



CASE STUDY: **PANAMA, AMSTERDAM**

WHEN ONE OF THE NETHERLANDS' MOST RESPECTED NIGHTCLUBS NEEDED A FLEXIBLE SOUND SYSTEM TO REACT TO DIFFERENT MUSICAL STYLES IN ITS TRICKY MAIN ROOM, COULD PIONEER PROFESSIONAL AUDIO FIND THE SOLUTION?

PANAMA[★]



PANAMA

INTRODUCTION

For 15 years, Amsterdam nightclub Panama has been at the forefront of the Dutch music scene. Offering an eclectic range of musical styles on different nights of the week, the venue is renowned for its dependable parties featuring world-famous DJs and local residents who draw huge crowds.

“ We want to be known as the club with one of, or maybe even the best, sound systems in Holland. I think we’ve achieved that. ”

Timo Lassche | Manager | Panama

“The international club scene is watching Amsterdam at the moment. It’s diverse and vibrant here,” says Timo Lassche, Panama’s Manager, who explains how the club’s programme resembles a microcosm of the city’s nightlife and is frequented by clubbers with an appetite for a flawless audio experience. “Flexibility is very important for us. One day we’ll host a business seminar with presentations and speeches, the next day we’ll have a pure techno night, and the next day it’s a jazz party. And for every event, the sound has to be fantastic.”

INSTALLATION AT A GLANCE

MAIN ROOM:	MONITOR SETUP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 GS-WAVE stacks.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 x WAV-SUB- 2 x WAV-HORN- 4 x WAV-LOW- 2 x WAV-LENS-E- 2 x WAV-LENS-L- 4 x WAV-TWPOD• 6 x XY-122• 3 x XY-101• 8 x XY-81• 2 x XY-115S• 4 x XY-215S	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 x XY-215S• 2 x XY-122• 2 x K3DSP Powersoft <div>AMPS:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 x K10DSP Powersoft• 2 x K2DSP• 5 x K3DSP• 3 x M50HDSP

THE CHALLENGE

FOCUS ON THE DANCE FLOOR

As Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE) approached in late 2016, the team at Panama decided they wanted a new sound in the club's 900-capacity main room. ADE is the world's leading conference, festival and cultural playground for electronic music and Panama holds many of its most important events.

"We'd had our previous sound system for four or five years and it was still working well, but we knew it could be better," explains Lassche. "For starters, we were missing some bass and we wanted the music to be more focused on the dance floor but still sound good in the bar areas and on the balconies." A number of audio brands were invited to demo systems at the club, but none of them hit the mark. Having been impressed by Pioneer Pro Audio's systems at Boom and Sankeys

in Ibiza, Café D'Anvers in Belgium and Magdalena in Berlin, Lassche asked a few of his industry friends for their opinions on the brand. "It's super important for me that artists want to come to Panama because they like playing on the sound system," he explains. "I spoke with a lot of different artists and I heard Pioneer's name many times." Consequently, the Panama team bought their Pioneer Pro Audio system without requesting a demo. But it was clear that the installation wouldn't be such a breeze. Although the century-old former power station occupied by the club has a charming history – it's one of many structures in the Zeeburg district named after the far-flung corners of the world that once sent trade ships there – it's awkwardly shaped and is protected from being modified with damping material or even by fixing speaker brackets to the walls.

"We had to make the system work for all kinds of musical styles and even business events, but there were so many variables in the acoustic space," explains Pioneer Pro Audio Manager Alex Barrand. To tackle the installation Pioneer Pro Audio collaborated with local company Discovery Sound and Vision, whose Owner, Wim Kuin, recognised the same challenges. "The room is surrounded by balconies with a lot of space underneath where you have to try and get even coverage. The roof is about 20 metres high and is really thin so it creates unwanted reflections."



“ The acoustics are so difficult in this room, but we created an innovative, completely customised solution. ”

Wim Kuin | Owner | Discovery Sound and Vision.

THE SOLUTION

PURSUING PERFECTION

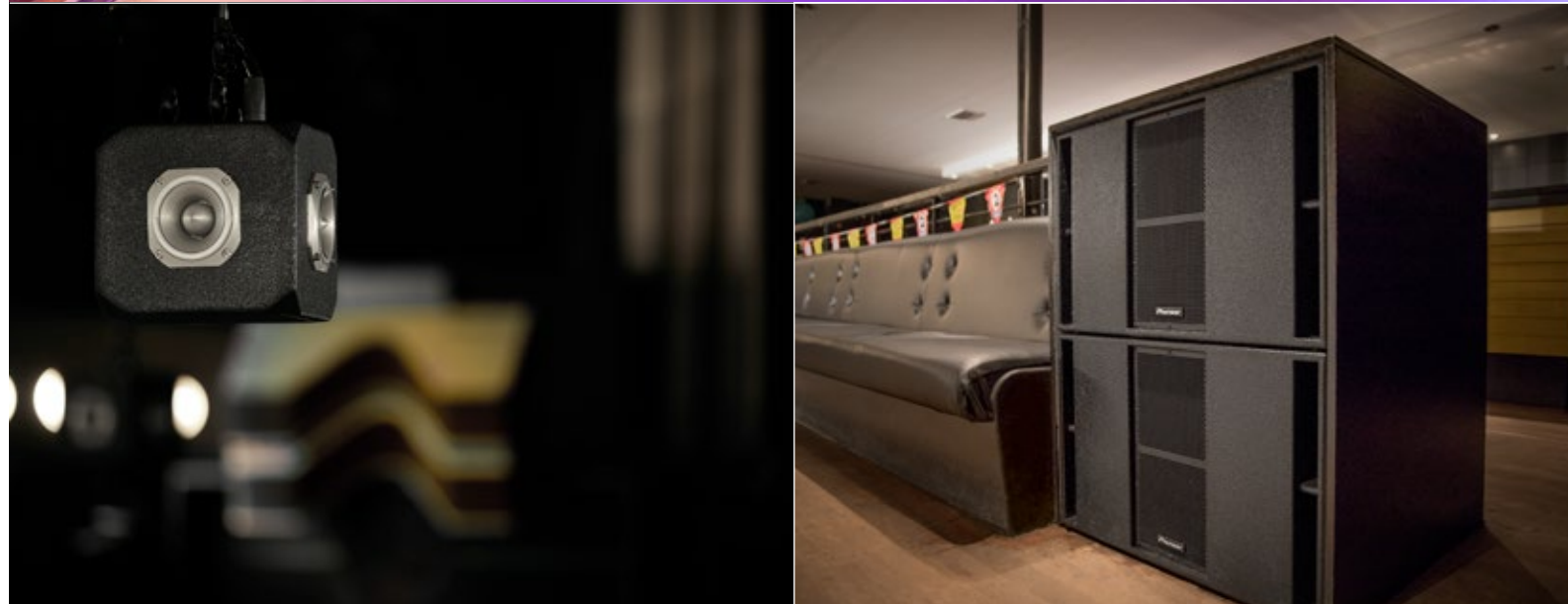
The natural choice to suit the layout of the room was a system comprising twin 3-metre GS-WAVE stacks with tweeter pods above the dance floor and an assortment of XY Series speakers used for infills at the front and back of the room, and around the bar and balcony areas. The entire system was installed in an incredibly tight time frame, taking less than five days, and was ready for the first ADE party.

Portions of the stage were cut out on either side in order to integrate the GS-WAVE stacks, which were angled inwards. This directed the system's main power and energy into the centre of the dance floor and avoided dead spots that would be caused by reflections from the balcony if the stacks were pointed straight forwards. The flexibility of the WAV-LENS, with its 35-degree tilting mechanism, also meant the best focal point for the high frequencies could be selected.

XY Series speakers were placed at the back of the dance floor and in the bar areas underneath the balconies to create even coverage of the room. They were the perfect choice, says Discovery Sound and Vision's Kuin. "The XY speakers give a very natural sound, so you can use them for all styles of music and audio. They're not just for club music." Barrand and Kuin created a custom bracket that would allow, for the first time, for speakers to hang from the sides of the GS-WAVE stacks. With an XY-101 on the inside and an XY-122 on the outside of each stack, a stereo image is created in the centre of the dance floor to envelope the listening area for the audience right in front of the DJ console.

“ We were seeking perfection, so we were constantly listening to feedback from the owners, sound technician and resident DJs, and tweaking the system to improve the sound. ”

Alex Barrand | Manager | Pioneer Pro Audio



For monitoring, an XY-215s sub with an XY-122 on top was placed at either side of the DJ booth. There was some concern from the club that the 15" subs wouldn't be powerful enough, but those fears were put to rest on the first night of ADE when it was clear there was more than enough low end for the DJs. In fact, the solution was so popular it's since been implemented in other Pioneer Pro Audio touring systems and installations. And to enhance the monitors' performance even further, another custom bracket was engineered by Discovery Sound en Vision. Fixed to the sub, it suspends the counterbalanced top speaker above, so each DJ can effortlessly tilt it at any angle necessary to direct the mid and high frequencies straight at his or her ears. "The speakers stay in the perfect position," says Kuin. "The DJs love it."





THE RESULT

A DIFFERENT SYSTEM EVERY NIGHT

On the finished system, Panama's Manager Lassche says, "It looks impressive. When you walk in and see those stacks it really makes you pay attention." Describing the sound, he continues, "It's warm and powerful but I think it has an edgy bass to it, and that's special. It's rawer and sounds more underground than other systems, which is great for dance music, but it also adjusts really well for different music genres."

The dance music community has responded well too. Following the installation of the Pioneer Pro Audio system, Panama has been voted into DJ Mag's prestigious Top 100 Clubs in the World poll for the first time, and is the second highest ranking Dutch club on the list.

"The system is totally adaptive for different nights at the venue," says Pioneer Pro Audio's Barrand. "We invested a lot of time in creating presets to enable the system to respond that way." Those presets are accessed via custom control panels created by Pioneer Pro Audio in an open-architecture DSP software from DSS. Now, the Panama sound technician can simply press a button on an iPad each night and have the peace of mind that the system will respond to the genre of music the DJs will play.

Working relationships are incredibly important in the nightclub industry and for Panama's Manager, Lassche, the experience of collaborating with the Pioneer Pro Audio team reassured him that the club had made the right choice. "With Pioneer, we weren't just buying a sound system. We've got a partnership now, which is exactly what we wanted. We know that, as the technology changes, Pioneer Pro Audio can deliver the best sound at Panama, now and in the future."

“ Now we can travel to our other club in Ibiza and feel confident that our customers here will be impressed by Panama's system. It's a relaxing feeling. ”

Timo Lassche | Manager | Panama



About Pioneer DJ

Pioneer DJ Europe Ltd is the subsidiary of Pioneer DJ Corporation responsible for sales and marketing in EMEA. For more than 20 years, Pioneer DJ has been a market leader in the design and production of innovative DJ equipment and software. The company works closely with DJs and clubs to deliver next generation products that inspire and shape the global dance music community and has recently launched a new range of musical instruments for production and live performances. Its portfolio includes brands such as TORAIZ, Pioneer Professional Audio and Pioneer DJ Radio as well as social platforms KUVO and DJsounds. Pioneer DJ Corporation is a privately held company headquartered in Yokohama, Japan.

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