



Lyric Theatre Belfast Becomes First on Island of Ireland to Deploy L-ISA Immersive Audio for World Premiere of Denouement

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(Above): L-Acoustics partners with Forfey to install the first theatrical L-ISA deployment on the island of Ireland

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Belfast, Northern Ireland - November 2025 - The Lyric Theatre Belfast has become the first theatre on the island of Ireland to deploy L-Acoustics L-ISA immersive sound technology in a live theatrical production, unveiling the system for the world premiere run of *Denouement*. The new drama, written by John Morton and produced in-house at the Lyric, invites audiences into a tense and unravelling end-of-the-world narrative, a story strengthened by immersive sound that places listeners inside every whispered fear and urgent plea on stage.

The project was realised in collaboration with Forfey, who designed, supplied, and installed the L-ISA configuration, working closely with L-Acoustics Application Engineer Ollie Crump and Lyric Senior Production Technician Ian Vennard. The installation marks a significant step in the venue's long-term audio strategy and its ambition to pioneer new creative and technical standards in theatre production across Northern Ireland and beyond.

"Striving for creative and technical excellence is central to everything we do," says Matt Minford, Managing Director at Forfey. "From our first conversations with Ian and the Lyric team, it was clear we shared that vision. Our role was to design and deliver a system that truly supports the theatre's creative ambition and demonstrates how spatial audio can heighten emotional storytelling and place audiences inside the narrative alongside the performers."



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Original Theatre Writing Meets Immersive Audio Technology

Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2026, the Lyric Theatre stands as Northern Ireland's only full-time self-producing theatre, creating a minimum of six original productions annually. New writing remains central to its mission, with *Denouement* emerging from the theatre's own New Playwrights Programme. For the team, pairing a world-premiere play with cutting-edge sound design felt like a natural evolution.

"Our focus has always been to champion new writing and elevate new voices," explains Adam Steele, Marketing Manager at Lyric Theatre Belfast. "Audiences increasingly expect a premium theatrical experience, and immersive technology now plays a key role in storytelling. *Denouement* felt like the perfect moment to explore that creative potential."

The production's staging, claustrophobic, close to the audience, and emotionally charged, further aligned with immersive audio's ability to heighten tension and bring performers into the same psychological space as the audience.

From Traditional Reinforcement to L-ISA Immersive Audio

While the Lyric had been exploring audio upgrade options, its collaboration with L-Acoustics accelerated last summer, when the venue hosted L-ISA training sessions for technical professionals from across the region. The event coincided with the theatre's early planning phase for *Denouement*, sparking the idea of using immersive audio technology for the production.

"We had been considering our next steps in sound reinforcement, whether that might be a refreshed left-right system or a more advanced LCR approach," notes Vennard. "But when we saw the potential of L-ISA and how well it complements our auditorium, it became clear this technology would help place us at the forefront of theatre sound."

The venue frequently hires L-Acoustics systems for larger productions and musicals, making L-ISA technology a future-aligned choice that builds on an already established sonic foundation. With a capacity of 389 and a single rake of seating, the main house offers ideal physical conditions for spatial audio, free from overhangs or balcony obstructions.

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(Above): The final design centers on a focused Scene configuration using L-Acoustics A Series loudspeakers

Designing the L-ISA Configuration: A Series Loudspeakers and Spatial Precision

We've worked with L-Acoustics for years and know the power of these systems," continues Minford. "For *Denouement*, we collaborated closely with L-Acoustics and the Lyric to tune the design precisely for the room — using Soundvision to model coverage and make the most of the theatre's ideal architecture."

The final design centers on a focused Scene configuration using L-Acoustics A Series loudspeakers. Three central arrays of one A15 Focus flanked by two A15 Wide form the core image, with two arrays of one A10 Focus two A10 Wide positioned at the outer edges to ensure even, precise coverage across the full seating rake.

To extend the spatial soundscape beyond the primary frontal image, one X12 loudspeaker per side were positioned as Scene extensions, widening the perceived sound field and strengthening lateral imaging. Surround and overhead immersion is delivered by ten X8 loudspeakers installed discreetly around and above the auditorium to provide enveloping spatial textures and height information, enabling subtle atmospheric movement as well as pinpoint localisation when required by the production.

The system runs on a Milan-AVB network, using a P1 processor for setup and signal routing, supported by LS10 switches. LA4X and LA12X amplified controllers provide power and processing, giving the creative team a flexible, object-based mixing environment that supports both narrative clarity and dramatic sound design.

Audience Response: Clarity, Immersion, and Emotional Impact

The system operates flawlessly across the show's four-week run, supporting seven performances each week. Crucially, audience feedback has been immediate and vocal — a rare but powerful indicator in theatre sound.

"Sound can often go unnoticed when it's working well," says Steele. "But audiences have been talking about how immersed they feel, and how clear and enveloping the sound is. That's particularly meaningful given many of our patrons are older theatregoers — it shows that clarity and natural imaging truly make a difference."

With cinematic and at-home streaming experiences shaping public expectations, immersive theatre sound has become increasingly important for maintaining audience engagement. "We're seeing audiences arrive



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expecting the best,” Adam adds. “This system allows us to meet and exceed that expectation.”





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Looking to an Immersive Audio Future

“This project has been a fantastic example of collaboration,” adds Minford. “It demonstrates our shared commitment to pushing standards of creative and technical excellence in Northern Ireland.”

“Our goal is to lead the industry,” says Vennard. “Immersive audio is shaping the future of theatre, and this project gives us a head start creatively and technically.”





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