

GERMANY

Four in a row for Duran Audio

Central audio control is the central theme, indeed, to the Open Source Festival, writes **Paul Watson**

Dutch-headquartered Duran Audio provided the PA systems for all stages at this year's Open Source Festival in Düsseldorf, using its WinControl and DDA software to control its AXYS line systems and steerable Target line arrays.

The mixed music genre festival attracted over 3,000 visitors, tripling last year's attendance. The main event ran from early afternoon until late evening on 7 August at the idyllic countryside location of Grafenburg racecourse. For the hardcore party goers, a number of late-night after-parties were held at some of the top hotspots in Düsseldorf's city centre, all of which ran into the small hours. Venues included Zakk nightclub, Red Kompot, Salon



Acts on the main staged covered a range of musical styles

des Amateurs, and The Pop Missile Club at Pretty Vacant.

At the main event, there were three outdoor stages – the main stage, the Carhartt stage, and the new bands stage – accommodating a total of 34 acts. This was the fourth successive year that Duran Audio has provided the sound system. PCs with WinControl running were on all three stages, each overviewed by a Duran Audio System Tech.

Duran Audio's Uli Ritter says that using DDA (Digital Directive Analyser) software and having WinControl onsite was key in meeting the festival's huge 99dB LEQ environmental noise restriction.

"DDA calculates all the settings and WinControl uploads the files and changes them on the system," says Ritter. "We managed to achieve an amazing 20dB reduction in the sub frequencies at the back of the Carhartt stage; and at the main stage we took even more out."

PA settings were set the day before the festival using DDA, but when the heavens opened mid-afternoon, the punters by the main stage ran for cover in the grandstand opposite, which meant adjustments had to be made – and quickly. Ritter reveals that due to WinControl, this posed no problem.

"All we had to do was switch in the main PA system and adjust the throw of the line array into the grandstand," he says. "We opened it up to a wider angle using one of the eight pre-configured presets; WinControl enabled us to do this in seconds."

The main stage PA was an AXYS Target line array system configured L/R: a hang of seven T-280s and seven B-215s each side; a mono sub block consisting of four pairs of B-121s with a single U-16 speaker on top; and a pair of T-2820s positioned L/R for frontfill. UFM monitor speakers were used on stage. The Carhartt stage PA was also an AXYS Target system: the set-up consisted of a hang of 8xU-16s each side and a stack of 5xB-215s per side in a cardioid set-up, with a pair of U-16s for the frontfills. The new bands stage featured a Source G2 system: one T07 sat on top of a pair of B-07s per side.

All FOH consoles were by Crest Audio: a GT, a GTX and an X8. Main stage FOH engineer Dirk Fleck ran 48 channels and his outboard included Tube Tech compressors, Drawmer gates and Lexicon PCM 70s, 80s and 90s; all microphones used on stage were by Shure and Sennheiser.

The main stage monitor desk was a Yamaha M7CL, operated by Mathias Hentschel from stage left. Although his preferred console is a DiGiCo SD8, he was satisfied enough working from the M7CL – somewhat of a festival standard for monitoring.

Although the four acts on the main stage differed quite dramatically in style (from bizarre poetry being screamed over heavy rock music, to popular rap act Dendemann) Hentschel says it didn't affect the way he worked.

"I have a routine as I have been a monitor engineer for 15 years now," says Hentschel. "I adapt the way I mix depending on which console I'm using, but the different styles of music don't affect me; every musician is different and my job is just to keep each one happy."

Hentschel ran 48 channels from the M7CL, generating eight separate monitor mixes and one stereo mix for a set of [Sennheiser] in-ears. There were eight wedges on stage and no sidefills. No outboard was used whatsoever; all FX were created from inside the console.

On the Carhartt stage, which featured mainly DJs and instrumental acts, Michael Ochs worked FOH from a 24-channel Crest Audio Century console. His outboard included Klark Teknik stereo compression and a Lexicon PCM 90 reverb. Ochs worked with the Duran Audio equipment at Open Source in 2008 with a similar cardioid rig, so he already had a good impression of what was possible with SPL beam shaping.

"At around 20-25m from the stage, there was a strong drop down in SPL level because there were a number of market tents close by," says Ochs. "If you crouched down on your knees at that point, you could literally hear that you were still in the beam; and when you stood up again, the frequencies in the high and mid ranges just fell out."

Ochs adds that because of the quality of the Duran Audio directional bass system, he was able to eliminate a lot of the low mid and bass frequencies on stage.

"Even with analogue turntables on stage, I don't get much feedback from the needle," says Ochs. "In 2008 I had six analogue DJs to deal with and I had no problems at all; this year we had mostly electronic music, so it's been even easier." ☺

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