

Zepp Halls Network Company upgrades existing fleet of DiGiCo SD8 mixing desks with nine Quantum338



Zepp has nine live music venues in cities across Japan. Each one of these venues now boasts a DiGiCo Quantum 338 at the front of house position. Kota Ueno, sound engineer at TWOMIX Inc is in charge of equipment selection and maintenance for Zepp and explains the reason behind upgrading its DiGiCo stock.

“Zepp Halls are large, popular live music venues and recently we have also opened overseas in Kuala Lumpur and Taiwan,” says Ueno. “The first venue opened in 1998 and our newest venue, Zepp Shinjuku, opened in April 2023. Each one has a similar capacity, around 2000 people, and the same equipment list. This gives our touring artists the advantage of knowing that they will receive the same high standard of equipment in every Zepp Hall across the country.”

The DiGiCo Quantum 338 is a big step up from the first SD8 that Ueno purchased for Zepp Sapporo in 2013, and an even bigger upgrade from the analogue desk the SD8 replaced.

“The SD8 was naturally cleaner sounding than the original analogue desk,” Ueno says. “The sound isn’t flat, it’s a fascinatingly coloured sound. It sounds very British and is something I think only DiGiCo could produce. When we installed the new Quantum 338, we thought about the SD10, but the chance to have the latest desk in our venue was a good selling point. We decided it was the right time to renew all our consoles across the whole

network.”

Because every Hall has the same equipment list, Ueno is able to track some surprising features across the whole range of music halls, including the JBL loudspeaker line array.

“It’s surprising,” he remarks, “but up to now all our line arrays had very different adjustments for each hall, but now we are noticing that they’re almost all the same. The desk upgrades have really improved our output and are demonstrating the loudspeaker’s potential.”

The change from SD8 to Quantum 338 has been very positive for resident and touring engineers. The UB MADI terminal is often in use for recordings and Ueno also appreciates the Mustard Processing and Spice Rack, as do visiting engineers.

“Mustard Processing can achieve much more precision,” he notes. “Many people say that this feature alone has made the console more convenient and everyone always notices the difference.”



The increased screen capacity means that engineers can operate from any position on the desk, which is especially useful if there is more than one operator accessing the console during a performance. But it is not just the sound and accessibility that Zepp engineers love about their new consoles, as Ueno concludes.



“The most obvious benefit is that the console is really cool,” he laughs “The Quantum 338’s lit faders are assignable and really stand out against the black body colour. In Shinjuku, we get a lot of international visitors and I often see them photographing the desk as well as the rest of the Hall!”