

Case Study:

The College of West Anglia

A project containing a suite of five MusicBox rehearsal pods, two control rooms and a standalone voice over booth



Overview

About the Client

Further education and training provider in the East of England.

Project Won

Project awarded in October 2013

Project Completion

All phases completed and handed over in September 2014

Type of Project

Project included design (including bespoke items), manufacture, installation and full project management.

Products Used

- IAC MusicBox, consisting of:
 - IAC Noise-Lock™ acoustic doors
 - IAC Noise-Lock™ II hard panel construction
 - IAC Noise-Lock™ acoustic windows



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Ross Griggs
The College of West Anglia

The College of West Anglia (CWA) is one of the largest and most successful education and training providers in the Eastern Region and amongst the top colleges in the country. In recent years, a number of development projects have completed, with the most recent being the Creative Studios on their King's Lynn campus. Formerly a sports hall, the building has been completely refurbished and is now a state of the art, dedicated facility for music, media, ceramics, performing arts and TV production.

Using CWA's chosen architect, Pick Everard, IAC Acoustics was approached to produce rehearsal rooms in the music department. Chosen due to the flexibility of MusicBox, IAC's range of music practice rooms, the modular design and high acoustic performance gained from an all-metal construction were favoured due to the stringent acoustic rating needed to be achieved. The initial enquiry

was back in 2013 when budgets were being outlined for the facility as a whole; IAC won the order in October 2013 and began on-site in April 2014. The facility was completed in time for the new term and the handover finished in September.

As is common with projects of this size, there were a number of things to consider and obstacles to overcome, right through from the initial planning stages to the final build. One of the main hurdles with this project was the difficult existing acoustic environment of the building, with a high ceiling of the original sports hall creating a lot of reverberation and echo. This was overcome firstly due to the standalone pod construction of each room and secondly by sitting the rooms on anti vibration mounts to reduce noise transfer through the host building.

The new music department which houses a suite of five music practice rooms, plus two control and editing suites are fully isolated from one

another and the host building so as to not disturb students learning in the nearby classrooms and workshops. Manufactured from IAC's range of Noise-Lock™ II hard panels, they work as both sides are solid faced, to minimise noise transfer. The second solution was to incorporate Noise-Lock™ acoustic doors with an acoustic performance of R'w51dB.

Using hard panels to stop sound escaping from the music practice rooms can cause issues with reverberation, which is not ideal in a recording environment. Reverberation occurs when there is a lack of soft surfaces to absorb sound. In music rooms, it is crucial to get the right balance between reverberation and absorption. To overcome this issue and increase absorption, tuning panels were added to the walls to reduce reverberation times using IAC's range of Absorbatone™ foam acoustic panels.

In terms of the look and feel of the facilities, there were various college-

wide requirements which needed to be incorporated into the new build. Firstly, the college uses an integrated door swipe system to manage access control across the campus - something which was required to be incorporated into all of the acoustic doors within the

music production suite. IAC had to work with this hardware to incorporate it within the doors, ensuring that security was upheld across the entire site. From a purely aesthetic point of view, the architect was working with a particular colour scheme in mind. Music Box comes as standard in particular colours. However, for this project, they were custom painted in the chosen colour scheme - white and pale blue to match the décor used throughout the rest of the department.



Speaking on behalf of CWA, Ross Griggs, Music Lecturer and Course Director, said "We are delighted with the newly installed music practice rooms. They provide a surprising amount of sound isolation which is instantly evident when one opens the super-efficient doors on a metal band in full flow! The modular layout has allowed us to make effective use of available space in providing a very adaptable set of rooms to accommodate a range of rehearsal or recording activities simultaneously. Conversely, due to the effective way that all rooms are interconnected with tie-lines, we are able to configure and utilise the spaces for activities where acoustic separation is required for a single project or recording. Staff and students alike are enjoying the increased space and flexibility this installation has provided us with!"

This project was one of the first to use the newly designed MusicBox range when used as part of a suite of rooms. Working closely with the client and architect, IAC Acoustics has succeeded in providing a music rehearsal and production suite that meets the original acoustic specification and all other requirements.



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