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PL+S Frankfurt

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IT'S THE **PERFORMANCE** THAT MATTERS.

ULTRA-COMPACT SIZE

LOW WEIGHT OF ONLY 8 KG

BUILT-IN AMPLIFICATION & DSP

M-F3A

A masterpiece of sophisticated German engineering

M-F3A is an ultra-compact active line array system offering crystal-clear sound reproduction with extremely low tonal coloration and studio quality highs due to its hornless design.

The unique PA sound is achieved by incorporating eight high-efficiency 2.8" neodymium mid-frequency drivers and 7 pieces of 1" direct radiation dome tweeters into each unit.

All drivers are mounted on an A4 paper-sized front surface in a cabinet weighing only 8 kg including the rigging, 400W class-D amplification and DSP.

THE ALEX SCHLOESSER COLUMN

Digital or Analog?

I would like to spend this column on the choice of gear at your front of house position. To be honest, I don't think this is really an option anymore these days. The upside of using digital technology is so big, that it is impossible to ignore. The flexibility of those systems and the ability to store and recall all settings is an unbeatable upside. At the same time the few downside issues of digital technology in the past, have been very well addressed and there is no reason why Analog would "sound" better than digital, if you are choosing a decent digital platform. And finally, the digital technology becomes cheaper and cheaper and ever more powerful and a good performance does not cost a fortune anymore.

However, what are you looking for and what parameters do you want to check on any piece of gear to evaluate what quality level the gear is working in? On the hardware parameters, there are only two pieces relevant to check: 1. the dynamics of the A/D converters, that play a major role in the Sonic performance of any mixer. 2. The quality of the preamps for microphones, as those need to be of decent quality to enjoy the benefits of everything afterward. The converters of any mixer are also where the big dollars go, as those things also make a big difference in pricing, but of course this pays back big time along the way.

Once you are digital, everything that you do is only bits and bytes and it is zero's and one's only. So here the speed of processing and the number of bits and bytes play a major role in the quality of your sonic performance and there is one thing that most people forget. In the digital domain things are easy, but this is not only about adding those one's and zero's up only. After all the characteristics of any Analog gear is non-linear and this needs to be represented in the way you "add" those bits and bytes up. So, this is all about the algorithm.

There is no parameter in any spec sheet to describe this properly, so as a user of this technology you need to check and verify, that what you spend your money on, is worth it. Here is where it gets tricky, because you will need to challenge the gear that you intend to buy and then see how it performs and if it still sounds great under those challenges. One microphone or one Stereo playback will sound pretty much the same on any decent digital gear, but 16 or 24 channels of Microphone inputs will make all the difference and now you will be able to hear how good those algorithms really are and if they "add" up in an analogue way. Since it is so easy to bring a

Multitrack by harddisk or USB Stick these days, I would strongly encourage you to use this for an evaluation of any gear before you make a purchase decision. Checking those things in a controlled environment and without the stress of an artist on stage or the doors opening in 15 minutes will allow you to find the right gear.

Last but not least the big 'thing' for digital mixers is the User Interface and the friendliness in which you are able to walk up to the gear and be able to operate it. There are different tastes and each manufacturer will sell you on their philosophy. I have always felt that the gear is there to help me do my job and the gear should not force me to work along its limitations. In this regard, if a user interface requires a lot of explanations, then it is not such a good user interface, or as Einstein puts it: Everything should be as simple as possible, but not simpler!

You are very welcome to keep this interactive and to share what you want to hear about and which topics you want to see addressed. Please send your queries to: alex@asaudio.de