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Within its Creations division offerings, L-Acoustics outfits its Island Prestige solution with 23 audio channels and design-friendly modular seating.

WHY L-ACOUSTICS ENTERED THE **RESIDENTIAL AUDIO MARKET**

Regarded as one of the preeminent manufacturers in the commercial sound industry, L-Acoustics is bringing its Creations division to residential integrators and their customers. **ROBERT ARCHER**



WITH USERS such as Adele, Red Hot Chili Peppers, ZZ Top and Andrea Bocelli, L-Acoustics supports some of the biggest names in music. To bring its sonic expertise to the home audio market, L-Acoustics recently launched its Creations division, a move that also serves as yet

another indicator of the increasing 'resimercial' presence in custom integration.

A French company, L-Acoustics formed in 1992 through a line that featured its line-source array solutions. L-Acoustics says that line arrays provides the professional audio industry with solutions that are lighter and more space friendly than traditional "walls of sound" systems.

Besides the ergonomic benefits of line arrays, L-Acoustics points out that its products also provide professional audio engineers with solutions that achieve greater throw and directional capabilities, and high levels of clarity.

So why take these concepts and products beyond the commercial AV world now?

IMMERSIVE SOUND OPENS MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Over the years, the company has diversified its product portfolio to include hardware, software, training and system design.

L-Acoustics says its latest initiative, regarding the Creations division development, was devised to provide users with concert-grade audio and technologies for use in auditoria and sensory environments.

Christian Heil, president and founder of L-Acoustics, says the Creations division began through the company's research & development (R&D) efforts to develop immersive audio solutions for the live sound market.

"The starting point for L-Acoustics Creations was the research and development effort that began in 2011 and culminated with the launch of L-ISA Immersive Hyperreal Sound technology for live events in 2016," Heil explains. "I was convinced that it was time to move beyond the stereo paradigm for live events and address the lack of correct localization while improving upon spatial resolution and detail. Too much information was getting lost for the audience between the live show and the delivery of that rich musical performance via just two channels, stereo left and right. The loudspeakers were physically distant from where the actual performance was taking place.

"L-ISA remedies the shortcoming of stereo, reconnecting audio, performance, and emotion. L-ISA also provides professional end users with a familiar ecosystem and new, easy-to-use software tools that enable object-based mixing to achieve hyperrealistic results. L-ISA technology has been implemented by over 5,000 shows to date playing to 10 million spectators in shows across the world and across musical genres."

Once L-ISA hit the market, he continues, it sparked the next consideration the company had of whether it would be plausible to bring the L-ISA audio experience into the home audio market.

PRO AUDIO DIFFERENTIATOR

Entering a market that is saturated with products, including several brands that have fostered decades of consumer loyalty, presents L-Acoustics with a formidable



COURTESY REFIK ANADOL

L-Acoustics embraces a variety of 'resimercial' markets. This large-scale installation in New York City by Refik Anadol is a "mixed reality experiment deploying machine learning algorithms on a dataset of 300 million image," according to the company and features 32 channels of L-Acoustics L-ISA Immersive Hyperreal Sound technology paired with Barco projection.

challenge to overcome for residential success. It's something also encountered by a handful of other companies that have made the transition from commercial-only to adding a residential element, such as Meyer Sound, Alcons Audio (*see sidebar*) and the studio monitor company PMC, and likely to continue as more manufacturers find their dealers diversifying solutions.

Heil states that despite a crowded market, L-Acoustics can leverage its professional DNA and nearly four decades of live music production to stand out.

He emphasizes that because of the demands of live music reproduction L-Acoustics' products are engineered to provide high levels of performance and reliability.

"In addition to threshold characteristics such as fidelity, time-alignment, and accurate reproduction across the full range of frequencies, our installations are designed to handle the extreme dynamics of a live concert and the rigors of touring, implying a high level of robustness and dependability," Heil comments.

"Our residential solutions are not manufactured separately from our concert and touring solutions. They are the same, produced on our assembly lines in

France, made exclusively of components manufactured in Europe from suppliers in long term relationships with L-Acoustics. It's worthwhile to note that L-Acoustics employs over 500 people today and roughly a quarter of the team consists of engineers in R&D and application in the field. Our residential endeavors benefit from the same innovation and scientific firepower as our pro audio clients."

According to Heil, L-Acoustics is approaching the residential market similarly to how it addresses commercial, by building a network of certified dealers in strategic locations. These locations will receive support from L-Acoustics applications and training teams, and this will ensure that L-Acoustics systems benefit from same consistent install processes that include modeling, integration and onsite calibration.

Heil adds that once an integrator signs on and becomes authorized dealer, that company will be able to address any type of AV installation, including standalone audio systems and AV systems that employ L-Acoustics' L-ISA Immersive Hyperreal Sound technology, such as its Bubbles spatialized recordings in 23.1 channels, Island

and Ocean offerings. Syva 2.0 packages begin at roughly \$20,000.

“Island represents an elegant solution to the specific use case of OLED, LED and MicroLED walls. Unlike projection screens, LED walls are not transonic and thus loudspeaker placement becomes a challenge,” Heil explains. “The self-contained, immersive nature of Island in tandem with a large LED wall provides plug-and-play audio delivery.”

The idea, Heil notes, would be to “elevate” the home listening experience to bring it to the levels imagined by music creators.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET SOLUTIONS MIX

Heil admits that realistically most of L-Acoustics Creations integration clients will be luxury consumers, but the company’s plan is to also support less obvious system deployments.

As immersive audio continues to gain momentum through applications such as theaters and other commercial vertical markets, solutions such as L-ISA can be used in a variety of ways beyond traditional installations, he says.

“Despite being a high-end solution, we believe that as immersive experiences multiply — in theater, art installations, museums, experiential gatherings, new approaches to wellness and well-being — more curators, architects, experience designers and creators will understand how truly immersive, hyperreal sound can transport the public in profound ways,” Heil says.

Consider the aforementioned, unique Island solution, for instance, which employs the BluSpace standard featuring 23 speakers, including five overheads, and two subwoofers to immerse listeners in everything from movies and music to nature soundscapes that piggyback on the biophilia trend. For integrators who work with interior designers, the Island Prestige puts just as much emphasis on aesthetics with high-gloss lacquer exterior finishes of “natural” and “night” wood grain veneer patterns, as well as ergonomic, modular and cozy seating.

“The visual arts and technologies have made tremendous strides in recent years. Now the biggest win for qualitative leaps in user experience lies in audio. Audio is cool again. Future L-Acoustics Creations integration partners will have the opportunity to expand their businesses not only to include the most state-

of-the-art futuristic residential solutions, but to also offer a whole new creative and experiential palette of applications,” Heil says.

“We truly believe we are in the right place at the right time to enable a new wave of thinking about sound as a vector of emotion.” **CE Pro**

Veteran Commercial Brand Rocks Home Theater Design

WHEN IT COMES TO commercial audio companies catching on in the residential and resimercial frays, count Dutch company Alcons Audio among those that have made the recent jump similarly to L-Acoustics’ latest endeavor. Alcons, a mainstay in the cinema, installation and touring/rental industries, has exhibited at CEDIA Expo in recent years, including teaming with projector maker Barco Residential — itself a commercial fixture that has rolled out high-performance solutions for the residential market — for home theater demos.

This luxury home theater epitomizes the strides Alcons has made in the resi sector. Alcons Audio’s David Rahn and Walter Fortmüller of Austrian integrator SAVO helped turn the home theater dreams for an Arizona-based client into reality.

The system comprises three Alcons CRMS mkII three-way Cinema Reference Monitor System units, featuring a patented RBN401 pro-ribbon driver, plus four CRMSC-SRIW compact in-wall reference surrounds and four CRMSC-SRHV compact horizontal/vertical reference surround. The system is powered and controlled by four Sentinel3 amplified loudspeaker controllers.

“A key aspect with the new immersive sound formats is to create a coherent, smooth 3D soundfield around the listener, without any gaps and apparent transitions,” says Fortmüller, who provided his acoustical design and system tuning specialist skills for the project.

“The outstanding dispersion characteristics of the Alcons C-series, together with close to perfect timbre matching between speakers, allowed us to deliver flawless audio quality in every seat. Seat-to-seat variation is minimized with balanced and closely matched on-axis and off-axis response — the whole listening area becomes the ‘money seat,’” he adds.

“Even with 11 speaker channels, object-based sound formats place and move sound events between those fixed speaker locations. It is critical to have very stable, focused phantom images. Alcons products perform exceptionally well in that regard.”



The eight-seat theater features 11 Alcons Audio speakers delivering the immersive audio.