



L-R: Bhavin Sureliya from Innovative Systems & Solutions with Munro's Cyril Thomas and Utkarsh Naidu



The live room, where artists can come and start playing, is connected to a recording studio



A flexible boardroom was required for in-person conferences and videoconferencing

Music business

Sony Music India has relocated to brand-new premises in Mumbai in a move to improve collaboration and accommodate the company's growth. **Caroline Moss** reports from Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)

AS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST GLOBAL MUSIC companies, Sony Music India dominates 25% of the Indian music market. As such, the company needed new premises in Mumbai, and it made sense to move to the upscale commercial hub of BKC. M Moser Associates architects set to work designing a facility in a newly built office block that would streamline the company's workflows and provide for future growth.

Cyril Thomas and Utkarsh Naidu from Munro Acoustics India worked closely with M Moser Associates to design a facility that would not only give Sony Music India the space and flexibility for its different business activities but would also provide high levels of privacy for meetings with artists.

"The client had a specific vision of how each room should function," says Thomas, indicating a large boardroom where *Pro AVL Asia* begins the tour, just a week after staff had relocated to the new premises. "They wanted a wooden veneer finish, so we incorporated a lot of perforated elements – the ceiling as well as the walls – to counteract these reflective surfaces, fitting absorptive acoustic material behind the wall. We've also hung curtains over a large window dividing the room from the open plan office space outside."

A high degree of isolation was a prime consideration for the boardroom. "Acoustic privacy is of paramount importance, so that highly sensitive meetings can't be overheard," continues Thomas, explaining that reverberation time also needed to be carefully managed to provide optimum speech intelligibility. "It's not a dead space, like you'd get in a recording studio, but it doesn't give you that slap-back effect as if it was all flat, shiny surfaces."

AV integration was handled by Innovative Systems & Solutions, which came onboard just two months before the premises became fully functional, sourcing, installing and commissioning all the AV systems. Sony's own AV equipment, including video monitors and projectors, has been integrated throughout the building, alongside Genelec, QSC and Poly. The IP backbone of the facility is provided by Netgear M4250 AVLine AoIP network switches.



Each meeting room has pair of Genelec 4040A monitors for consistency

"The client required a flexible boardroom setup to handle in-person conferences and presentations, as well as videoconferencing," explains Bhavin Sureliya, chief technology officer at Innovative Systems & Solutions. "Everything is wireless with the option of wired connectivity too. Connecting to laptops and other devices is done through a single switch, and wired connectivity gives the option of USB-C."

A Poly G7500 4K videoconferencing system provides connections for cameras and microphones and support for native third-party applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. "We have integrated the Poly system with a QSC Q-SYS NC-12x80 PTZ videoconferencing camera," continues Sureliya. The Q-SYS backend incorporates a Core Nano audio, video and control processor, input and output expander boxes for DSP and a TSC-101-G3 touchscreen controller. The boardroom is equipped with a Sony FW-75BZ40H 75-inch professional display, a Barco ClickShare CX-30 interactive wireless presentation system and Lightware Taurus series switcher. Audio is relayed via six Genelec 4435A IP installation ceiling speakers in white, while a Sennheiser TCC2 Team Connect ceiling tile microphone – also in white – tracks speakers' voices during meetings.

Despite the project being completed in a reasonably short timeframe, it wasn't entirely free of lingering supply chain issues. All areas, from the meeting rooms and cabins through to the boardroom, are fitted with Poly videoconferencing equipment supplied from Thailand with an 8–10 week lead time. "This was very close to the deadline of the project, with everything flying in just three days before," says Sureliya. "With all cabling in place, it was a matter of connecting everything up in time to meet the deadline."

The entire installation was done in less than three weeks. "It was a straightforward project, with no complexity to any of the rooms," he continues. "It's designed in such a way that all the equipment is easy to use; anyone can come in and start it up."

There are six six-seater and two four-seater meeting rooms. All eight have near-identical equipment packages based around Poly Studio X50 videoconferencing bars, Sony FW-55BZ40H 55-inch



A multipurpose performance space is equipped with an L-R DAS Audio system

professional displays, Lightware UCX-2x1-HC30 universal switchers and Klark Teknik DI 20P direct input boxes. Each of the rooms has a pair of Genelec 4040A active reference monitors to provide audio consistency during playback meetings with artists, and Audio Pro Link 2 audio streaming devices. An Extron room booking system provides wall panels for meeting room scheduling, displaying occupancy and availability and facilitating reservations. The rooms also have Extron motion detection occupancy sensors.

Eleven smaller cabins are similarly equipped with Poly Studio X50 videoconferencing bars and Sony FW-55BZ40H 55-inch professional displays. Executive versions also offer a Barco CX-20 presentation system and an Audio Pro Link 2 streaming device. Devialet Mania portable stereo speakers are provided in six of the executive cabins.

A multipurpose space where town hall meetings, larger presentations and artist performances can be staged is equipped with an L-R DAS Audio system of three Event-26A compact line array speakers and an Event-11.15A subwoofer per side. "We suggested this for its compact size and it delivers a great sound right to the back of the room," says Sureliya.

This area is also equipped with a complement of AV equipment including a Sony VPL-XW5000ES 4K laser projector, a Crystal Screen motorised projection screen, a Barco ClickShare C-10 interactive wireless presentation system and Shure SLXD24/B58 handheld wireless microphones and receivers. A Q-SYS audio network is provided by a Core 8 Flex processor with output expander boxes and a touchscreen controller.

A Q-SYS network extends through the common areas such as the cafeteria, corridors and washrooms, with Q-SYS NLP4 and NL-C4 PoE ceiling speakers providing zoned background music or combining with other systems on the network to relay the same audio throughout the building for company-wide events.

Of course, no music company would be without a recording studio. Munro has designed an 8.8m x 7.8m live room with an isolation booth and a control room equipped with an Avid Pro Tools Ultimate package running on an Apple Mac computer, an Avid MTRX audio interface, an RND 5025 Shelford dual mic preamp, a Lewitt LCT 640 TS large-diaphragm condenser microphone and a pair of Genelec 8351 SAM studio monitors. Again, a Q-SYS backend controls the audio in this area. "They wanted this to be an open space where artists can come, pick up an instrument and start playing," says Thomas, "and if they want to record somebody playing, it's a really simple process. They also needed it to be consistent with their other facilities, so we had a few calls with their international team once we'd done the layouts."

The live area is installed with a pair of LD Systems MAUI 44 G2 portable column array speakers and four Genelec 4435A IP ceiling speakers, with two modes set on the Q-SYS Core that provides the backend: a quiet mode for playback sessions and a party mode. "Musicians can use this space to jam, to connect their equipment and record," says Sureliya. "They might, in future, use this space as an immersive audio listening space. We'll just need to add a centre and some surround channels; the wiring is already in place."

The move to this spacious new premises in the up-and-coming BKC district has provided Sony Music India with a highly efficient launchpad to continue its musical journey on the subcontinent.

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