

CASE STUDY

Tippet Rise

FISHTAIL, MONTANA

**Genelec brings precision monitoring to
Montana's Tippet Rise Art Center**



GENELEC®



THE BACKGROUND

Deep in the rolling foothills of Montana, where music, art and nature converge, Genelec monitoring plays a central role in capturing the soundscape of [Tippet Rise Art Center](#), a 12,500-acre working ranch and multidisciplinary arts haven founded by Peter and Cathy Halstead.

The whole vision was basically to create a space for unifying and exploring the connections between nature, art and music. Tippet Rise has several studio/performance environments, large-scale art sculptures out on the lands scattered throughout the property, and a view of one of the most amazing landscapes you have ever seen.





Audio Engineer, Video and Technical Systems Manager Monte Nickles oversees the facility's recording, post-production and concert archiving operations, where [Genelec](#) monitors anchor all three studios, including a newly built mastering suite outfitted with [8381A](#) Smart Active Monitors in a 7.1.4 configuration.

"Tippet Rise is all about exploring the connections between art, nature and music," says Nickles. "We host chamber concerts, residencies and recording sessions in a space designed for intimacy and reflection. Tippet Rise is very uniquely positioned, literally and figuratively, to explore the arts in new and different ways. And the Genelecs let us preserve that experience with absolute truth. They put you right there in the room or space."

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Monte Nickles
Technical Systems Engineer
Tippet Rise



THE VISION & SOLUTION

At the heart of the campus is the Olivier Music Barn, a 140-seat concert hall designed for warmth and connection. Outfitted with an Avid S6 console and a 7.1.4 Genelec system featuring seven [8351B Smart Active Monitors](#) for LCR, side and rear surrounds, four [8240A](#) height channels and a [7270A](#) subwoofer, the control room handles both live concert recording and post-production. Audio is captured simultaneously in DXD 384 kHz via Merging Technologies Pyramix and Pro Tools 96 kHz (as a backup), preserving ultra-high-resolution masters of every performance.

“The barn gives you a truly personal listening experience, as the audience is on the same level and space as the performers,” Nickles explains. “That intimacy makes for beautiful concerts, but it also means every chair creak and cough gets recorded. We do a lot of detailed de-noising work, but even after cleanup, the Genelecs reveal every nuance without ever feeling clinical.”

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Tippet Rise's newest facility, the Cirrus Building, marks a major expansion of the art center's technical capabilities. Here, Nickles has designed two new audio suites connected via fiber to the main hall, with audio routed over merging Ravenna and Dante® networks for seamless collaboration across the campus. “The buildings are pretty far apart but because of the fiber and Dante network, I can be in a completely different studio and access our data server, located in the basement of the barn, which is how I get all the material I am working on.” During post-production, Nickles recreates the natural ambience of the Olivier Music Barn by placing a pair of Genelec [1238s](#) in the now-empty hall, where live audiences of 100 to 140 people had previously been for the recording, and absorbing much of the room's natural resonance. He then positions eight or more microphones throughout the space, plays back the original recording, and captures the hall's authentic reverb and reflection characteristics, restoring the sense of depth and dimension that define Tippet Rise's intimate acoustic signature. “Capturing the authentic reverb and reflections characteristic of that room is something I learned at an AES show from immersive audio experts/engineers Jim Anderson and Ulrike Schwarz. I think I started doing that method of capturing the ‘room’ in 2022, and I have never looked back.”

The crown jewel is the Mastering Suite, anchored by seven Genelec 8381A main monitors for LCR, sides and rear surrounds, four [8341A](#) overheads and a [7380A](#) subwoofer, forming an immersive 7.1.4 environment. “When we installed the 8381As and finally dialed everything in, I hit play on a piano recording and it was like the instrument was right in front of me,” recalls Nickles. “It was one of those moments you don’t forget. The realism was jaw dropping.” This new room serves as the mixing and mastering hub for all of Tippet Rise’s projects, including recent albums by Brandon Patrick George and Bryan Wagorn (which is a flute album), and Nickles is about to start working on recordings from their 2025 concert series. “The space is increasingly being used to host listening sessions for visiting artists and





students. We can fit about a dozen people comfortably inside the sphere,” Nickles says. “Sharing that kind of immersive experience with others, that’s what it’s all about.”

Nickles’ relationship with Genelec dates back to his earliest audio education, first encountering 8030s as a student at Northwest College and later honing his skills on 1032s at Webster University. “I’ve been mixing on Genelecs my entire career,” he notes. “They’ve never let me down. They’re familiar and trustworthy, and every decision I make on them translates perfectly.”

That reliability was a key factor in selecting Genelec for Tippet Rise’s system upgrades. “When we were building the new mastering suite, we looked at several options,” says Nickles. “But Genelec’s customer support, track record, consistency from model to model and the performance of the new 8381As made it an easy call. The U.S. Genelec team in Natick, MA went above and beyond to make sure everything worked perfectly, and now it’s one of the best listening spaces I’ve ever been in.”

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THE CONCLUSION

From a remote Montana ranch to world-class recording output, Tippet Rise exemplifies the fusion of art and technology that Genelec continues to support. “When people sit in this room and listen, they realize how great and different music can sound when you hear it reproduced truthfully,” says Nickles. “That’s what these Genelec speakers do – they don’t just reproduce sound; they reveal it.”

THE DETAILS

Architect

Laura Viklund

Acoustics Design

Arup Engineering

Integrator

Kevin Hodgson / Salsa O’Brien

Photographer

Kevin Kinzley

Loudspeakers

- 7 x 8381A
- 4 x 8341A
- 1 x 7380A
- 7 x 8351B
- 4 x 8240A
- 1 x 7270A

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