

THE BRITISH ARE COMING! BUT JUST HOW VALUABLE IS THE FRANKFURT MUSIKMESSE?

John Rogers Prosser gets the verdict on Frankfurt from some of the British companies who exhibited at the recent Musikmesse



The song is *The girl in the other room*, performed by Diana Krall. The scene is the Dialog Room at the Frankfurt Messe, and the company is Funktion-One. As a bonus, there is also some German beer. The beer is good, but it is the sound quality that makes the impression: loud, mellifluous, and absolutely pure. Did I mention loud?

It has taken me what seems a lifetime to find the location of Funktion-One's press conference, and what is beginning to seem like days trudging around the Musikmesse, which as veterans will know is the

size of a small city. But it's been worth it. Against the far wall of the Dialog Room is a preposterously comprehensive array of loudspeakers. The floor begins to shake as the style of the music changes to something with, er, just a tad more bass.

Funktion-One describes itself as an "English inventor and manufacturer of professional loudspeaker systems," and has provided sound equipment in environments ranging from international stadiums to bars and foyers. "We understand sound to be the most important of



our senses and, in fact, the root of the structure of the entire universe," says Funktion-One's Tony Andrews. "We also pay considerable attention to the emotional effect of not just music, but the sound itself; what you might call its 'quality'. In a world where everything is 'dumbing down' and finesse and subtlety are rapidly disappearing, it is a source of pride to us that we are continually going in the opposite direction," he adds. Funktion-One has clearly had a good time.

Vicky Wallis of audio technologist Allen & Heath agrees: "Frankfurt was a huge success for Allen & Heath and we had a consistently busy stand for the duration of the show with lots of buzz around our new iLive, ZED and Xone products," she says.

Allen & Heath and Audinate announced at Prolight & Sound at the Messe that they are collaborating to introduce Dante networking modules for the iLive digital mixing series. Dante will be incorporated into Allen & Heath's range of audio networking plug-in cards, which slot into the iDR MixRacks and allow iLive to interface with a variety of common audio interface and networking standards, increasing inventory flexibility and system integration.

Faith Guitars, another aspirational British brand under the wing of Barnes and Mullins, enjoyed the Messe. "Frankfurt was a great success," says Alex Mew, B&M marketing manager. "As far as international trade events go, Frankfurt has long been second to none, so it seemed appropriate for Barnes & Mullins to make this the next step in our Faith Guitars export process.

"Having had the last few years to get the Faith instruments established in the UK, our first major international exhibition was Music China in Shanghai in 2006. Thanks to the subsequent four years at that show, a good network of distribution for Faith Guitars was built throughout Asia and Australasia. However in order to make proper impact throughout Europe, Frankfurt was the logical choice.

"With 2010 being our first year of exhibiting 'proper' at the Messe, we expected a good level of interest, but tried to remain realistic. However, our expectations were massively exceeded thanks to the beginning of some major partnerships with European distribution companies. These developments will undoubtedly bring huge benefits to these new markets in terms of having a new, exciting brand to take to market; but also to the existing and very important UK market. Over the next few years, UK retailers will see the positive impact that having a European-wide promotion and marketing presence will have."



Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH/ Pietro Sutera

