

# VUE Audiotechnik: A Different Approach

By George Petersen

Back in March of this year, right on the eve of the Musikmesse/Prolight + Sound show in Frankfurt, there was a surprise announcement about a new pro audio company. The "new company" part wasn't much of a shocker — new companies spring up nearly every day. But the real issue of interest here was that this new enterprise known as VUE Audiotechnik is headed by Ken Berger and Jim Sides, two well-known industry icons with an impressive track record.

Berger was the co-founder and CEO of Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW). Sides was part of the founding management of Apogee Sound and, more recently, was MD/CEO of Meyer Sound Labs GmbH in Germany. Joining in the venture is head of engineering Michael Adams, a top FOH mixer and systems designer who later co-founded Audio Composite Engineering and played key roles in the development of numerous major touring products.

Another key component to VUE Audiotechnik is its global breadth. The company's Southern California operations in Escondido (just outside of San Diego) are partnered with world-leading beryllium innovators Materion Electrofusion (Fremont, CA, just north of Silicon Valley) and Speaker Trade of Solingen, Germany, which also owns a sizeable 290,000-square-foot R&D and production facility in Asia.

## Real Questions, Real Answers FOH

Having assembled what seems to be a dream team, the next question is: What are these guys really up to? So far, the company has been extremely tight-lipped about its goals, except to issue a vague statement about its plans to "redefine high-output, low-distortion loudspeaker performance." A few clues have leaked over the Internet in the past few weeks, and VUE Audiotechnik will officially show its hand at this month's InfoComm Expo. But, being curious, we couldn't wait, and wanted to uncover some answers.

The company structure is centered around the launch of three distinct "classes" within the brand. These include its flagship H Class — representing the most advanced technologies and no-compromise performance; the A ("Applied Engineering") Class of audio tools for working pros; and the I Class, with products designed specifically for the needs of system integrators and contractors. VUE Audiotechnik's focus — at least for the time being — is entirely about advancing the state of loudspeakers for the professional market. And given the lineage of its principals, that comes as no surprise.



Fig. 1: The HS-28 dual-18 subwoofer uses Active Compliance Management technology.



VUE Audiotechnik founders Jim Sides and Ken Berger

## H Class: Ultimate Performance FOH

All compression drivers in the H Class incorporate Materion Electrofusion's Trueextent® beryllium diaphragms for ultra-low mass and greater rigidity and stiffness than other metals, yielding improved transient response, while exhibiting reduced unwanted resonances over titanium or aluminum. All H Class full range transducers employ 4-inch voice coils and multi-ply, cross-grain laminated Baltic birch enclosures.

The first entries in the H Class revealed so far include the powered two-way H 12 (12-inch system) and H 15 (15-inch) full range speakers for wide and narrow coverage, but the model that's sure to generate the most interest and attention from the pro community is the HS-28 subwoofer, which is shown in Fig. 1 as a cutaway rendering with the front grill and part of the top panel removed.

The HS-28 subwoofer uses VUE Audiotechnik's patent-applied-for Active Compliance Management (ACM) technology. This places two LF drivers in a single space, in a unique hybrid configuration, with one operating as a front-address direct radiating driver and the other woofer set at 90 degrees, feeding a bandpass chamber. Both share a single vented space, and each is driven by separate amplifier channels under individual DSP control. This application of

Active Compliance Management is said to yield a substantial increase in amplitude over conventional designs, with the summed output of drivers and vents maintaining flat phase response and exhibiting low distortion, while occupying a more compact enclosure.

Full-range models in the H Class include integrated hanging points, while H 12 models also include a pole mount for use with stands or atop subwoofers in speaker-on-a-stick applications. Network control and monitoring capabilities are available via standard Ethernet-based protocols and accessible through VUE Control Software, offering a straightforward interface for both Macintosh and Windows platforms.

The VUE Control Software provides network control and monitoring of parameters (such as individual speaker muting, volume and delay), with onscreen displays of amplifier operating temperature, load impedance and warning indicators for HF/LF clipping, thermal overload and protection modes.

## A Class: Applied Engineering FOH

The A Class is intended and built specifically for working professionals seeking a balance of performance, versatility and value, while sharing many of the design principles of the H Class products. Further, A Class enclosures are built to the same standards as the H Class, using multi-ply, cross-grain laminated birch with extensive interior bracing and a rugged, six-layer polyurethane finish.

The initial offerings in the A Class line includes 8-, 10-, 12- and 15-inch two-way models as well as three subwoofers. All of these A Class two-way models combine a high-efficiency, neodymium LF driver with a neodymium compression driver. The HF compression driver mounts to a 70 x 55 degree horn that can be rotated for use in either horizontal or vertical applications.

This flexibility is extended by the cabinet shape, which is five-sided for ease in use as a slant monitor or as an FOH enclosure. Via a simple rear panel switch, the larger A-12 and A-15 models can be selected for either passive (single amp'd) or bi-amp'd operational modes. Integrated hanging points provide versatile flying options, while a cup-mount system allows for por-

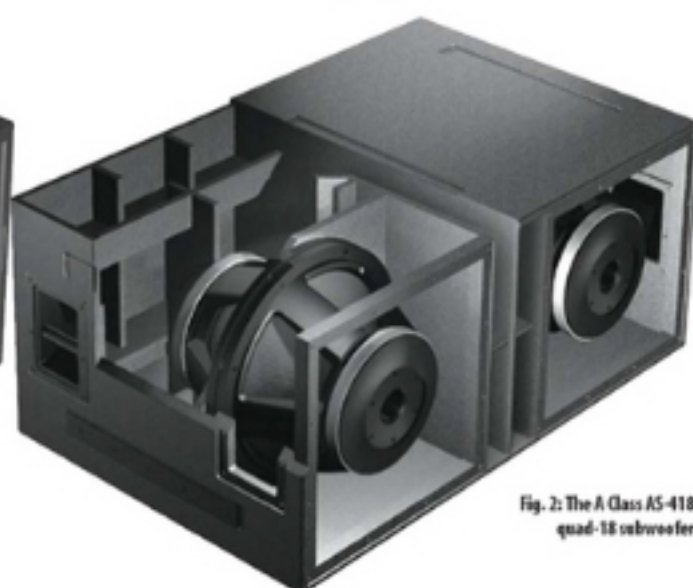


Fig. 2: The A Class AS-418 quad-18 subwoofer

table use on floor stands or mounted above A Class subwoofers.

The A Class subwoofer family is led by the AS-418 quad-18 box. Shown in cutaway view in Fig. 2, with the front grills and part of the cabinet side/top removed, the AS-418 subwoofer employs VUE Audiotechnik's Compound Force technology. This approach has a single cabinet with two mirror-imaged, side-by-side chambers.

The AS-418 puts four 18-inch woofers mounted in a front-to-front isobaric arrangement in a push-pull configuration that combines direct radiation with the rear speaker in a tuned vented enclosure. This Compound Force design is said to deliver more output, less distortion and reduced power compression, while at the same time providing a quad-18 design in a box that's comparable to the dimensions of a traditional dual-18 subwoofer enclosure.

## I Class: Integrator Systems FOH

Rounding out the VUE Audiotechnik rollout is the company's I Class, which is designed to deliver quality, rugged wood enclosure products to installers and systems integrators as an alternative to molded plastic box systems.

Intended to cover a wide variety of applications, the I Class range has surface-mount, full-range systems and a choice of three powered and passive subwoofer options. The line is designed to cover a wide range of uses, including small portable PA to background/foreground music systems to fill speakers in larger systems. All I Class enclosures have a rugged, industrial-grade polyurethane coating, and every full-range model includes integrated surface mounting hardware.

## Summing It Up FOH

So here's your personal preview of the initial launch, but certainly there's a lot ahead in the future for VUE Audiotechnik. Based on the company's stated philosophy of "tackling commonly accepted compromises with a perspective born from real-world know-how, and backed by advanced technologies and manufacturing resources available worldwide," it seems like this venture is off to a good start.

"But this is just the beginning," says CEO Ken Berger. "All three classes will expand significantly over the next 24 months. It's really quite exciting to debut this first wave at InfoComm and to underscore our commitment to serving the industry we value so highly."

For more information, visit VUE Audiotechnik at [vueaudio.com](http://vueaudio.com) (full details are scheduled to be made online on June 13, the first day of InfoComm exhibits). Or see them at InfoComm at Booth C12028. **FOH**



VUE Control Software offers remote control and monitoring of DSP and amplifier parameters in self-powered I Class speakers.



The pentagonal-shaped A 12 is sloped for monitor or FOH duties