



The DJ, dance floor and surrounding areas are catered for by a combination of R1s, F218s and F118s

# Falling for Funktion

When it first opened, Falling Club set a benchmark as a completely new kind of bar in Chongqing. Helping to preserve this image is an F1 sound system. **Alice Gustafson** reports

## IN THE BUSTLING YUZHONG DISTRICT

in Chongqing, any visitors will find themselves bombarded with a choice of hundreds of clubs, bars, lounges, karaoke bars and restaurants in which to while away the evening hours. There are so many in fact, that standing out in the crowd as the venue of choice can be a hard task. Nestled in the midst of these choices is Falling Club, which first burst onto the local scene in 2004, determined to make an impression on the under 30s crowd.

And make an impression it did. Situated in the entertainment centre of Chongqing where discos and karaoke nights are always flavour of the month, when the doors opened and locals found heavy hip hop beats inside instead of questionable covers of Backstreet Boys ballads, club-goers certainly took notice. Quickly establishing itself as the place to be in order to enjoy a more urban flavour of music, Falling Club not only set a milestone as the only bar of its kind in town, but also sparked a new trend, resulting in many copycat clubs opening suspiciously soon after boasting similar themes. And so a new era of the entertainment industry in Chongqing was born.

With imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, the additional bars only reinforced Falling

Club's influence over the vibrant entertainment scene, and in turn, highlighted its 'cool' status due to a cunning mix of rhythmic music and 'fashionable clientele'. But as complementary as this was, this meant that there were now a multitude of other cool bars to choose from. What the club needed was to push the boundaries further.

To pull the crowds back, Falling Club owner Mr Zeng commissioned a large-scale renovation centering around a 3D projection and lighting system intended to play videos on the walls of the venue. Realising that sound plays a crucial role in the success of any nightclub, the owner approached Eddie Zhu of Kayu Fashion Entertainment Group Company Limited to be the consultant and contractor for a completely new sound, lighting and video system.

'In the past, there has been an underlying rule with regards to the proportion of investment an entertainment venue places on lighting and sound,' says Funktion One China's Bruce Chan. 'It used to be approximately 70 per cent for the lighting system and 30 per cent on the sound system in the 1990s. However, this ratio has changed and now the figures are reversed. Nowadays, entertainment venue owners will invest 70 per cent in a



The Funktion One speakers compliment the bar's 3D projection system

sound system and 30 per cent for the lighting system, and the ratio is often 8:2 or even 9:1 in some cases. They realise that music is the soul of a venue,' he clarifies. 'Audiences tend to enjoy music played on a high quality sound system over lighting effects.'

After considering various options, Mr Zeng and Mr Zhu opted for club titan Funktion One, and jointly enlisted the help of Funktion One China to design a tailor-made sound system for the bar.

'During the planning stage, at first Mr Zeng asked us to consider two other brands,' Mr Zhu explains.

'However, after comparing the sound quality and performance of a few manufacturers we believed that Funktion One was the best choice. Mr Zeng was persuaded when we arranged for him to visit a F1 bar in Beijing named Suzie Wong. After his visit, he confirmed that he would only choose Funktion One!'

Confident that the sound system would match the club's 3D visual system, the F1 equipment was given the go ahead by all parties. 'The investment in a sound system is of a much higher importance than lighting and video equipment nowadays,' Mr Zhu asserts. 'The sound system plays a core part in the installation in any bar or club. Video and lighting systems are important, but they actually play a supporting role. Since the Falling Club is a high class bar that plays hip hop and house music, we knew that Funktion One would perfectly match the music here and really fit with its image.'

Taking about six months from the initial preparation stages until the final installation was completed, each of the bar's three zones were addressed, comprising a quiet area, the middle of the bar, and the DJ booth and dance floor section.

A challenge presented itself straight away in the form of the bar's 8.5m high ceilings and the



## FEATURES: INSTALLATION

glass windows found on the second storey of the premises. 'This type of structure makes it very difficult to install speakers,' admits Mr Zhu. 'But after seeking the professional advice from Funktion One China, we opted to install the speakers at a height of about 3m. This ensured that we could deliver the best sound quality to every point inside the club.'

the lighting and 3D video projection, this allowed the crowd to fully immerse themselves in the amazing imagery.' As dazzling as these projected images were, Mr Chan notes that the audio remained the star of the show. 'This success could not have been achieved without the strong sound system,' he states.

In fact, Mr Chan reports that since



The F1 system is said to 'perfectly match' Falling Club's image

The team set to work installing 12 F101 two-way speakers hung each side of the quiet area, complemented by four F118 18-inch subwoofers. When addressing the DJ and dance floor section, eight R1 two-way cabinets boosted by two F218 subwoofers were installed, whilst the area around this is taken care of by a further 10 R1s, 10 F118 subs and two F218s. Powering the R1s and F101S are 10 E25 power amplifiers, while all subwoofers are driven by a total of five E45 amps. Lastly, two Funktion One XO-4 audio management systems handle speaker control.

The audio upgrade certainly seems to have drawn the crowds back in, as Mr Chan testifies after visiting the bar to review the system. 'The reopening drew large crowds,' he enthuses. 'The DJ mainly played hip hop music, and when coupled with

the upgrade, business is going so well that on weekends the club operates at full capacity, and that guests need to reserve a seat in the bar in advance in order to avoid disappointment.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr Zeng is a happy customer: 'In recent years, I have visited many high-class clubs in Europe and in the US that have large sized Funktion One speaker systems. I am pleased to say that even though the Funktion One system installed here is smaller than those others, the sound quality is still outstanding. The bass is strong, and the highs are transparent and clean. I am especially impressed by the sound quality of the 18-inch subs, as even though they are compact in size, the sound is strong and smooth.'

'Mr Zeng is more than satisfied with the sound quality of the new

*'We knew that Funktion One would perfectly match the music here and really fit with its image'*



The F1 speakers overlooking the bar and DJ area

system,' adds Mr Zhu. 'He knows that he has made the right choice and has already decided that he will choose Funktion One when he expands the sound system.'

When Pro Audio Asia asks whether he expects the bars similar to Falling Club to follow in its footsteps by purchasing an F1 system to complement their own hip hop nights, Mr Zhu's smile widens.

'Because of the success of Falling

Club, many bar owners have come to visit the club to hear the Funktion One speakers for themselves. In fact, we now find ourselves providing a consultancy service to customers from Shenzhen, Guangxi, Shanghai, Shijiazhuang and Zhejiang – each keen to choose a Funktion One sound system for their venues.'

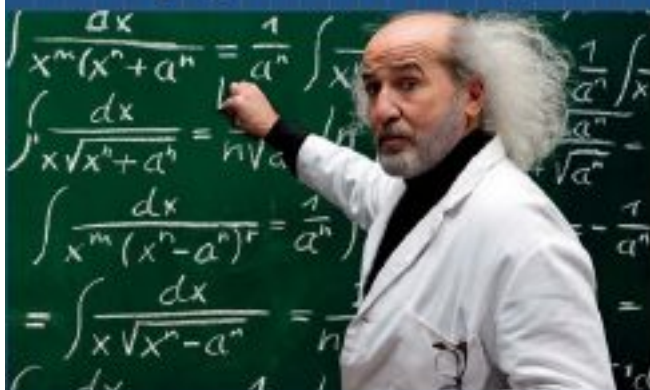
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Since the installation, the club has been operating at full capacity on weekends

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