HK Audio for Board Budapest’s A38

Picture: Olah Peter



The terrace stage at Budapest’s iconic A38 has had an audio refresh with HK Audio now powering the party. The 300-person performance space which focuses on electronic music is now covered by a CONTOUR X solution, supplied by local partner, Eurhythmics. Permanently moored on the banks of the Danube, A38 is a unique venue. The ship itself is a former stone carrying barge that has been completely gutted and reimagined by a team of architects, ship engineers, acoustic designers and electricians into a three-stage live performance venue. Over more than two decades since its renovation, A38 has hosted countless performances from international artists in every genre, as well as being the location for numerous live recordings and TV broadcasts. Today, its three stages see multiple performances every week throughout the summer season, making A38 one of the most popular venues in Budapest.

The terrace stage at the bow of the ship is a 300-person area that largely caters to EDM performances, particularly drum and bass. Its aging sound system was not delivering at the levels the A38 team required with the subs creating a particularly noisy stage and a difficult mix environment. The team decided a replacement was

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required for the 2025 summer season, leading to the search for a new solution.

Eurythmics had hosted a demo day at A38 earlier in the year to show off the capabilities of HK Audio's extensive range. Based on that experience, the A38 team got back in touch with Eurythmics to see if HK Audio had the right solution to meet the needs and acoustic challenges of the terrace stage. "It's a pretty big venue and it's half open and half closed," explains Gábor Major from Eurythmics. "That makes it interesting to work on the acoustics for the space as the roof is not symmetrical."

To cater to this challenging space, Eurythmics supplied four CONTOUR CX 210 LT cabinets flown in pairs either side of the stage with low frequency support from the same number of C Sub CF118 subwoofers ground-stacked in pairs either side of the stage. The solution is completed with a pair of CX 8 speakers for delays and six Linear 5 MK2 110 XA put to use as monitors. "A38 wanted to have a point source solution rather than a line array but the terrace is quite a long area to cover," explains Major. "The CX210 LT was the perfect choice because they could throw all the way to the back of the space and still sounded great."

A further challenge came from the location of the open-air venue. "A38 is moored in a residential area with flats very close to it, so we didn't want the sound to leak out and disturb people," states Major. "The CX210 LT has rotatable horns, so we were able to alter the coverage pattern to focus the sound inside the boat. We calculated the coverage in EASE to confirm this, and everything worked how we planned it to, it was the perfect choice."

One of the major improvements that A38 has seen since the installation has been with low end control. "With the old system, when you pushed up the lows everything was on the stage and you couldn't mix anything else because it was so loud," recalls Major. "We've installed the C Subs at the side of the stage rather than the front, so while they are still loud, there is separation and the stage is much quieter." The HK Audio solution has certainly proved to be a popular choice for the venue. "The technical team really like the system," reveals Major. "They like working on it and it is pretty loud compared to the older system. Also, it isn't falling apart when it gets loud. The HK Audio engineers have made the system indestructible, and it sounds so consistent."

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