

Main stage headliners  
The Futureheads



# LEEFEFEST 2010

**A GROWING NEW FESTIVAL, LEEFEFEST WELCOMED SPONSORSHIP FROM SOME MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY THIS YEAR, INCLUDING FUNKTION-ONE AND PRG LIGHTING WHO KITTED OUT ALL THREE OF ITS STAGES, HELPING TO MAKE THIS YEAR'S EVENT ITS BIGGEST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL EVENT TO DATE WHILST INCREASING ATTENDANCE BY 30%. PAUL WATSON REPORTS FOR TPI...**

Now in its fifth year, *LeeFest*, winner of the Best Grass Roots Festival at the 2009 *UK Festival Awards* (also nominated for Best Small Festival and Best Toilets), is the brainchild of Lee Denny, who created the non-profit festival by accident back in August 2006 after inviting 150 school friends round to his parents' back garden for a day of live music, DJs and comedy while they were away on holiday.

Every year since, the festival has grown and grown, and *LeeFest 2010* attracted a record 2,000 people to its new south-east London location at Highlands Hill Farm in Bromley on August 14.

After the excitement generated by the garden party in 2006, Denny upped the ante the following year, doubling attendance and adding a second stage, 15 acts, and a portalo! Although a great success, he described *LeeFest 2007* as "a total nightmare" from an organisational point of view, pointing out that its two small stages ran

simultaneously, generating an abundance of noise.

Improvements were made over the following two years, culminating in an outstandingly well organised *LeeFest*, which boasted an extremely proficient — and very young — production team, featuring mainly students from Croydon's BRIT School put together by Alex Marchant, who teaches sound there.

"The youngest member of the crew is just 17 and the oldest is me at 27," explained Marchant. "There are no egos here and it's rewarding for me to use my knowledge to help the kids at school get invaluable festival experience working with top quality gear."

At least half of all the profits from *LeeFest* will be given directly to central London-headquartered children's charity KidsCo, which raises money for inner-city underprivileged young children, and the rest will be put straight back into the festival.

*LeeFest* also provides various opportunities



Below: Overcast weather didn't spoil the fun; The King Blues



that can help these children get involved in the event doing things they love, such as artwork, performing and photography.

#### FUNKTION-ONE SUPPORT

Funktion-One is a sponsor of BRIT School and Marchant said he had built a good working relationship over the last five or so years with both F1 pioneers Tony Andrews and John Newsham — Newsham's sons also attended BRIT School and were both working on the production team at *LeeFest 2010*.

Essex rental company Audio Plus, the biggest stockist of Funktion-One (F1) PA equipment, supplied all three stages with an array of F1 loudspeakers. Britannia Row supplied the wedges, amp racks and all line systems on stage.

The main stage PA was powered by F1 MC2 amplifiers and speaker management was a pair of XTA DP448s controlled via an XTA Audiocore. The main fixtures were six Res 5s per side (three wide and two deep), four F221 subs per side, two Res 4s for the infills and two F218s for the frontfill subs. There were two d&b C7 subs per side and a d&b C top per side for the sidefills,

which were powered by d&b D12 amplifiers.

The Colin Denny Lava Lounge (named after Lee's father) was an analogue split L/R set-up of two Res 4s and four F218 subs per side, powered by Full Fat Audio amplifiers and controlled by an XTA SiDD.

**"It's rewarding to use my knowledge to help the kids at school get invaluable festival experience..."**  
**Alex Marchant**

The dance tent was also powered by Full Fat Audio amps and controlled by F1 X-04 crossovers. It featured three Res 4s and four F218s per side and a pair of Res 2s for the DJ monitors; the DJ mixers were also fed into an XTA SiDD.

F1's sales director David Bruml said that it was a pleasure to help out a festival team that cares so much for music, something he feels is becoming all too uncommon in the live world.

"At *LeeFest*, the attention to detail is so clear and when that's the case, the sound will reward you," said Bruml. "These youngsters have got a great attitude and we're really supportive of that, because everyone cares about what they are doing. The closer the musicians can get to production, the better it can become and that's what we're seeing here.

"We're looking at the production teams of the future, which is extremely refreshing. There's hope for the future yet."

#### GRASS ROOTS CONCEPT

Production manager Alex Brooks, 24, has been involved in *LeeFest* from the start. Although not in attendance at the debut event in 2006, he still found time to help organise it from across the pond in Houston, Texas. There's dedication for you!

He said that hard work and communication were key factors in running this well oiled ship, and that although growth is important from a business point of view — he and Denny have both invested significantly to make *LeeFest* happen — losing focus of its humble 'grass roots' beginnings would be a disaster.

**PRG**  
PRODUCTION RESOURCE GROUP

Production Resource Group are proud to supply lighting equipment for

**LEE FEST**  
2010

LeeFest

T: 0845 470 6400 | [www.productionresourcegroup.co.uk](http://www.productionresourcegroup.co.uk)

Below L-R: Festival founder Lee Denny; production manager Alex Brooks; BRIT School crew co-ordinator Alex Marchant; main stage lighting director Luke Jackson.



**“We want to develop LeeFest as a training platform...” Lee Denny**

“We want this to become a full-time fixture, but it’s obviously difficult to achieve that. It takes it out of us all physically and we have so much risk involved on the financial side,” Brooks explained.

“Organising *LeeFest* is literally a year-long process. Two weeks after this we’ll start applying for the licence for next year and although this is our biggest year, we have to be careful not to lose its charm. I’d like to do a few consistent years like this with the same sized, same team.”

After discussions with Rob Hughes at Midas, Marchant arranged for an XL8 to be deployed at the FOH position on the main stage and a Pro6 was assigned to monitors at stage left. A Midas Verona was also donated and used in the Colin Denny Lava Lounge.

Main stage engineer John Pinner ran 48

channels from FOH and Jack Newsham (son of F1’s John) ran 48 from the Pro6 on stage.

Aside from a Yamaha SPX 990 at FOH, the only outboard used was brought in externally by main stage headline act The Futureheads: two Avalon 747s and some Summit Audio DCL200s. The BRIT School also owns a Midas Pro6, which Marchant said helped a great deal when preparing for *LeeFest*.

“The students were able to adapt to the XL8 because I could show them that it’s not put together too differently to the Pro6, even though the XL8 is a monster!” said Marchant.

“We went through all of the bands’ riders and made a master list of all channels used. For each band we created a scene on the XL8 and Pro6 which just displays the channels they need to see, so it’s also nice and easy for the visiting engineers to get working quickly.”

**PRG OPENS ARMS**

Another major sponsor at *LeeFest 2010*, PRG provided a plethora of lights for all three stages. Former BRIT School student and main stage lighting director Luke Jackson (who was presented with the inaugural My Generation award by the Pet Shop Boys at the *TPI Awards* in February and now works for PRG) said it was the biggest show of his career and explained that meticulous pre-programming measures were undertaken.

“We had a free run of the PRG warehouse, which has helped with the design no end, because I like to use whatever is most versatile and often use techniques that are a little different,” explained Jackson.

“So I worked for three days pre-programming using the CAD design software and researching The Futureheads’ music to get



Above: Funktion-One systems dominated the festival; F1’s David Brumli; a main stage F1 hang with subs; Jack Newsham at a Midas Pro6 monitor desk; Andrew Smith (BRIT School) and They Came From Japan’s FOH engineer Mickey Del Buono get acquainted with the Midas XL8.

Below: BRIT School graduates Chris Burnage, Alex Peters & Jack Jewell with PRG's John Partridge (second left); tent stage LD with Avo Pearl Expert desk; LD Dan Hill & PRG's Haydn Williams; PRG branding exposure!



**"We're looking at the production teams of the future..." David Bruml**

a real idea of what they sounded like. I even went online and found recent set lists so that I could work out which songs they were likely to play, I got it down to 14 potentials! Then I just programmed as accurately as I could, even down to the drum rolls. It's my biggest job yet, so I wanted it to be the best it could be."

Jackson's ample main stage lighting rig consisted of six Martin MAC 2000s, eight Clay Paky Alpha Beam 300s, eight Alkco fixtures; four

Robe 575 washes; 16 2-cell Molefay blinders, nine Martin Atomic strobes and 12 Vari\*Lite VLXs.

All fixtures were controlled from an Avolites Diamond 4 Elite and a Chamsys Magic Q console.

The dance tent featured 14 i-Pix BB2s, two LED blinders (prototypes), 12 Molefay 2-cell blinders, four Martin Atomic strobes, eight Clay Paky Alpha Beam 300s, four GE PAR 64s

and one S4. These were controlled from an Avolites Pearl Expert 2010 console running Titan software.

The Lava Lounge set-up comprised of three Showtec Sunstrip actives, eight Martin MAC 250 Entours, 12 PAR 64s, four ProCan 2-lite blinders and four S4s, all controlled by an Avolites Pearl Expert 2004 console.

Dan Hill, lighting designer and operator for the dance tent, commented: "PRG has been

# VOLUNTEER BRITS LEARN THE ROPES



TPI spoke to two young volunteer crew members, Alex Peters (BRIT School graduate) and Harry Greenfield (BRIT School student), to find out about their contributions to *LeeFest 2010*...

**Alex Peters:** "My role was to help Luke Jackson and the crew to get the main stage set up and help with the dance tent and the whole site really. When we first turned up early Friday morning, we put up the production and catering tents and helped with the dance tent and the main stage.

"It's been fun to do and you learn a lot working with Luke. Harry and I have a good friendship with him because we went to college together. I finished working at Essential on a work contract and when I finish there I then go to study light control.

"BRIT is a great school; we love it. It helps with making good friends and team-building. Even if you weren't going into the music industry, it helps a lot with making you mature and so on.

"I worked on *The BRIT Awards 2010* and before I started BRIT School I had no idea about the industry at all. I had started working at my local theatre, which is where I got the interest, then

BRIT School taught me everything. Now I am working with the top lighting company in the world.

"I would like to do a work placement with Essential and PRG and once I have finished my studies, if they're still interested, then I'd happily work with them."

**Harry Greenfield:** "I'm in my fourth year of *LeeFest*. I was there at the last year in Lee's garden and now I am going into year 13 at BRIT School. I've been helping out generally but mainly on the site power and pre-rigging the main stage.

"If you look at Dan Vincent as an example, he's working at my local theatre, the Churchill Theatre in Bromley, and he's come straight out of BRIT School and worked at White Light for a couple of years. He's just one example of many who have gone on to bigger things.

"BRIT is one of those places that you want to get up and go to in the morning. You get an insight into what the industry is like.

"It gives people that have never had jobs before or been in the music industry, the opportunity to learn, which is just amazing."

Below: Campers United; beams a-plenty in the dance tent; Dan Hill operating the dance tent's Avolites Pearl Expert 2010 lighting console.



a fantastic help because we were really keen on having a serious LED set-up after using some basic LED fixtures last year and it just feels right, because it's all electronic music.

"The i-Pix fixtures work really well in creating a feel and with the Alpha Beam 300s, we have a nice combination of solid beams too, which is great."

## TRAINING GROUND FOR THE FUTURE

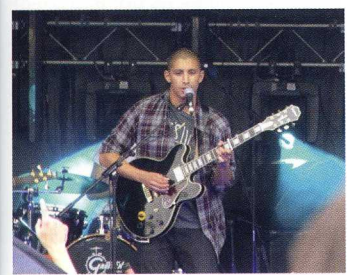
Tickets for *LeeFest* cost £25 in advance and a very reasonable £30 camping-inclusive option. The music got underway at 1pm and the curfew was at 11pm. In that time, almost 30 acts (including DJs) performed in total.

The main stage running order was thoughtfully assembled, with a number of popular local acts packed into some of the earlier slots (including the youngest, Bromley-based Bordeauxxxx) generating a constant stream of people before the main acts took to the stage in the evening, and DJs were rotated pretty much on the hour in the dance tent. All changeovers were extremely swift at around 20 minutes.

Considering the compact size of the festival and the fact that there was no bleed between the stages, which were in very close proximity of each other, it was really impressive.

There were also considerable noise restrictions set out by the local authorities that had to be dealt with, so Vanguardia Consulting offered its services to *LeeFest* with a member of its team monitoring

Below: Bill toppers The Futureheads & Does it Offend You, Yeah? Middle: Marcel Legane; Wilsoni Tha Funk Masta; Chris Cape. Bottom: Professor Penguin; Funkton-One: integral to the event.



on-site throughout, managing to keep a little headroom available at all times.

Initial production took place four days prior; and two days later, Lee Denny and the rest of the team had arrived. The crew were still on-site four days after the show, so it was a long week for all involved.

Denny is enthusiastic, yet realistic about *LeeFest's* future and concluded: "The help from Funktion-One, PRG and all participating companies has been astounding, and the production has jumped up massively. Last year

we thought we'd reached the peak but this is far bigger, which means it's an enormous leap in organisation and that's key," insisted Denny.

"It's a great starting point for the young team and for us as an organisation. We want to develop *LeeFest* as a training platform and there have already been loose discussions about

setting up internships. It'd be fantastic to get training in all of the top gear and set up an educational experience that culminates in an amazing event."

TPI

*Photography by  
A.J. Roberts & Paul Watson*

**SEE VIDEO FOOTAGE FROM LEEFEST 2010 NOW  
AT [WWW.TPIMAGAZINE.COM](http://WWW.TPIMAGAZINE.COM)**