

UNITED KINGDOM

# A vision of the future

3D AudioScape helps bring The Future of Sound to Goldsmiths College, reports Simon Duff

The Great Hall in London's Goldsmiths College was the setting for March's Future of Sound/Future of Light event, designed to showcase the latest in cutting-edge audiovisual acts and hosted by Martyn Ware, electronic pioneer and founder of Human League and Heaven 17. Part performance, part art education presentation the show explored the future of experiential art and sound. In tandem with Illustrious, Ware's creative venture with Yazoo/Erasure co-founder



Martyn Ware hosted the event

Vince Clarke, Future of Sound began putting on events in the UK in 2003 presenting ambient compositions that utilise a ground-breaking 3D surround

system, called 3D AudioScape. It is capable of transforming a conventional room into a sports stadium, or a concert hall into a cubicle. "This is the holy grail of audio: 3D sonic imaging that challenges audiences to embrace a new take on embracing sound," says Ware.

3DAudioScape is a Mac-based software and hardware surround-sound 3D Audio FX and composition solution aimed at the theatre, design, art and cinema industries. Developed by Paul Gillieron Acoustic Design, with extensive input from Ware and Clarke, it allows users to position up to 16 sound sources, in real time, anywhere in the three-dimensional soundscape created within an array of at least eight speakers. A composition rendered in 3D AudioScape can be reconfigured for any speaker placement or size of room, by entering the individual co-ordinates of each speaker in relation to the centre of the space.

Ware comments: "With our system we can tickle a sense of reality in people



Russian theremin artist Andrey Smirnov was a highlight

at a very deep level. The best cinemas only have sound on one plane. They don't have a height access. We can move sound in any direction, including up."

For Goldsmiths, 12 speaker positions were set up. A standard left/right FOH stack on stage consisted of d&b audiotechnik Q1s and Q subs, handling the speech and some of the acts choosing to work in conventional stereo. For the 3D processing a further four speaker points around the sides of the hall consisted of d&b M4s and Q subs with an additional six d&b Q7s set up in the balcony either side of the hall. Providing the PA and a DiGiCo SD8 handling the PA and a DiGiCo SD8 handling FOH and monitors were Encore Sounds who has been working with Illustrious and Future of Sound Projects since 2000 when they put a huge 3D system in the Woolwich Arsenal when Erasure played live.

Illustrious content which is either in Logic format or rendered as B Format (which plays directly from 3D AudioScape). We also take live inputs from the different artists. Inputs usually come via a MOTU 8pre which gives us both digital and analogue options and our outputs are sent via a MOTU Ultralite or two depending on how many speakers we're using. We give the FOH one feed per speaker and they sum the lower speakers to the subs."

Acts performing on the night included The Sancho Plan who produced a live interactive show using electronic drum pads to control a cast of animated characters. The trio used AudioScape in two ways: first by plugging in their stereo mix signal to utilise what band leader Ed Cookson refers to as "some fantastic spatial effects that broaden the sound" and secondly for an under-

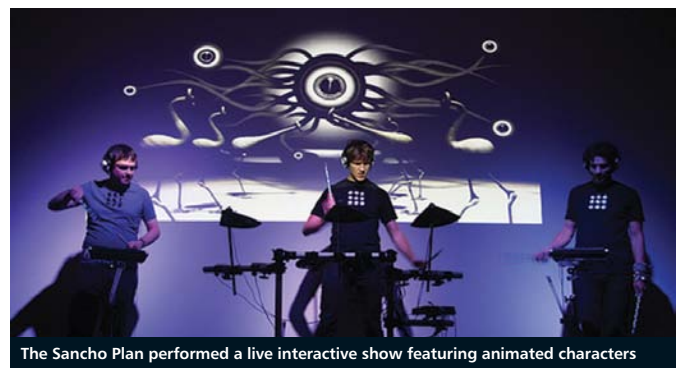
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The Sancho Plan performed a live interactive show featuring animated characters

Glenn Pearson, Encore's project manager, gives his view of the 3D AudioScape system. "I have heard a number of these systems over the years but most of them didn't seem to do what they said they did. The specialisation on this system however works really well and isn't just dependant on being in one sweet spot in the room."

Mixing at the SD8 was Encore mix engineer, David Howells. He commented on the set up for the evening: "Most of the sources come from computer, but we are using Shure UHF-R radio systems for vocals. Regarding the SD8 we are trying one out on demo, as we already own a D1. The SD8 is packed with features, has excellent I/O and bussing capabilities, with great sonic performance, in a small package and it is reasonably priced. All of this makes it a good choice for a hire company with a diverse portfolio of work such as ours."

Responsibility for processing the acts into the 3D AudioScape was Future of Sound regular live and studio sound engineer Asa Bennett. For the event he ran 3D AudioScape alongside Logic on the same Macbook. He explains how he works: "For the show we run

water animated piece. Cookson says: "We designed this so that the sounds of the characters being played can be moved independently around the 3D sound-field by our real-time MIDI control messages that we send to the AudioScape controller."

London-based design collective United Visual Artists showed highlights of their swinging light/sound pendulum installation 'Chorus'. Scanner presented, in tandem with visual artist Sophie Clements, extracts from their collaborative work including an installation shown at The Royal Opera House last year where images were mirrored upon themselves producing a hypnotic tunnel of light and sound. Other highlights included a mesmerising performance from Russian theremin artist Andrey Smirnov and a remix version of The Human League's early classic *Being Boiled* complete with live vocals from Ware. The nationwide tour travels to The Sage, Gateshead on 23 May. 📧

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