

GENELEC®

CASE STUDY

Sustainable thinking

STUDIO BRAIN'S CLASSIC
1035 MONITORS GET
NEW LEASE OF LIFE WITH
SMART UPGRADE





AFTER DECADES OF SERVICE, SMART ACTIVE MONITORING RETRO-FIT SEES 1035s UPDATED FOR MODERN DEMANDS



Studio Brain's Mitsuhide Takamura

Established in 1981, [Brain](#) is a full-service production house based in the fashionable Kagurazaka district of Tokyo. For over 40 years the studio has provided a range of video production services, from planning through to filming, editing and online delivery. It also provides media planning with expertise in drone footage, projection mapping, web marketing and live events.

Boasting customers such as Fujifilm, TV Asahi and Toyota, Studio Brain is built around two fully equipped creative studios and three editing suites.

MA1 (Multi Audio) is the largest of these, and is a 66 m² control room which can accommodate up to 15 customers in a tiered theatre structure. A longtime supporter of Genelec, Studio Brain installed two Genelec

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[1035](#) main monitors back in 1991. Designed for flush mounting, the 1035s were installed in the wall cavity at the front of the studio where they provided more than 30 years of reliable service. However, all good things must come to an end and the daily wear and tear on the monitors meant it was time for a replacement.

“The 1035s had been in use for decades, and there were parts that needed maintenance,” explains Toshiyuki Ootaki from Studio Brain’s studio department. “Talks about renewing the whole system in the first MA room were brought up, and thinking ahead, we decided to upgrade the monitors.”

When the studio looked at upgrading, it first looked at switching the 1035s out to nearfield monitors, but instead settled on a more sustainable route. Genelec’s Retrofit Upgrade Kit enabled the studio to upgrade the legacy 1035s to modern [1235](#) Smart Active Monitors by retaining the enclosures and updating them with the latest Class D amplifiers, DSP hardware and drivers. And as the saying goes, ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’.

“I’m someone who is really cost-conscious, so a part of me thought that maybe we should take this opportunity to downsize,” recalls Mitsuhide Takamura, who serves on



Studio Brain’s Toshiyuki Ootaki

” CALIBRATION IMPROVES THE SOUND, BUT GLM ALLOWS YOU TO FINE-TUNE AFTER CALIBRATION.

the board of Studio Brain and is also involved in production. “But when we took the 1035s out from the wall, I noticed that the foundation was very solidly built and thought we should make good use of it.

“I work on projects such as video and projection mapping that are played at events, some of which take place outside,” Takamura continues. “In those cases, it’s crucial to sense the SPL and ambience just like you would experience them at the event, and that would be impossible with nearfield monitors. I also need to work with directors and decide on how things will sound on site, so a large

monitor is also necessary for that to be possible.

“I thought that installing the monitors in the walls of the room would be a financial burden, but when compared to the cost of downsizing there was no difference in price,” reveals Takamura. “The fact that we could upgrade the 1035s that we trust, but with the latest technology, is truly wonderful.”

When they were launched in 1989, Genelec’s 1035 monitors quickly became a go-to for top studios around the world who demanded full-range monitors that combined high SPL with



true reference quality. The replacement 1235 was launched in 2020, offering Genelec's Smart Active Monitoring technology, with 96 kHz processing and tight integration with [GLM calibration software](#). At the same time, the Retrofit Upgrade Kit allowed installation of the new RAM-XL amplifier module, brand new drivers and a complete system calibration, with no structural changes and little downtime, enabling 1035 users to benefit from the improved performance and greater flexibility of the 1235 – thus providing many more years of reliable service from their monitors.

In well-established, theatre-tiered listening rooms like Brain's MA1, this is a real benefit for two other reasons. Firstly, the 1235s can be calibrated via GLM to allow even greater flexibility in tailoring them to the acoustics of the room, and additionally, they can be optimised for a variety of listening positions.

"When we got the monitors installed we tried listening to the uncalibrated sound without using GLM. The sound was – unsurprisingly – very close to the 1035s," says Takamura. "To us, it would be a big problem if our reference sound changed significantly. Calibration with GLM improves the sound, but also allows you to fine-tune the characteristics – so I was able to create a balance between the outstanding sound characteristics of the 1235s, and the sound that I'm used to with our original 1035s.

"Also, customers are often concerned in spacious rooms like this that if they can listen comfortably in the mixer's seat, the sound at the back won't be as good," he continues. "With GLM we can

measure and store the settings for the client's position in addition to the mixing position, and switch between the settings quickly. This is vital in terms of sharing the same sound with the client, so this feature is definitely a must for us."

In addition, the Retrofit Upgrade Kit saves Studio Brain money by consuming less power, supporting Genelec's longstanding commitment to sustainability. Genelec has always been keenly aware of the environmental impact of its designs, and this has seen the company treat sustainability with equal importance as sound quality and profitability. For years, Genelec has been an ISO 9001 and 14001 certified company, committed to optimising resources, using less energy and reducing waste and emissions. But for companies like Studio Brain, application is still key:

"I've been mixing with Genelec's large monitors since I started in this business, and I think Genelec is really special," says Takamura. "The sound is ingrained in my body and I can easily imagine how things will sound on TV, for example. I think it's really fascinating that I can keep this feeling with the Retrofit Upgrade, yet still have monitors with the latest technology."

"Brain has other studios with Genelec systems and they last a very long time," concludes Ootaki. "This is truly a connection of trust, and we will keep moving forward into the future while cherishing this sound. I feel that the Retrofit Upgrade was a really worthwhile thing to do."

THE KIT

- 2 x 1235A (retrofit)
- 1 x GLM Calibration Software

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