

PRO AUDIO REVIEW

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First Look

BY WAYNE BECKER

QSC has widely been known for their power amplifiers. Their reliable and accurate sound has been a mainstay in touring and installed sound for decades. However within the past two years, QSC has made a bid for their place in the loudspeaker market, coming out with some very good, cost effective designs. One of their latest designs, the ISIS WideLine array has opened to a critical audience of audio professionals.

The design objective for the WideLine array as stated by QSC is "To design a compact system that would perform as a larger system in terms of power handling, frequency response and coverage. The primary focus is to be on the regional corporate user in ball-room situations, theaters and the myriad of small to medium size events that confront such users daily."

And recently, I had a chance to demo the ISIS WideLine arrays at the Trump Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The demo was held in the main ball-rooms A&B along with the entire line up of the latest QSC installed sound offerings. QSC did it up right with a full live rig including a Yamaha DM2000 digital mixing console, a host of outboard effects and of course QSC power amps and loudspeaker processors all running under the control of their QSCControl.net platform software, Venue Manager. And not only did they have various program material, but they had an entire live band made up of piano, drums, upright bass, guitar and vocalist.

The room roughly 150 feet x 150 feet was mostly empty, had plush carpeted floors, stucco walls and some moveable partitions, your basic huge conference room. A few chairs were set up in front of the room in the middle

QSC ISIS WideLine Array Loudspeaker System

section for attendees. The WideLine arrays were hoisted to both sides of the stage area sporting eight array modules along with subs on both sides. The frequency response seemed to be very consistent and the pattern control was well controlled from the front of the room to the back of the room. The horizontal response was very even and articulated throughout the coverage pattern. Even though the room presented a delay off of the back wall, the stack still presented a clear and unmarred direct field presence.

What I liked immediately about the sound of the WideLine is that it didn't have a "hyped" high end, but rather a smooth midrange transitioning to a clean but not overly bright top end. Although not overbearing, I did notice a bit of "tubbiness" in the lower midrange, I attributed that to the room. Overall I was impressed with the wide horizontal coverage and linear and even transition of frequency response as I moved to different seating locations from the front to the back of the room and from side to side between arrays. The roll off of the pattern was decisive as well. The intelligibility was good, even in this less-than-ideal acoustical setting. I was also impressed with the mid-range frequency shading demonstration. It seemed to make a noticeable difference in the response and behavior of the array. Although I would have liked to do a few more tests with a male and female speaking voice, the live sound of the vocalist and the program material of various artists (I selected the CDs) certainly provided me with enough proof that these arrays are certainly a good solution for this type of environment and other stage settings where



quick set-up and quality sound are required.

THE PRODUCT

The ISIS WideLine Array is made of a lightweight composite cabinet, and comes in black or white finish with an optional weatherized version (black only) and weighs about 70 pounds. Its multiple aperture diffraction slot waveguide provides a wide dispersion of 140 degrees horizontal and 10 degrees vertical. It also provides three-way, biamp or triamp design with selectable frequency shading between the enclosure's two woofers, which are 10-inch, 16-ohm long excursion, high power (380 watts), low-frequency transducers.

The cabinet also contains a single 1.4-inch exit, 3-inch diaphragm, 16 ohm neodymium high frequency compression driver capable of handling 80 watts. The hardware design incorporates all components necessary for easy to use box-to-box rigging. The WideLine's internal mid-range frequency shading can be switched to either of the two woofers. Both drivers handle the low frequencies, but only one driver handles the mids, this is said to create a smoother pattern control at the mid-high crossover. The

selectable frequency-shading circuit enables an operator to redirect mid-bass build up without touching the EQ, for improved intelligibility in an otherwise problematic frequency range. A switch allows the sound engineer to orient the enclosure's low frequency pattern for use as either house left or right, without the need to flip boxes. The modular design allows for the quick connection and rigging of the cabinets into an array. The frequency response is stated to be 55 Hz to 18 kHz and

a sensitivity of 97 dB. The dimensions of the cabinet are 10.75 inches H x 27.5 inches W x 20.25 inches D.

Wayne Becker is vice president of sales for Communication Systems, Inc. and has worked in the pro audio and systems integration business for 23 years. He also owns Westwires Digital USA, a music production and consulting company based in Allentown, Penn. He can be contacted at wbecker@systemsbycsi.com

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