

## INTERVIEW

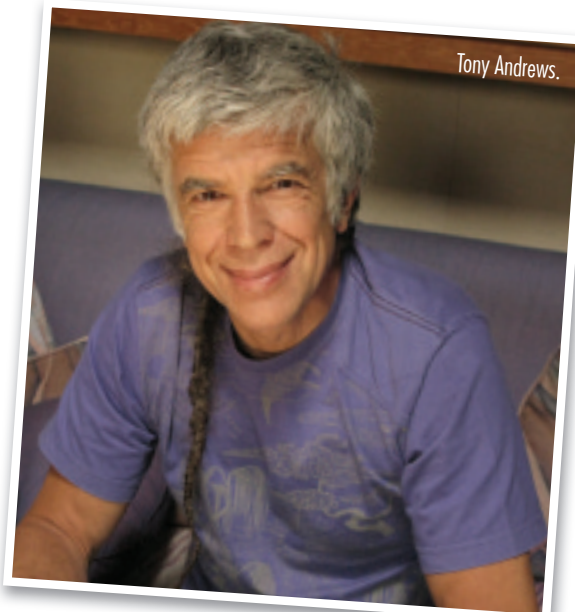
Funktion One's Tony Andrews talks about why an updated spec at Nasimi has put an end to sound complaints and smiles back on faces of the punters who want to dance the night away.



# FULLY FUNKTIONAL

**A**s the sun sets on another balmy Dubai day, the crowd at Nasimi Beach swells; revellers keen to spend another evening dancing and partying barefoot on the sand. It's just a regular night at the popular beach club, situated at the Atlantis the Palm resort in Dubai; but up until recently, the audio was far from optimal. While residents on the Palm 'frond' across the water from the venue and guests in the hotel complained nightly about the noise, those on the beach bore the brunt of a potentially powerful sound system that was regularly being turned down.

But thanks to a consultancy period and a range of adjustments by Funktion One founder Tony Andrews, the problems have been solved. Key to this, he says, has been finding out exactly what kind of



sound the venue's management wanted – and where.

"It's about knowing exactly what's occurring, what they want to occur, and making it fit exactly that," he explains. "In fact, what they want is a nice ambient sound around the beach and a re-

ally strong focus on the dance-floor – and you can't use the same system for that.

"It takes a while to get out of a client what they really want to do, but we get there and it goes around in my head for a while and I figure out the best way of doing it."

In this case, that meant fewer sources. "Before, they had speakers all across the beach, which in some ways is quite nice, but there's too much of a delay," says Andrews. "What I find over and over again is that there is this scatter bomb approach to how speakers are put in - the more sources you have, the more chance you have for conflict, and no cohesion and therefore not a great sound."

The noise concerns of residents across the water from Nasimi was arguably the project's biggest hurdle to overcome. Developer of the Palm, Nakheel sets sound level limits of 40 decibels in the area. "To give you some perspective on that, 60

## LINE ARRAY OR POINT-SOURCE?

Tony talks about why he is confident Funktion One's point-source technology will always be a cut above its line array competitors.

"We don't do line arrays because they're a flawed approach. There's no question that a better result can be achieved with point-source's. The thing about a line array is that you're hearing through quite big chunks of the frequency range, maybe as many as 15 or 20 speakers at once; which is okay if they're all perfectly aligned and everything arrives at that nanosecond. But the difference between one box and the next, in terms of the arrival time, is actually greater than the minimum amount of sound resolution that we're capable of discerning.

With a video, if you have a minimum of 28 frames per second, that's going to appear as a flowing continuum. That's 2000 times slower than is necessary to achieve a flowing continuum with audio.

This clearly shows what an incredible precision instrument our hearing system is.

Line arrays don't allow that precision. They sound like they're 'over there'. I like a sound to be right with you, and that's what people really like about us. It's involving and sounds like it's actually with you rather than being a kind of a painting on a wall a hundred yards away. And it's the club people that have really picked up on that, rather than in the live music scene.

Two Novembers ago, I presented a paper to the Institute of Acoustics, which wasn't specifically aimed at line arrays but the paper was about bringing attention to a parameter of sound that is completely neglected and is just as important as frequency response and levels and even distortion. The transient response is a really important thing and that's where line-arrays really let you down."

## KIT LIST

### Weekend System Funktion One Loudspeaker System

- 4 x Resolution 2
- 2 x F218
- 2 x F88

### DJ Monitors

- 2 x RM12 Passive

### Amplification

- 1 x FFA F60
- 1 x MC2 E45

### Loudspeaker Management

- Funktion One X02

### Weekday System Funktion One Loudspeaker System

- 2 x Resolution 1.5 Passive
- 2 x F101

### DJ Monitors

- 2 x RM12 Passive

### Amplification

- 1 x FFA F60
- 1 x FFA F40

decibels is birdsong. And sound travels wonderfully across water," says Andrews, who seems to revel in such a challenge.

"What we've finished up with is the four trusses in a square [onto which speakers are rigged]. We spent a few

days running trials and once the arrangement went in, they had a show that night and guess what? No complaints. They haven't



Precise tuning means hotel guests can now enjoy a peaceful nights sleep.

had any complaints since we left."

Known for a paring back the complexity of sound with a much simpler approach, Andrews says the key to keeping residents and the club's punters happy was Funktion One's point source technology, which, thanks to extremely high standards of directional control, allowing sound to be focused where it's needed, minimising out-of-venue impact.

"The people living across the water had to be happy, which meant little to no sound heard over there, the people on the dance floor had to have pumping sound for a night club-type experience and they needed a chill out arrangement on the beach," explains Andrews. "It was definitely a juggling act."

A semi-permanent 'chill out' arrangement on the beach gives "lightweight ambient coverage" on week nights



and during the day, and on weekends, it is switched off, making way for a more powerful system that is installed around the dance floor section and DJ booth.

"They've got a couple of extra speakers that go on the outside two trusses that just give a mid range and high frequency lift to the bass, which of course they can hear on the beach," says Andrews, adding that being outside can actually benefit sound quality. "You hear the actual speakers and not the room."

"It works really nicely and it's dead easy. It means the amount of cabling you have to put in is cut down to probably about 20 per cent of what it was, so everybody is really pleased. They complaints have stopped and the guys that install it can do it in say, half the time."

Vital in getting to this point, according to Andrews, is consulting the experts, something he encourages more venues to do. And it's not a responsibility he takes lightly.

"If we're going to get involved, we're going to get involved to the fullest extent. It's not just about selling speakers. I like to help clients solve their sound problems," he says genuinely.

"To get audio right, you have to be very orderly. It's not an aspect of F&B. It's quite technical but also, there's quite

## SPACE-OUT

Infamous Ibiza club Space recently opened a counterpart in Egypt's Sharm El Sheik, at the top of Naama Bay, which features a mega Funktion One audio install.

The system was installed by a team from London-based Blue Box, headed by Mark Metcalf, who co-designed the spec with Funktion One's Tony Andrews.

The club covers a massive 5,200 sq metres, and its three main rooms - two outdoors and one an indoor lounge - can accommodate up to 10,000 people, so the audio design was split into sections.

The main room features an "organic" style and is decorated with natural elements including a 12 metre pool with a waterfall, the indoor lounge features luxury decor and the disco is described as having "modern and sophisticated design" elements.

A lighting design by locally-based Baher & Maged, which has also worked on projects at the pyramids and at the lighting show at Giza's Sphinx, complements the club's impressive audio.



## KIT LIST

### Disco

- 8 x Funktion One Res 3s
- 16 x Funktion One F121s
- Powered by Funktion One FFA amplifiers
- Driven by XTA DP 548 controller
- Positioned in four corners: 4 x F121/ 2 Res 3s per corner
- In VIP: 2 x Funktion One AX88

### DJ Booth

- 2 x Pioneer CDJ2000
- 1 x Pioneer DJM2000
- 2 x Funktion One Res 2SH
- 2 x Funktion One F118
- Powered by Funktion One FFA 4 channel amplifier
- Driven by Funktion One XTA controller

### Main room

- 10 x Funktion One Res 5
- 8 x Funktion One F221
- Powered by Funktion One FFA amplifiers
- Driven by XTA DP 548 controller
- Positioned in two stacks: 4 x F221/ 5 Res 5 per stack
- In VIP: 4 x F55s, 2 F88s

### DJ Booth

- 2 Pioneer CDJ2000
- 1 Pioneer DJM2000
- 2 Funktion One Res 2SH
- 2 Funktion One F118
- Powered by Funktion One FFA 4 channel amplifier
- Driven by Funktion One XTA controller

### Lounge

- 2 x Funktion One Res 3P
- 2 x Funktion One AX88
- 6 x Funktion One F218
- Powered by Funktion One FFA amplifiers
- Driven by Funktion One XTA controller

### DJ Booth

- 2 x Pioneer CDJ2000
- 1 x Funktion One F6000 mixer
- 2 x Funktion One RM12 monitors
- Powered by 4 channel Funktion One FFA amplifier



The 'weekend' sound system offers more robust audio than its weekday counterpart.



Dubai's nightlife venues are being run by F&B managers, and what they don't realise is that venue's sound can make or break any event and have a direct influence on bar spend. Atmosphere and quality of sound is essential to create the perfect experience for the punter," he says.

Involved in the venue since day one, Chaka says the "mighty" Funktion One system is positioning Nasimi on another level in terms of professionalism and punter-satisfaction. "It's so good to finally play on the Funktion One system that has been fine-tuned to the specifications of the venue, and not just thrown in with amps turned up to max," he says. "There have been a lot of tough nights doing events with sound complaints coming in

and having to cut the sound mid-way through the event... overall, I'm really excited about 2011!"

a strong artistic element, because in the end, you have to put yourself in the mind frame of how a dancer would like to hear the music."

Dubai-based DJ and regular Nasimi booking Charl Chaka agrees. "A lot of

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