

Live [Audio] from
New York!

Product Hits of the 139th AES Show

By George Petersen

Let's be blunt. In past years, the conventions of the Audio Engineering Society have strayed away from the live community. In fact, at the 2012 convention, only one manufacturer of sound reinforcement speakers exhibited product on the show floor — and that was a small, 10 x 10-foot booth featuring ceiling speakers, which hardly reflected the growth and vitality that the live audio community has experienced over the past decade. Cognizant of that fact, this time around the AES put a full court press, reaching out to the sound reinforcement community, repeating the popular Live Audio Expo with seminars available free to all attendees, and encouraging more live sound companies to the exhibit floor.

For the most recent show, held in New York City Oct. 29 to Nov. 1, 2015, the results of that effort were evident, both in an increased presence from live sound exhibitors, a show that was packed with attendees and some major new unveilings of products for live users.

Clearly, AES is well back on track to representing all segments of the audio community and in terms of cool new gear, there was plenty to see — and hear. Here are some of the product highlights that caught our attention.

» Consoles

Consoles at AES were again popular at AES, and as in past years, there were more new live sound mixers than recording models on the show floor. Maybe there's a trend here...

Avid exhibited its VENUE | S6L scalable, large-format live console with a touch-based interface; Ethernet AVB, Dante, MADI and Thunderbolt support; industry-standard plug-ins, over 300 total processing channels; new Stage 64 I/O rack; and full Pro Tools record/playback integration, but the new here is that the console began shipping two weeks after the show, taking it from concept to reality.

avid.com

Allen & Heath demoed its new Chrome Qu line of digital mixers — available in Chrome Qu-16, Qu-24 and Qu-32 versions, with the Qu v1.8 Chrome firmware that adds major new features such as automatic mic mixing, spectrogram analysis and additional monitor mixes. These expand on existing Qu features such as touchscreen and Qu-Pad Wi-Fi control, motorized faders, multitrack recording to USB and more.

allen-heath.com

CADAC had the official U.S. debut of its CDC six 64-input channel/48 assignable bus digital live sound console that combines high-performance audio with gesture-based operation for a fast workflow. The CDC six's traditional physical controls have been replaced by an intuitive "high agility" user interface, accessed via a 23.5-inch, 16x9 touch screen without the compromises of hardware-centric designs. Also standard is a card providing Waves MultiRack SoundGrid integration.

cadac-sound.com

Lawo expanded the capabilities of its mc²36 live audio console with the Nova37 Hybrid RAVENNA/MADI Plug & Play Audio Router. The three-rackspace unit offers easy networking of mc² compact I/Os and mc²36 mixers, supporting a maximum of 1,536 x 1,536 crosspoints with fast, preset-based routing. Features include eight RAVENNA/AES 67 ports and eight MADI ports, providing extensive connectivity in small- to medium-sized audio systems

lawo.com

Hear Technologies joined forces with Waves Audio to include Waves SoundGrid technology in the Hear Back PRO 16-channel personal mixers, a high-end yet affordable monitor mixing system. This enables monitor engineers to incorporate Waves' award-winning plug-ins with the Hear hardware, for more versatile in-ear mixing and monitoring.

heartechnologies.com

Waves Audio — having previously launched its Tracks Live capture/DAW software for live recording — was demoing its eMotion LV1, a 96 kHz software-based mixer for FOH and monitor applications. Powered by low-latency Waves SoundGrid DSP servers, the LV1 utilizes SoundGrid to connecting multiple mixers, stage boxes, I/O interfaces, playback/recording hosts and all other SoundGrid-compatible devices. Its modularity and hardware scalability allows flexible, fast configuration with all standard network components. eMotion LV1 supports up to 64 mono/stereo input channels, 32 stereo bus/return channels and is Mac- and Windows-compatible, supports industry-standard control surfaces and multi-touch devices, and can run on multiple screens.

waves.com

» Loudspeakers

Eastern Acoustic Works expanded its Adaptive Systems speaker family with Anna for mid-sized touring, regional sound and installations. Each Anna module has 14 transducers: eight HF compression drivers form a continuous line of apertures on a horn that fills the entire face of the enclosure, four 5-inch MF cone mids combine with Radial Phase Plugs and Concentric Summation Array technology to sum coherently with the HF wavefront and dual 10-inch LF woofers that extend horizontal pattern control well into the lower octaves. The 14 built-in amplifier and processing channels provide independent power and control of each loudspeaker component, with software control of each individual cell. Anna modules are sold in groups of 24 or 12 enclosures including power and data distribution, dollies, covers, flybars and cabling.

eaw.com

L-Acoustics showed its X Series coaxial short-throw speakers for the installation and rental markets. The X8, X12 and X15 feature high-excursion neodymium drivers. For installs, models offer flexible rigging accessories and custom colors. The X8 live monitor enclosure has a conical directivity; the 90 x 60 degree X12 is a multipurpose speaker also suited for FOH applications; and the X15 has a narrow 40 x 60 degree directivity and has integrated risers for adjusting the monitor angle from 35 to 55 degrees.

l-acoustics.com



Avid is now shipping its S6L console.



Allen & Heath launched its Qu Chrome Series.



CADAC's CDC six made its AES debut.



The Nova 37 router adds functionality and flexibility to Lawo's mc²36 console.



The Hear Technologies booth was packed throughout the show.



Waves eMotion LV1 brings a software approach to live mixing.



EAW's Anna may be the Anya for the rest of us.



Nexo demoed its compact GEO M620 line array.



Tascam's DA-6400 brings 64-track recording to a 1U chassis.



Jensen showed its new direct box kit, designed for audio students.



Lectrosonics HHA handheld transmitter features interchangeable capsule heads.

Nexo's new GEO M620 is a full-range unit for stand-alone, curved array or line array application. Housed in a 22-pound, 7.5 x 14.7 x 10.3-inch cabinet with 3-point rigging, the GEO M620 combines a high-efficiency 6.5-inch woofer and 1-inch exit HF compression driver on a Hyperbolic Reflective Wavesource, to deliver nominal peaks of 127 dB. Nexo's new ID Series is a compact, low profile/high output speaker intended for under-balcony, front/side fill applications, and is and is designed to work with line arrays in acoustically challenging spaces.

nexo-sa.com

Yamaha's DXS18 — the company's highest output subwoofer — offers onboard 1,020-watt Class-D amplification and DSP processing for 136 dB max SPLs and extended LF response down to 32 Hz. It also features a cardioid mode setting for systems with two or more DXS18's and has M20 fly points and a 35mm pole socket. MSRP is \$1,949 and it's shipping now.

yamahaproaudio.com

» Mics, Mics, Mics!

DPA debuted its d:screet Slim Miniature Omnidirectional Microphone, an ultracompact condenser model that is perfect for theater applications. The flat, short mic's cable runs perpendicular to the sound inlet for a tiny footprint. Used with the detachable buttonhole mount or concealer, it becomes completely invisible, yet offers a sound on a par with DPA's other d:screet omni's. Deliveries are slated to begin around year-end, and adapters for all standard wireless systems will be offered.

dpamicrophones.com

Lewitt Audio is finally shipping its long-awaited flagship MTP-940 CM handheld condenser mic. Features include: selectable polar response (cardioid, wide cardioid or supercardioid), a three-position attenuation pad, and a three-position high pass filter, with recessed slide switched and illuminated indication of mic settings for quick and easy handling even in dark environments.

le Witt-audio.com

Microtech Gefell was showing its latest dynamic handheld mics, designed for live vocal applications. The MD-100 is a cardioid model; the MD-110 is a hypercardioid and an omni MD-120 rounds out the line. All have a distinctive look with a dark bronze finish.

microtechgefell.de

Lectrosonics debuted HHA, a high-performance Digital Hybrid Wireless handheld transmitter, which features a wide tuning range of 75 MHz or three standard Lectrosonics blocks, selectable RF power of 50 or 100 mW and IR sync for quick setup and a programmable external button that can be set as to function mute, cough, power or talkback switch — or bypassed entirely. Its interchangeable capsule mount accepts variety of industry-standard dynamic and condenser elements.

The HHA is an ideal companion to Lectrosonics' new Venue 2 wide bandwidth high-performance modular (up to six-channel) receiver system, also launched at AES. Specs of the compander-free systems include a 40 Hz to 20 kHz (± 1 dB) bandwidth and 105 dBA signal to noise. The patented Digital Hybrid Wireless process uses an analog FM carrier to transmit a specially encoded signal that delivers highly spectrum-efficient digital audio quality.

lectrosonics.com

Shure is now offering its ULX-D digital wireless systems in the 900 MHz band. Targeted for use where UHF "TV" band spectrum is limited or congested, ULX-D 900 MHz is optimized for use within regional variations of the 902-928 MHz spectrum. The new 900 MHz option offers the same high standards other ULX-D systems and the latest version of Wireless Workbench software will a 900MHz Site Survey tool.

shure.com

» Production Essentials

Neutrik — in a sneak peak of what may lie in the future — showed a possible replacement for the (now aging) 58-year-old XLR connector, with a new design that's smaller, yet robust. It will be interesting to see how manufacturers react to the new proposal. Neutrik was also showing a 10-pin that fits in the same form factor as a standard XLR connector but can handle four twisted pairs of Cat 5e data along with up to 16A of power at 50 volts on two large power pins.

neutrik.us

Tascam's DA-6400 is a single-rackspace recorder stores 64 tracks of 48 kHz/24-bit or 32 tracks at 96 kHz/24-bit audio to an internal SSD drive caddy for live and event recording. Professional I/O options include MADI and DANTE, and it's offered with single or dual redundant power supplies.

tascam.com

DirectOut showed MADI.MONI, a new MADI tester and mobile MADI monitoring tool. Specifically designed for MADI testing and monitoring in the field, the pocket-sized device has the smallest footprint of any mobile MADI monitor on the market. Operation is extremely straightforward via four push buttons.

directout.eu

MOTU, long known for its DAW software and studio interfaces, demoed the Stage-B16 stage box, which offers up to 192 kHz performance with onboard DSP for mixing and effects processing and connectivity to a digital snake, audio network or host computer via AVB Ethernet or high-speed USB 2.0. Features include 16 mic inputs, eight line-level analog outs, four channels of AES/EBU digital output and an EtherCon AVB Network port.

motu.com

Jensen Transformers announced the JIK-DB1 Iso-Kit, a passive direct box in easy-to-assemble kit form, developed specifically for recording schools and other education facilities that teach pro audio. The kit includes everything needed to build the JIK-DB1, with a tough chassis; printed circuit board (with beefy solder points that make it easy for students to learn to solder); Jensen transformer; rugged switches for ground lift, pad and polarity reverse; ¼" and XLR connectors plus the full complement of resistors and capacitors. Should the student mess up the circuit, the Iso-Kit can be returned to Jensen and repaired for a modest fee. The Iso-Kit is \$125 and only available through select educational facilities.

jensen-transformers.com

» More to Come

There were other cool products at AES, and we will present these in next month's new products section as well as on fohonline.com, so stay tuned for more action. Meanwhile the AES show returns to the Los Angeles Convention Center next year from September 28 to October 1, 2016, so start making those travel plans now! FOH