



LOCATION: BRISTOL VENUE TYPE: CLUB

The Syndicate

Nexum's roll out of its powerhouse Blackpool dance brand begins

On 25 August Nexum Leisure opened the doors on The Syndicate in Bristol: the first incarnation of its newly-acquired superclub concept outside of its native Blackpool and the first in a planned roll out of the brand. The city was "always a target town for us to venture into," says Nexum Chief Executive Paul Kinsey, who envisages six to eight more Syndicate units being created over the next two years. "When we acquired The Works it was perfect for The Syndicate, with its large main room and its second room upstairs."

With the intention of stamping the brand's established dance music credentials on Bristol - and signifying the club's serious intent - Nexum kicked off proceedings with big name house and trance bookings like Judge Jules and Fergie.

"To open a new venue successfully it's crucial that you differentiate it from the competition," says Paul. "Customers are after a big room experience - something that's reflected in the attendance figures for large scale dance events and festivals across Europe. You can't beat the drama, the lights and the

atmosphere that you can create in a big club room. It's very compelling."

To deliver that experience to customers Nexum are relying on GM Peter Crowe, whose CV includes stints at Ministry of Sound, Destiny in Watford and Plymouth, and The Works in Nottingham. He's determined that The Syndicate will have a massive impact on Bristol's club scene.

"This is venue is an icon, it's been part of clubbing in Bristol for years," he says. "The main room here is a perfect theatre in which we can create an unrivalled atmosphere, that in turn will help us establish the club as a high quality dance venue. Our success in this will hinge upon the production - which is superb - and on delivering great music from the big names in house and trance. Bristol will really demonstrate the strength and potential of the brand and of this particular club."

Although The Syndicate's reputation will be built on its mainroom dance music policy, the venue's second room allows the management to showcase a second choice of music, providing clubbers with a choice of where to spend their

time. It is here that the design changes - ushered in under the watchful eye of project managers EBM Contracts - are most evident, setting the mood for the room's R&B music policy with plush décor, quality finish flooring from CCI and plenty of comfortable seating. In the main room, a dancefloor is overlooked by a second tier with seating - providing an eagle's eye view of the action.

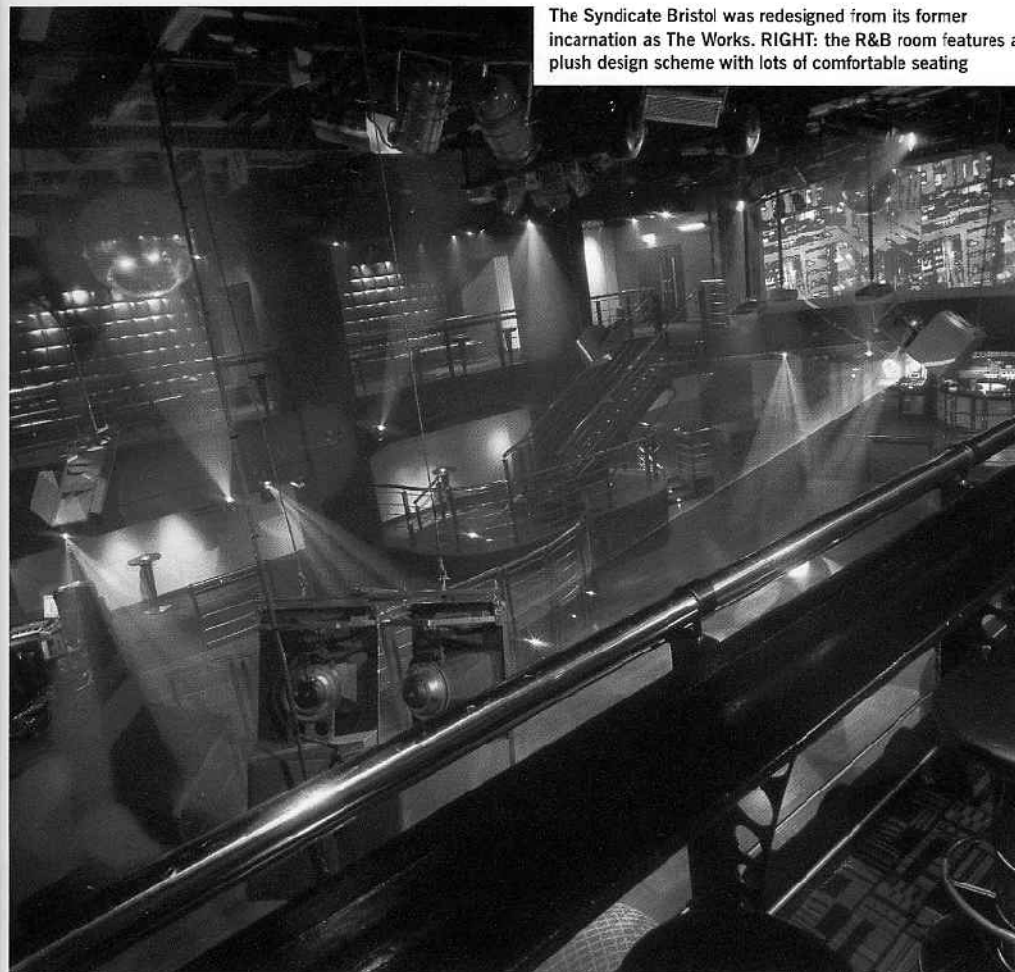
With such a focus on the music, it's perhaps unsurprising to note the level of investment in production. Malcolm Robertson's Techliaison Ltd was employed to oversee the sound, light and video systems at the club, with a brief to replicate the effect at the Blackpool club. Malcolm brought Will Norton of Willpower on board to design and install the sound, allowing Techliaison to focus on the lighting and visuals - which comprise Martin Mac 500 Wash, Robe ColorSpot 575 AT moving heads and ProScan 1200s, suspended with high powered strobes, sourced from Showtec, over the main dancefloor. Two one metre-diameter mirror balls, Le Maitre smoke machines and confetti cannons mounted around the balcony level add drama. ▶

The Syndicate, Bristol

Night Magazine OCTOBER 2006

Page 2 of 2

The Syndicate Bristol was redesigned from its former incarnation as The Works. RIGHT: the R&B room features a plush design scheme with lots of comfortable seating



VITAL STATISTICS

The Syndicate
15 Nelson Street
Bristol
BS1 2JY
Tel: 01253 753 222
Owner: Nexum Leisure

Hours

Mon-Wed 10pm-2am // Thur-Sat 10pm-3am // Sun 10pm-2am

Key Contractors

Lighting and Video Installation: Tech Liaisons Ltd // Sound Installation: Willpower PA Systems // Project Management: EBM Projects // Flooring: Commercial Carpets and Interiors

Drinks

Pouring brands: Smirnoff vodka, Gordons gin, Bacardi rum, Jack Daniels whiskey // Premium draught lager: £3.00 (Kronenberg, pint) // Mainstream draught lager: £2.80 (Fosters Super Chilled, pint) // Lead PPL: £3.00 (Kronenberg) // Lead RTD: £3.40 (Smirnoff Ice) // Cocktail List: No

Technology

Sound: 3 x Technics SL-1210 turntables, 2 x Pioneer DVJ-X1 DVD/CD players, 1 x Pioneer DJM-1000 mixer, 1 x Pioneer EFX-1000 effects unit, Funktion One Res 4s speakers, Funktion One FF-218 subs // Lighting/Video/FX: 1 x Showcad Artist, Martin Mac 500 Wash moving heads, Robe ColorSpot 575 ATs, Robe ProScan 1200 scanners, Le Maitre smoke machines, 3 x Mitsubishi XD2000 projectors, 1 x Edrol V4 video mixer, 2 x Pangolin lasers

► A 30ft x 12ft purpose prepared area on the balcony wall is lit by three Mitsubishi XD2000 projectors.

Control of the lighting falls to in-house technical manager Steve 'Shaggy' Wright, who uses a Showcad Artist running across four PCs to manage his arsenal of equipment. The Showcad Live Pro 4.0, programmed by Syndicate Blackpool resident VJ Greg McLenaham, gives Steve the ability to change the intelligent lighting system, and control high powered Pangolin diode lasers with the touch of a Novation 255 MIDI keyboard key. A live video performance application Resolume, created and programmed by another Blackpool resident Stewart Wilson, gives the venue precision content customisation for its video screens - providing six layers of graphics that can be changed to suit the lighting and atmosphere at the flick of a switch.

Musically the set-62up also packs a punch. Like The Syndicate Blackpool, the DJ booth features three Technics SL-1210 turntables in addition to a complete Pioneer digital DJ booth solution - comprising two DVJ-X1 CD/DVD players, 2 x CDJ-1000 MK3s, a DJM-1000 mixer and an EFX-1000 effects unit. The signal path travels through DBX Zone Pro audio matrix which then feeds the two XTA/Funktion One processors, with Funktion One Res 4 boxes and FF-218 sub speakers positioned around the dancefloor. Reconditioned Bose Panaray speakers are used for infill in the peripheral areas. "The Syndicate is an amazing playground for the

world's finest DJs," says GM Peter. "So far the performers have preferred the use of CDs to vinyl, showing the level of confidence they have in the new digital technology.

"The system is overspecced and we never need to run it at more than half its ability."

Whilst it's the club's flagship weekend nights that are commanding the most attention, the other nights are far from forgotten. As in other university towns, students are a massive factor in the midweek success of a venue and The Syndicate have recognised that, signing deals with Comeplay and Absolute Life to provide first class entertainment on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights. Following a promising start, and even before the influx of students in September, Paul Kinsey was optimistic for the future of the unit. "We've had a good following so far. Saturdays and Thursdays have been the biggest nights, and Fridays and Sundays are growing. The students will be back soon too."

To keep things building, autumn and winter tours with Hed Kandi and Gatecrasher Classic are planned. Continued Paul: "We aim to have the top 20 DJs in Europe playing at the venue within the next six months, with Eddie Halliwell and Roger Sanchez already booked for gigs. We want to deliver top acts, we have an amazing sound system and the best lighting system in the south west, and we want the talent to back it up." ■