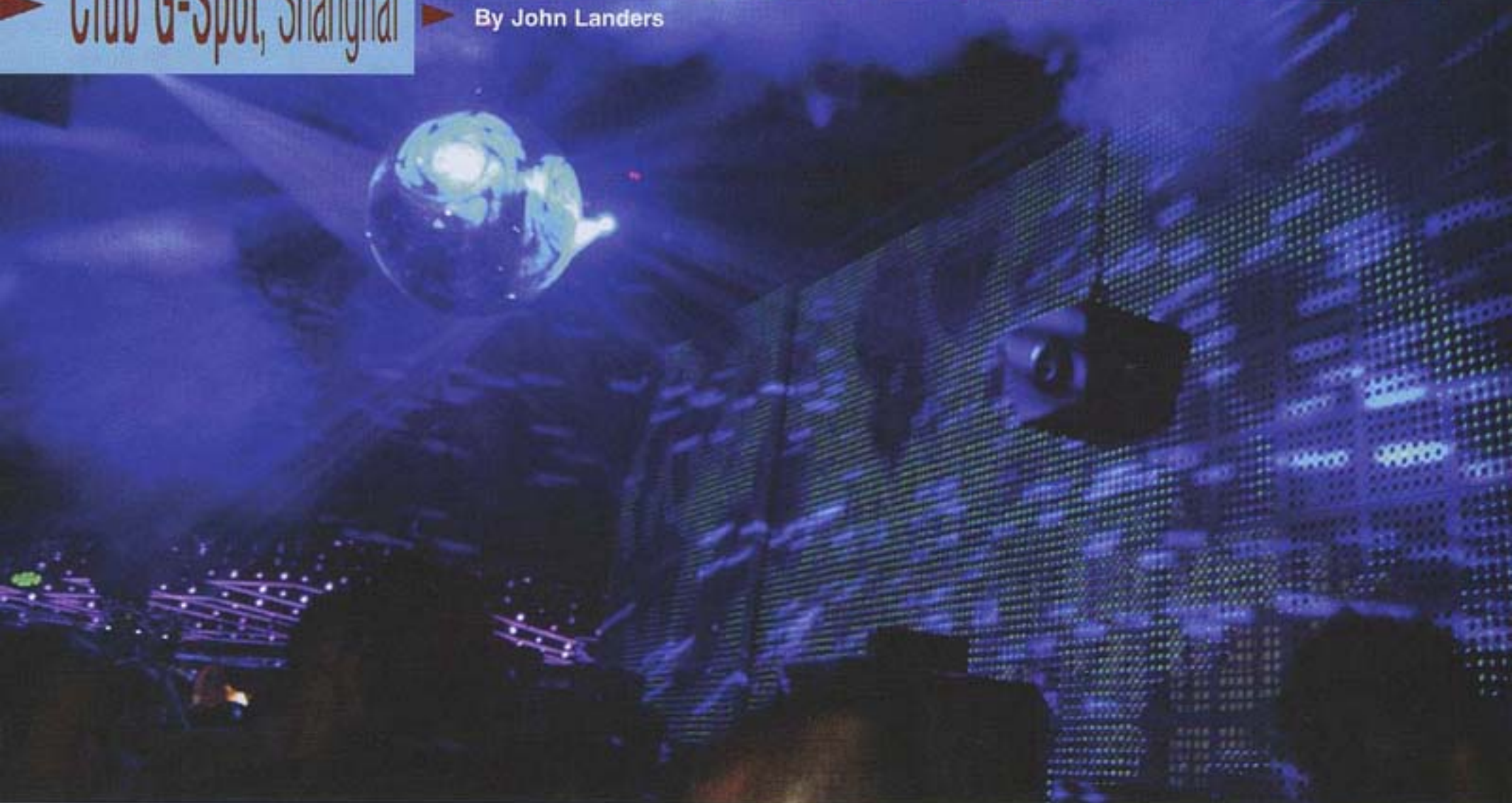


Club G-Spot, Shanghai

Shorty spreads the analog gospel to the Far East.

By John Landers



G-Spot boasts 20,000-square-feet and over 65 individual speakers.

It's a Thursday night, but the sci-fi-styled club is packed to the ceiling with smartly-dressed party people. Swirling beams of colored light sweep the room, bathing the chic crowd in a surreal glow. A massive LED wall displays endless eye candy while busy bartenders pour exotic cocktails.

It looks like a lost scene from *Blade Runner*, but it sounds like New York back in the day. Tweeter arrays hang overhead, filling the air with musical detail, while the towering speaker stacks surrounding the dancefloor deliver a full-body massage at 130 beats per minute. Welcome to Club G-Spot.

Analog Speaks Volumes

More than 20 million people currently live in Shanghai, and on any given night, at least half of them seem to be out clubbing. If they're searching for something special, however, they come to Number 1 Huai Hai Zhong Lu. An elevator ride to the fourth floor (yes, you go in and up to reach G-Spot) brings the scenesters, the audiophiles, and the curious tourists to this unique venue, where the best of the past, the present, and the future combine to create an exquisite clubbing experience.

While this 20,000-square-foot space certainly boasts dazzling decor and an impressive lighting system, the thing that really sets G-Spot apart, even in the crowded Shanghai club scene, is its sound. The venue's premium system is the work of East Brunswick, N.J.-based Systems by Shorty (systemsbyshorty.com), a company well known for its involvement with sonic haven Stereo Montreal, and its allegiance to traditional audio technology. In fact, it was Shorty's reputation as an analog iconoclast that convinced the G-Spot team to hire him from 7,000 miles away.

"It all started with an instant message," recalls Shorty. "This guy wanted to know if I would be interested in doing a club in China, so I asked him, 'Why are you contacting me?' He said, 'We really want to build a kick-ass sound system, and we don't want to do digital.' So they flew me over there to look at the place."

After an initial walk-through and consultation, Shorty encouraged the owners to reconsider the club's proposed layout. "They came to me with the interior design, and then I started talking to them about the sound system," he said. "I went out there with pictures of the boxes, and when I showed them where everything had to be to get the most of their investment, they changed it all around."

Eventually, the bar was re-positioned, carpet was added to some walls, and the dancefloor was shifted to accommodate the speaker stacks. "If you're going for a money-no-object, top-of-the-line sound system, you really should base the room around where the speakers are going to go," Shorty maintains.

Built From Scratch

G-Spot consists of two main rooms, G1 and G2, plus eight pimped-out KTV or karaoke box rooms, which also feature live audio and video feeds from the rest of the club. "They wanted analog for both of the main systems," explains Shorty. "They wanted a big, hi-fi analog sound system for G1, which holds about 800 people, and a good, clean sound system with some custom boxes for G2, which holds about 300 people." To make it all happen by the scheduled opening date, he decided to design, build, and install the premiere G1 system from scratch, and use a blend of custom and stock products for the smaller G2 room.

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G-Spot

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Even with all of the intense lighting in G1, the big room is visually dominated by the four colossal SBS speaker stacks aimed directly at the dancefloor. Although the basic cabinet shapes may seem familiar to clubland veterans, each enclosure has been designed and refined for optimum performance.

"The low-mid boxes, for example, are SBS FLH 210 cabinets, which are my new double 10-inch straight horn-loaded boxes," he explains. "I also used the new JBL 2012 drivers in this system for the first time. This technology works very well. It's extremely clean with fast transients."

The rest of the enclosures are equally impressive. "In the double 15-inch straight horn-loaded cabinets, I used TAD TL1603 drivers. They're incredible; very tight and punchy. The midrange compression drivers are TAD TM4002s, and for the high frequency drivers I chose Fane HF250s."

Stock EAW full-range enclosures provide additional coverage around the room, so sound levels are appropriate for each environment. Shorty used 10 EAW FR153z speakers in the seating areas, and EAW LA325 cabinets near the bar, so patrons enjoy an immersive audio experience, but never have to shout to order drinks or converse with friends.

No Aural Fatigue Here

The G1 DJ booth is located directly in front of an enormous, eye-catching LED wall, giving the room a definite DJ-centric vibe. The well-appointed booth features two Technics 1200 MK5 turntables, three Pioneer CDJ-1000 MK3 CD players, and a Pioneer DVJ-1000 video deck. "I explained to them that when you've got a guy like Sander Kleinenberg coming, you're going to need the video capability, so why rent? Most of these guys are asking for three CD players on their riders, anyway, so having a fourth deck that can also play DVDs just makes sense," Shorty notes.

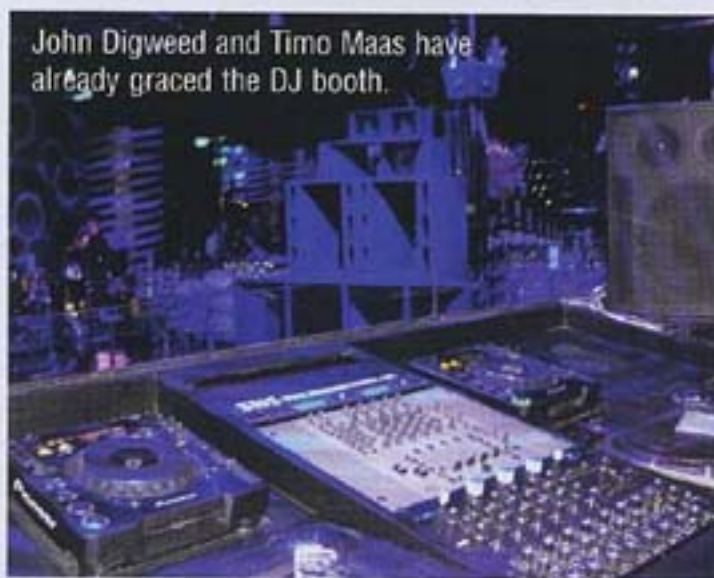
Since its grand opening in October, G-Spot has hosted A-list DJs like John Digweed, Nic Fanciulli, and Timo Maas. Feedback from the artists (as well as the patrons and owners) has been overwhelmingly positive so far.

The sound system in the smaller G2 room is more modest, but it still rocks the house. "For the bottom end, I designed two SBS FLH 3.2 sub modules, and for the top end I used two SBS STA tweeter arrays with Fane HF250s," Shorty explains. "For the mids, I used four EAW LA325 cabinets. They've always worked well for me."

"I chose to design the secondary room this way so that clients can



Crown amplifiers power G-Spot's enormous analog sound



John Digweed and Timo Maas have already graced the DJ booth.

G-Sound

G1

- 14 - EAW FR 153Z booth monitors and full-range cabinets
- 8 - Crown MA 3600 VZ amplifiers (modified)
- 8 - SBS FLH 215T mid-bass cabinets (w/ TAD TL 1603 drivers)
- 8 - SBS SMT 4002 mid-top cabinets (w/ TAD TD 4002 drivers)
- 5 - BSS 966 Opal system equalizers
- 5 - Crown D75A amplifiers
- 5 - Crown MA 5002 VZ amplifiers (modified)
- 4 - EAW LA 325 full-range cabinets
- 4 - Middle Atlantic amp racks
- 4 - SBS BSC 115 booth subwoofers (w/ JBL 2226 drivers)
- 4 - SBS FLH 212 J low-mid cabinets (w/ JBL 2020 drivers)
- 4 - SBS SBH 2.18 EXT horn-loaded subwoofers (w/ extensions)
- 4 - SBS STA HF 250 tweeter arrays (w/ Fane drivers)
- 3 - Bryston 10B analog crossovers (modified)
- 3 - Pioneer CDJ-1000MK3 CD decks
- 2 - Bryston 3B SST amplifiers
- 2 - Bryston 4B SST amplifiers
- 2 - SBS BTC 250 booth tweeter cabinets (w/ Fane drivers)
- 2 - Stanton 680 EL cartridges
- 2 - Technics 1200 MK5 turntables
- 1 - Allen & Heath Xone:92 DJ mixer
- 1 - Bryston 2B SST amplifier
- 1 - Pioneer DVJ-1000 DVD turntable
- 1 - RLA X3000 crossover (SBS modified)
- 1 - Rane MP 2016a DJ mixer
- 1 - Rane XP 2016a expander
- 1 - SDA SDX3000 monitor crossover
- 1 - Thrive Audio DJ EQ tube isolator

G2

- 4 - EAW LA 325 full-range cabinets
- 2 - EAW FR 129Z booth monitors
- 2 - EAW FR 153ZR fill cabinets
- 2 - QSC RMX 2450 amplifiers
- 2 - SBS Bass Module subwoofers (w/ Eminence Omega 18 drivers)
- 2 - SBS STA 250 tweeter arrays (w/ Fane drivers)
- 1 - Ashly CLX-52 limiter
- 1 - Ashly MQX 2310 31-band equalizer
- 1 - Ashly XR 2001 crossover
- 1 - Crown MA 3600 VZ amplifier
- 1 - QSC PLX 3602 amplifier
- 1 - QSC RMX 850 amplifier
- 1 - Pioneer DJM-800 DJ mixer

hear what I can provide for them, both with a custom-designed system and with a mixture of custom and off-the-shelf products," says Shorty.

"It's got a tremendous bottom. It hits you in the chest like a truck, it runs through you, and it's got a nice sizzle on the top, but the mid-range is really relaxed and laid-back. You don't leave the club with aural fatigue," Shorty says. "Like I told the owners from the beginning, if you're looking for a screaming sound system with high SPL, you've got the wrong guy."

With G-Spot now serving as the New Jersey soundman's Asian showroom, Shorty expects to be doing more installations in the region in the near future. "Clubbing here is tremendous. They're going out every night of the week," he observes. "It's going to be the place to be." ○