Shibuya Eggman Rebuilds Around L-Acoustics A15, Holding One Mix from Acoustic Sets to Club Nights

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L-Acoustics Certified Partner, Bestec Audio supplied the new L-Acoustics A Series system for the 350-capacity Tokyo live house

Four decades on from the room’s first gig, the 350-capacity Tokyo live house gives its house team and the visiting engineers a system that behaves the same way every night

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Shibuya Eggman opened in the basement of a Jinnan district building in 1981 and has been a gateway room ever since. It’s the kind of stage where RED WARRIORS held a monthly residency before their major-label debut, and where BAND-MAID played their way toward an international audience. The venue holds around 350 standing, and in any given week, the stage carries bands, acoustic singer-songwriters, idol groups and club nights. Around 40 per cent of the shows are mixed by visiting sound engineers, rather than the house team, so the system has to behave predictably for anyone walking in for the first time.

It also has to fit. Loudspeaker positions at Eggman are tight, and in a room of this size, sightlines count for as much as coverage. This year, the venue tackled every one of these demands at once, replacing its house system with L-Acoustics A Series, supplied by L-Acoustics Certified Partner Bestec Audio.



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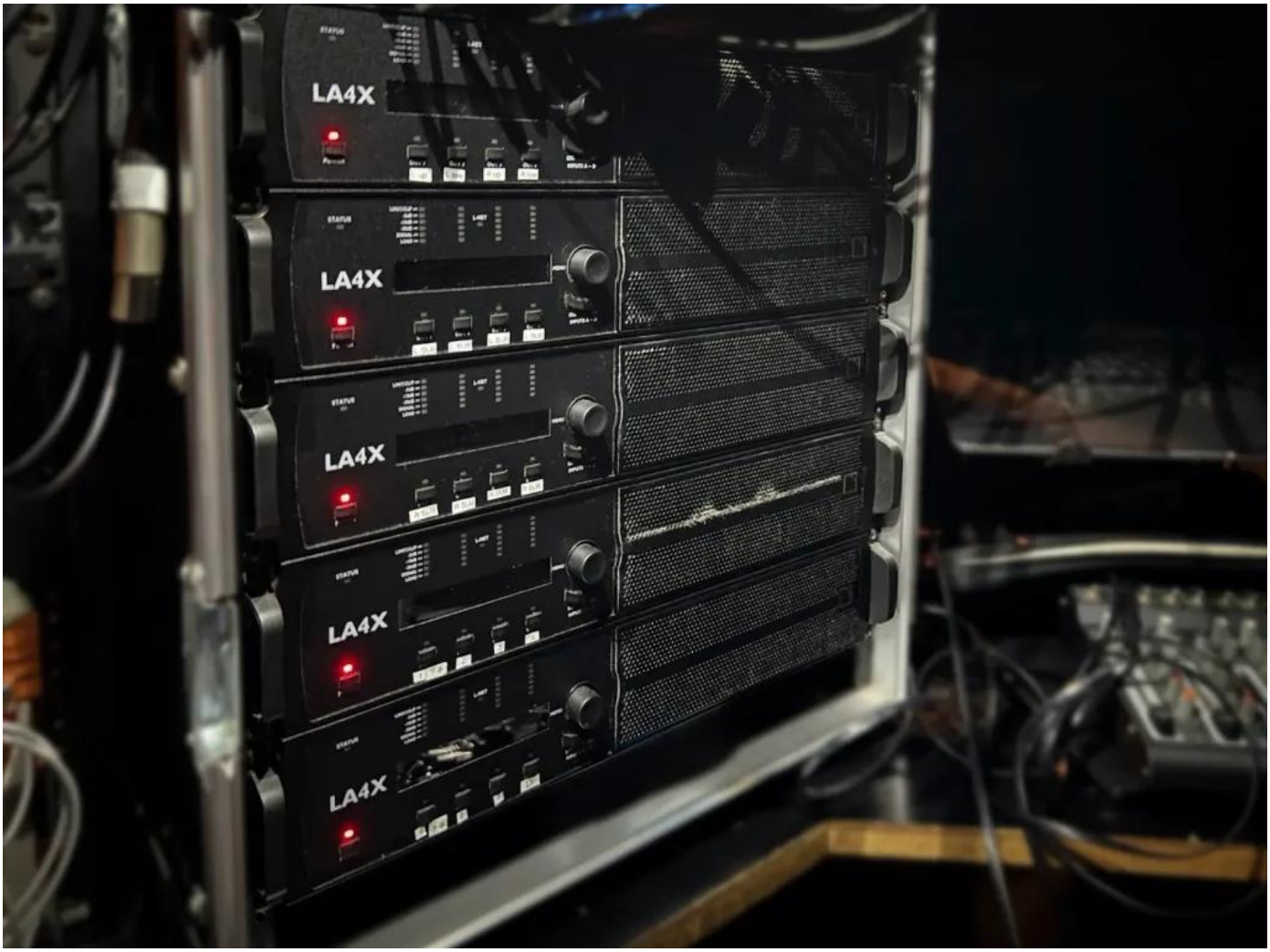
Shota Kodama has been part of the room since he was a teenager. Now sound engineer at venue operator Eggman Base Co Ltd., he has run Eggman’s audio for 17 years. The old system still worked when he proposed replacing it, but what had changed was the music on the stage.

“Considering the evolution of the modern music scene and sound technology, I felt a strong desire to create a sound that can express the atmosphere of ‘today’ and move on to the next generation of sound, so I proposed the renovation,” says Kodama.

He arrived at the brief with his own reference points. Alongside his work at Eggman, Kodama mixes regularly at larger external events, where L-Acoustics systems are a familiar part of his working life. “I often have the opportunity to use K2 and K3 at external gigs. L-Acoustics is easy to operate, and I personally like the sound quality, so I’ve always admired it.”

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A15 Holds Its Character Across Every Genre on the Bill

The new system comprises four A15 as the main system, eight KS21 subwoofers, seven X12 stage monitors and five LA4X amplified controllers. Kodama ran comparative listening across

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several manufacturers before specifying it, with the breadth of the booking sheet as the test.

“Eggman features a diverse range of artists, including not only bands but also acoustic singer-songwriters and idols. After comparing and listening to speakers from various companies, I felt that L-Acoustics offers the sound best suited to the widest range of genres,” he explains. “I was particularly impressed by its high resolution even at high volumes, and conversely, the fact that the sound quality doesn’t change much even when the volume is lowered, maintaining a consistent mix.”

The four A15 answered the space question at the same time. “One of the deciding factors was that it fit into the limited speaker space. Visual appeal is also an important element in live music venues, and this fits perfectly,” says Kodama.

Eight KS21 Carry the Club Nights

Eight subwoofers is a generous count for a 350-capacity floor, and deliberately so. Eggman has programmed club nights alongside live shows since the early 2000s, and those nights set the low-end specification rather than the bandbills. “The sound required for a band performance and a club event is different. For club use, we needed sufficient weight from the subwoofers,” says Kodama.

The KS21 are installed with their bass reflex ports facing downward, protecting the drivers from drinks and debris on a working club floor. It is the kind of detail that comes from two decades of running the room rather than from a drawing.

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L-Acoustics X12 stage monitors replaced the venue’s previous 15-inch wedges, putting the stage and the house on the same sound

Five LA4X Switch the Room Between Live and Club in Seconds

Kodama keeps separate LA4X session files for live performances and club events, so the room is retuned for each mode without touching the physical system. The first change visiting engineers notice is a different one.

“Previously, there was a discrepancy in how the sound was heard between the audience and the PA booth, but now we’re getting positive feedback that ‘the difference in sound depending on the location has decreased, making mixing easier,’” says Kodama.

Coverage across the floor has evened out too. Areas the previous system struggled to reach now get the same mix as the rest of the room, which matters in a standing venue where the audience moves around all night.

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Seven X12 Put the Stage and the House on the Same Sound
On stage, seven X12 replaced the venue's previous 15-inch wedges. Four sit across the stage front; one serves the drummer, and two are held in reserve for side fill or in-fill duty. The X12 is close to half the size of the monitor it replaced and considerably lighter, which matters to staff who reposition them several times a day.

"With both the main speakers and floor monitors being L-Acoustics, the sound quality on the stage and in the audience is now consistent. The overall look is also much cleaner. The 15-inch monitors I used before were almost twice the size of the X12," explains Kodama.

Spill from the mains onto the stage has dropped as well, giving performers a cleaner reference and letting the system work at lower levels. "We receive many comments like, 'The sound has improved, and it's easier to sing,'" says Kodama. "With conventional speakers, you had to input a fairly loud volume to get a good sound, but with L-Acoustics, you can hear clearly and distinctly even without turning the volume up that high."

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With L-Acoustics on stage and in the house, the sound for performers and audience is now consistent

A Training Ground for Engineers as Well as Artists

Kodama learned the job on this stage as a teenager and now mixes outside the venue as well. The system he specified is aimed at the engineers coming up behind him.

“From now on, I would like to see young PA engineers also step up their game. With L-Acoustics speakers, we have been able to provide an excellent training environment for engineers. I would be happy if eggman became a place where both artists and engineers can inspire and grow together.”

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Shota Kodama, Sound Engineer, Eggman Base Co Ltd

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