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1Rebel High-Intensity Super Gym Opens in Riyadh, With High-Octane Martin Audio

MSL specifies multiples of BlacklineX and ADORN for pioneering fitness brand



When Middlesex Sound & Light (MSL) undertook a contract in Saudi Arabia 16 months ago - to invest a brand new gym concept with a high octane ‘club-spec’ technical infrastructure—they little knew what was waiting around the corner.

“We shipped the gear out to Riyadh in February last year, and the following month COVID struck,” recalls project manager Toby Jones. “Rather than suspend the work, they decided to press ahead.” Engaging with local crews - communicating via video calls and different programming platforms - when they finally managed to fly out to commission the system during the brief pre-Christmas break from lockdown, it was little short of a miracle.

While this represented a joint venture between 1Rebel in the UK (represented by James Balfour and Giles Dean) and Pulse Fitness Group’s Fahad Alhagbani and Nathan Clute, there have subsequently been a number of venues open in London, all bearing the familiar imprint of Martin Audio BlacklineX loudspeakers.

“We had already specced Martin Audio in other 1Rebel venues as they represent great value for money, and display tremendous sonic quality,” said Toby. Large quantities of Martin Audio Blackline X12, X10, X8 and X115 and SX212 subwoofers were supplied locally by Martin Audio partner’s Dubai-based distributor, PRO LAB, along with 16 ADORN A55 for the waiting, changing and reception areas.

1Rebel Riyadh boasts separate male and female studios (with female being the larger). Each has its own clearly delineated fitness zones. Knowing that the spec needed to match the high intensity of these studios, with trainers curating their own playlists, Jones set to work on the original concept design with celebrated lighting designer Durham Marengi.

RIDE is the high workout Spin room where 12 x 4m trusses are flown down the length of the room. Two Blackline X115 subs are ground stacked, one on top of the other to the left-hand side of the stage. Two Blackline X12 boxes, forming the FOH audio, are located on the truss above the instructor, with a single X12 in the middle of the truss pointing down as a reference monitor. Here, a number of video panels in an exploded format are located behind the instructor position and equally down both sides of the room. Meanwhile ten matched pairs of X10s and three SX212 subs are flown down the length of the room, offering the time-aligned delay boxes.

The level of intensity is automatically cued to the lighting. “The instructors have full control of the lighting by way of an interactive 22” touch screen and become performers in their own right as well as handling the ops,” says the MSL project manager.

RUMBLE is the boxing studio, where eight wall-mounted Blackline X10 are evenly distributed around the perimeter, with a pair of SX112 at either end of the room again providing high level club sound.

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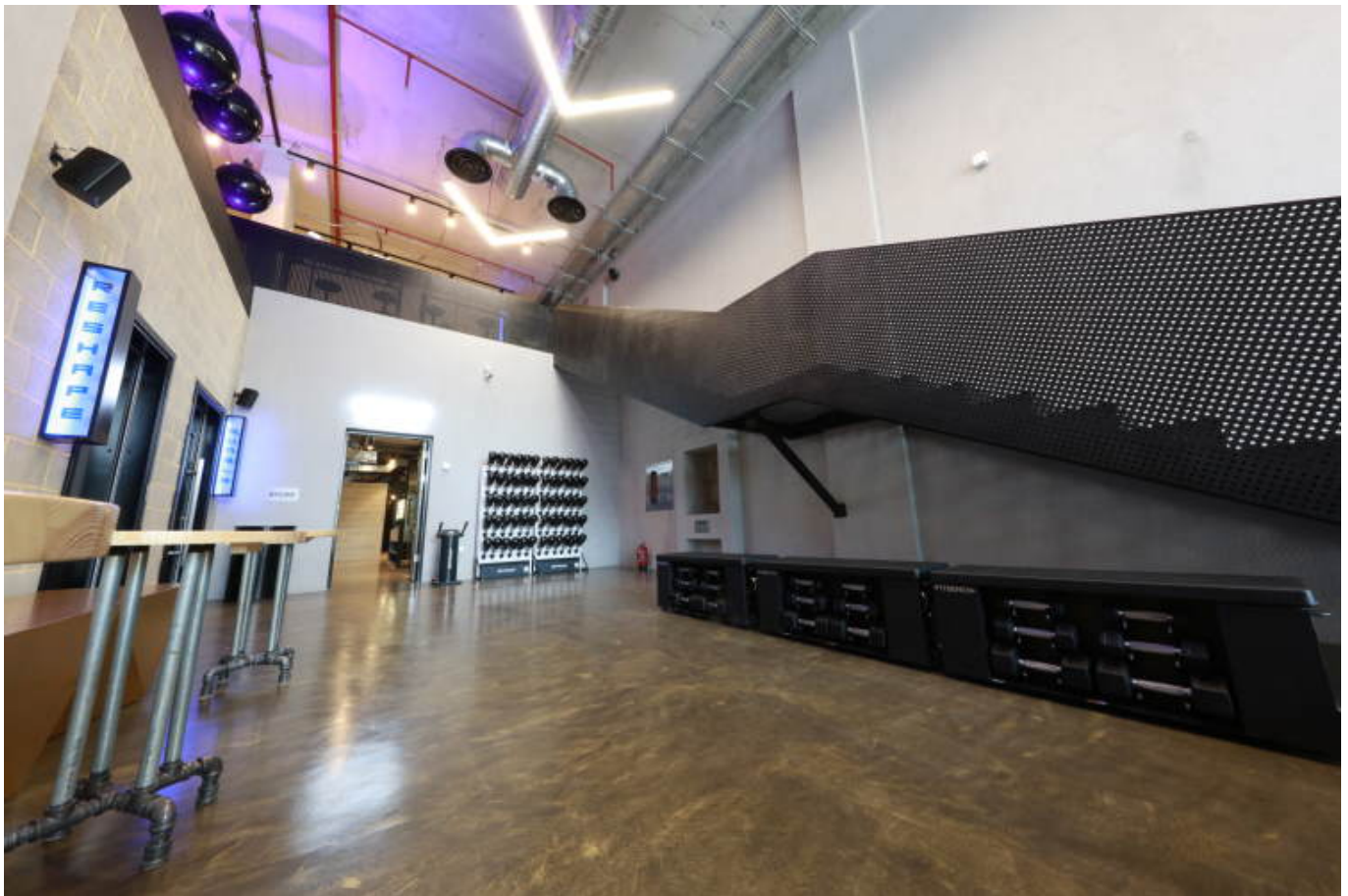
RESHAPE, used largely for treadmill running, cardio and box work, sees 15 Blackline X8 around the perimeter, with a pair of SX112 subwoofers on a central truss.

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Finally, the FUNCTIONAL STUDIO, a facility to be used by Personal Trainers, contains a further eight Blackline X8 speakers and two single floor-mounted SX112 subs.



Other than RIDE, the Male studios are largely a mirror image of the Female. All rooms have multiple touch screens so can be controlled locally from set positions.

Control is handled in a BSS Soundweb London environment, and each room is fitted with an audio interface and equipped with Trantec radio mics. Because of the high humidity, MSL fabricated their own rotary analogue control panels, using custom made fascia panels and military grade rotary pots.

Describing the many logistical challenges of remote implementation when stuck more than 3,000 miles away, Toby Jones said, "I was constantly sending wiring diagrams and Face Timing with representatives in Saudi, while a local crew undertook the installation under our direction. We built all the racks, loaded them in the UK and air freighted them ... around six tons of kit in all. We did all the audio testing remotely ... it was insane!

"The fact that we managed to pull it off was due to great team work. Ten years ago we couldn't have achieved what we have, as the technology simply wasn't around."

Nathan Clute further summed up the effectiveness of the fit-out. "We are extremely impressed with the quality of the system and level of execution. With our partners at Middlesex Sound & Lighting we were able to design and implement a bespoke solution using what we believe to be the best products in the market, to create

something previously unseen; the front-end controls are simple and user-friendly, despite the technical complexity within the design.”

Delivering top-class audio had been a key objective, he said. “As our clubs require us to deliver multiple experiences within a tight envelope, we needed an audio solution that allowed us to operate independent zones, each at different volume levels with different music genres.

“Within our studios, we needed a solution that had the power to deliver intensity without distortion, with uniform coverage throughout, and with the ability to have clear vocals regardless of the volume. More often than not, operators try to overcome poor audio infrastructure with volume, which does nothing but distort the user experience. We selected Martin Audio due to their ability to present a clear and proven track record of similar solutions, and we were overwhelmingly satisfied with the system they delivered.”

1Rebel Riyadh is the first of a planned roll out in Saudi Arabia.

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