of the building's audio set up, a Quantum 852, Quantum 7, SD10, SD9 and SD11 are all owned by the venue. This ensures continuity for quality of sound, whatever the performance, and enables the audio department to prepare shows in advance, improving workflow during quick daily turnarounds.

Ben Evans has been Audio Operations Manager since 2021. He was part of the team who

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instigated the Hall's first in-house audio team and is well placed to understand the needs of this unique venue. Every inch of space is used in the building and performances are always high profile. There have been shows on stage, end-on or in the round, in the loading bays, on the stairs and even on the roof. The sound system needs to be flexible and fast to keep up. The after sales support offered by Autograph and Rob Tory, Head of Technical Support, plus the Hall's onsite facilities in the the basement warehouse, ensures the sound team are ready for anything, including offsite rehearsals.



“During 2018, we went out to tender and had a d&b audiotechnik system designed for us, in addition to new network infrastructure,” Evans says. “We have a different show pretty much every day, so our five consoles allow us to prep and rehearse efficiently. When combined with our fibre networking, we can serve our multitude of shows effortlessly.”

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Tom Marshall is a sound designer and freelance front of house sound mixer for the Royal Albert Hall, he works on many of the performances, whether that is a book launch, pop concert or a recital from the Royal Philharmonic. He uses DiGiCo products widely, in every area of his career.

“DiGiCo is my go-to tool, it is the nucleus of my work, and I feel very comfortable with it, whether I am mixing or designing, I’d be lost without it,” he says. “There are always demands from directors or producers and the speed of the console means that if I do get a request, I don’t have to make anyone wait, I can make changes instantly.”

When mixing, especially at the Royal Albert Hall, Marshall relies on DiGiCo onboard effects and processing to help things go smoothly. The development of the Spice Rack was a real game-changer for him, so having the continuity across the whole Quantum range, has been another bonus of using DiGiCo consoles.

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"I find myself using the dynamic compression and EQ a lot. Having the ability to add it across a whole group is really useful, especially if you are doing something with a high channel count, it just makes your life easier," he says. "Coupled with the ergonomics, user interface and the size of the screens, it allows you to see and access a lot more at once."

Usability is very important, especially in this busy, high-profile venue, but what really gives DiGiCo the edge for both Marshall and Evans is their relationship with DiGiCo, and sales partners Autograph as they both conclude.

"I find DiGiCo a very personal company in comparison to other manufacturers," says Evans. "They are very much available on the phone and having such a personal element of support from them is really important for an in-house sound team like us, it's great to have that relationship."

"DiGiCo feels like a family. There is always massive support, online and in person, plus a community of tech support and other operators, so you can always get answers very quickly," Marshall concludes. "For me, DiGiCo is a must."

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