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CASE STUDY

RAK rebooted

RAK STUDIOS CHOOSES
GENELEC FOR WORLD-
CLASS IMMERSIVE ROOM



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STUDIO 4 REBUILD PROVIDES NEW OPTIONS FOR HISTORIC LONDON STUDIO



(L-R) RAK's Andy Leese, Emma Townsend and Helen Broadhurst

Over its 46-year lifespan, [RAK Studios](#) has been the choice of a fleet of iconic musical pioneers, ranging from David Bowie and Pink Floyd to Adele and Arctic Monkeys. Now, the famous London facility is leading the way forward again, this time with a top-to-bottom rebuild of its historic Studio 4 into a Gold Standard space for immersive mixing, complete with a scalable 9.1.4 monitoring solution based around Genelec's 'The Ones' Smart Active Monitor family.

RAK had been having creative and commercial discussions about building an immersive space for a number of years, with [Studio 4](#) always earmarked for the project. However, it was clear that flexibility needed to be a key factor so it could adapt to any project that came through the door. The space had to be a state-of-the-art immersive studio while also offering a world-class stereo experience, creating the multi-functional room that RAK needed.

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“In a project like this, you either do it properly, or you don’t do it at all,” states Emma Townsend, Studio Manager at RAK. “We just had to tear the whole thing down and start from an empty shell.”

The decision to rebuild rather than retrofit gave RAK the opportunity to work out exactly what it wanted to achieve with the space, a process it went through with the support of [Level Acoustic Design](#) for the acoustic design and [Studio Creations](#) for the build. “From the get-go we knew this could be more than just an Atmos room,” explains Andy Leese, RAK’s General Manager. “We wanted a room that was a master of all trades, so that you could do Atmos or stereo mixing, or you could sit in there to have a writing session and collaborate. We wanted it to be a really nice place to spend time.”

“From a design perspective we worked with the RAK team to balance a number of objectives,” adds Matt Ward, Technical Manager at Level Acoustic Design. “Obviously, the internal room acoustic had to be world class. We needed to dramatically improve the isolation, both from the street outside and to/from the accommodation above – which could be hosting producers and artists working in the other studios within the facility. Lastly, the room needed to feel like part of RAK, both in aesthetic and vibe, maintaining the natural daylight of the windows opening out onto Chalbert Street, and providing connection to the other studios.”

Finding the right equipment to achieve its vision led RAK to embark on a thorough due-diligence process. The studio’s engineering team spent time



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in various different rooms listening to monitors from every major brand, before reaching a unanimous decision to choose Genelec.

“We invited the entire engineering team to our [London Experience Centre](#),” recalls Andy Bensley, Regional Business Development Manager at Genelec. “They were quite taken with some of the technology that’s inherent in [The Ones](#) – things like the very consistent and controlled dispersion characteristics, wide stereo imaging and the LF extension of the [W371](#) adaptive woofer systems. Our ethos matched theirs in terms of how they envisaged working in this new format.”

The resulting solution features nine [8361](#) three-way coaxial monitors in the front and surround

positions, with three [W371](#) woofer systems extending the low frequency LCR performance. Four [8351](#)s serve as the height channels, with a pair of [7380](#) subwoofers handling system LF duties. [GLM](#) software was employed for the main system calibration, taking care of in-room frequency response compensation, distance delay and level alignment. “The precision of Level Acoustic’s design and Studio Creation’s build provided the ideal foundation for the system to be calibrated,” says Bensley. “From the initial GLM measurements we were incredibly happy with the setup, and it gave us a fantastic starting point to refine the performance and ultimately deliver a Gold Standard immersive system.”

In addition to the Genelec monitors, Studio 4



runs Pro Tools via Avid MTRX and HDX 3 plus S1 control surfaces, and also features a Grace Design m908 immersive monitor controller and the classic selection of outboard that you would expect from RAK.

With the project complete, Studio 4 is now a cutting-edge space that still fits with the aesthetic of RAK while also allowing it to offer artists new creative possibilities. “We already had three absolutely excellent tracking rooms, but different clients prefer different rooms for different things. The one thing that we were missing was a really good listening, writing and mixing room, and that’s what we’ve got now,” reflects Townsend. “Everyone who’s been in there so far is really happy with the sound of the room. It sounds great.”

“We couldn’t be more delighted with how Studio Creations have realised the design, and how the

Genelec monitoring system and room interact,” reflects Ward. “The point source design and close-to-ideal impulse response of The Ones series, managed with GLM, gives incredible three-dimensional imaging and detailed articulation to the Atmos array, and the W371 woofers provide a smooth and clear low frequency extension way down below 20 Hz.”

“We wanted to be able to represent all the diversity of everything that goes on at RAK, and it dovetails so beautifully into all the things we’ve got planned in the future,” concludes Leese. “It sounds truly amazing, and I think it’s going to sound better over time when the room beds in. We’re so pleased about how it’s all come out. The look of it, the feel and the location itself of the room in the building was always really lovely – and now it’s even better because the internals are just so well done.”

THE KIT

- 9 x 8361A
- 3 x W371A
- 4 x 8351B
- 2 x 7380A
- 1 x GLM software

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