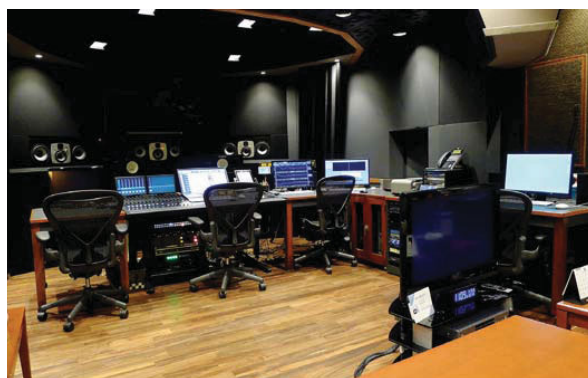


# In the Haus

One of Japan's longest-established postproduction studios has upgraded with Eve Audio and Avid.

**Caroline Moss** reports



The upgraded Studio MA-1



The studio has been equipped with an Avid S6 control surface; TAC Systems VMC-102 controller

## ONKIO HAUS HAS THE DISTINCTION

of being one of Tokyo's first postproduction studios. When it opened in 1974, just three studios existed to handle audio content for the city's film and advertising industries.

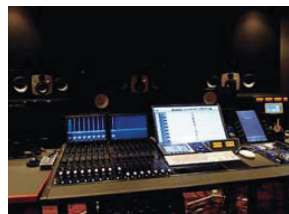
Over the decades, Onkio Haus has expanded to fill all eight floors of the Ginza building in which it started life, as well as acquiring a neighbouring premises. This second building, which houses video editing and audio syncing facilities, opened to coincide with format changes as broadcasting in Japan switched to digital.

The very specialised work carried out at Onkio Haus is based mainly in the world of TV advertising. Clients tend to be from large industries such as automotive and food and beverage, with substantial advertising budgets to spend. As is common practice, many meetings take place in the studio control room as clients view ongoing projects and approve changes and edits. Last year, it was decided that a complete redesign and reequip of Studio MA-1 be carried out to maximise the potential of its real estate. There was also a corresponding need to upgrade the technology, and provide a 7.2 surround system.

'There was previously very little space for people in the control room, and advertising clients like to sit in the control room when they come to discuss and review their projects.'

says Hamakazu Goto, Onkio Haus general manager, recording division. 'So we wanted to make our clients more comfortable by rearranging the control room to make more space.'

The company which handled the refit and equipment integration of Studio MA-1 was TAC System, headed up by Jun Yamazaki. Mr Yamazaki had previously worked on other



Onkio Haus is the first major installation in Tokyo for Eve Audio

rooms in the Onkio Haus complex, including postproduction studios and a recording room. As well as being a systems integration company, TAC System is the Japanese distributor for brands including Dolby, Eventide, Aviom, iZotope and Millennia. The company also designs and manufactures its own products, and is an audio development partner for Avid.

'We looked at as many ways as possible to create more space in the control room,' explains Mr Yamazaki of his role in the Onkio Haus upgrade. One of the key changes implemented

was to replace the SSL 4000 console with an Avid S6 control surface. As well as upgrading to a console with a smaller footprint, TAC Systems also moved a machine out of the control room, freeing up an alcove where clients can sit for their meetings.

The choice of monitoring was a complex process, and one which has resulted in the first major installation in Tokyo for Eve Audio. The decision to go with a relatively unknown brand was a slight concern for the studio. 'However, we really liked the timbre of the speakers and the balance of sound,' says Mr Hamakazu. 'Other factors, such as the physical size of the Eve monitors, as well as the price, were also important considerations.'

In fact, the height of the monitors played a crucial role in the choice, as the room required a large video display to be mounted above the speakers. There was also a specific requirement that the loudspeakers should be set into the wall. Engineers at Onkio Haus had actually decided on a new monitor system when they heard about Eve, but decided to give them a listen anyway. 'We were offered the chance to hear a demonstration of Eve, and we were a little reluctant as we'd been listening to a lot of speakers and thought our minds had been made up,' recalls Mr Hamakazu. 'But when we heard them, we were impressed by the great sound quality of the speakers,



Onkio Haus manager Hamakazu Goto and chief engineer Hirito Kubota

and the fact they fitted perfectly into the layout of the control room.'

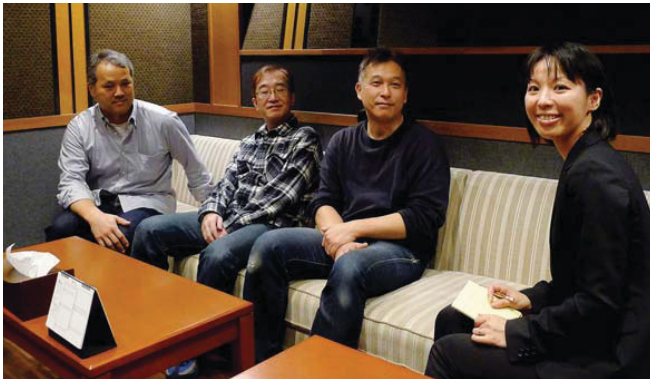
Three Eve Audio SC408s and four SC207s have been installed alongside a pair of Genelec 7070A subwoofers to provide a 7.2 system. The SC408 is the largest four-way speaker that Eve manufactures and, like the smaller SC407, features one amplifier per driver. The system was supplied by Eve Audio's Japanese distributor, Media Integration.

The speaker's rear bass reflector posed a slight installation challenge. Because the speakers needed to be sunk into the walls, this interfered with the intended bass response. So the installation was designed to leave an air pocket on top of the speakers to counteract this, a solution which has worked well. This was one of the innovations implemented by acoustic consultant Mr Nakahara from Sona, who

worked closely with Mr Yamazaki on what was the first Eve Audio installation for both of them.

Eve Audio, which is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year, is delighted to be making inroads into Japan. 'Media Integration has been our Japanese distributor since Eve Audio attended its first Musikmesse show back in 2012,' says Eve's CEO and head of R&D, Roland Stenz. 'Since then they have been able to grow our brand in Japan nicely. A major installation such as Onkio Haus with the SC207 and our flagship four-way SC408 monitor is a pinnacle of what Media Integration has achieved so far, and impressively demonstrates the heights achieved by the Eve Audio brand in Japan in the meantime.'

Aside from the main monitoring and mixing console, there have been a few other changes to the studio's



Onkio Haus chief engineer Hirito Kubota and manager Hamakazu Goto with Tac Systems' Jun Yamazaki and Sayuri Kimura

equipment. The plugins have been upgraded, and now include the McDSP Emerald Pack, Audio Ease Altiverb 7 XL, iZotope RX 4, Waves Diamond Bundle and Waves SSL 4000 Collection.

And making its debut at the studio is Tac Systems' new controller, the TAC VMC-102, designed by Mr Yamazaki himself. This is a speaker controller which can be inset into the centre of the Avid S6 to centralise all speaker functions. The VMC-102 enables multi-

completely Avid setup. This makes file sharing with clients really easy too, as we can easily make Pro Tools session files available to them, either on media hard drives or online file sharing.'

The studio has retained its Yamaha NS10s for stereo monitoring. 'These monitors are very common in postproduction studios; everyone still uses them as they are really familiar with the sound of the NS10s,' says Mr Hamakazu.

The newly-refurbished studio has allowed Onkio Haus to improve its workflow and offer improved efficiency to its clients. Studio MA-1 has become busier as a result of the upgrade, and is now able to handle significantly different types of work. This has gained Onkio



Onkio Haus chief engineer, Hirito Kubota hard at work on the Avid S6

stem mixing and monitoring with stereo and 5.1 capability, and can also step up to handle Dolby Atmos and MPEG-H mixing.

'This was a good testing ground for the VMC-102, and Onkio Haus have given us really good feedback,' says Mr Yamazaki. 'They started off with the prototype, and I've made lots of improvements to the production unit based on the feedback they gave me. Avid is using it for demonstrations on stands at various trade shows, and it is now shipping outside of Japan.'

As for working on the new Avid S6, studio engineer Hirito Kubota found the transition to a smaller console very straightforward. 'I like the fact everything is much closer together and I don't have to deal with a big control surface,' he says. 'I mix down from Pro Tools; the systems are designed to work seamlessly together, so it's really tight and all the information is displayed very clearly. We've been working on Pro Tools since 2011, so it's good to now have a



Inside the vocal booth

Haus some new clients while retaining happy existing ones. 'The upgrade has increased our reputation even more,' says Mr Hamakazu.

Onkio Haus has also become one of the first rooms in Tokyo to offer 7.2. 'We have always been driven to install something new, and this is no exception; we are always pushing ahead,' continues Mr Hamakazu. 'There aren't even so many 7.1 studios in Tokyo yet, so we are definitely leading the way. It has also been upgraded to 4K resolution, so we have really future-proofed our studio with this installation.'

[www.tacsystem.com](http://www.tacsystem.com)  
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