

## 6TH FLOOR RECORDING STUDIO

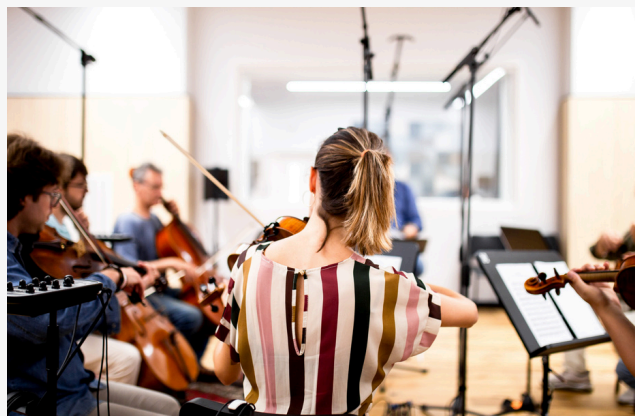


Photo credit: 6th Floor Recording Studio

In Italy, an hour's drive from Milan, engineer Andrea Squassina is working to change how Italians interact with classical music. Combining technology and classical music to create new, more accessible experiences, he hopes to reach a larger variety of audiences.

The studio has two goals: "That classical musicians understand that technology is not their enemy. A classical musician plus technology can be something (...) that can really create something new. The second aim is that young people can like (classical music)."

Three recent projects exemplify his approach to incorporating technology into classical music, including his Hear Back OCTO personal monitoring system:

1. Record in 5.1 surround sound to recreate a special performance of an Antonio Vivaldi piece. "We wanted the person to be inside of the music," Andrea said. The goal was to recreate a tribute performed after a terrorist attack 50 years ago. To recreate it, they re-recorded the original version, orchestra, strings, choir, and solo child vocalist. The audience would then be surrounded by projected archival images inside the theater and experience audio in 5.1 surround. "We wanted to bring classical music in a different way. To do this, we need some technical gear that is not made for classical music [...]." To enable editing and then simultaneous projection and performance, "Everything should be exactly in time with the [archival memorial] video. So, we have to record classical music with a metronome. Which, for a classical musician, is really, really strange! [...] We have the Hear Back OCTO with sixteen personal mixers, which was one personal mixer for every two musicians, so all the musicians could hear the click and play in the right time."

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2. For the second project, “We wanted to bring the technology [to] the limit for classical music.” Performing a piece of Bach with four pianos and orchestra, they recorded it “like rock music,” one section at a time – violins, violas, cellos, etc. – all with a metronome click. It was critical to have everyone play perfectly in time to be able to mix a uniform performance. “Of course, in this case, the Hear Back (OCTO) system was fundamental. Everyone needs to hear what the others did, fix the volumes. It was really important for us to have the Hear Back OCTO.”

3. 6th Floor Recording’s current project is a recreation of a 1962 Mozart piano concert performance by a famous pianist, “keeping the intention and the original mood of the piano player.” It will be a hybrid concert: The recording will replicate the original piano performance exactly, with the final aim to do a live concert in which the orchestra plays live with a click and the piano in their ears. “It’s like this famous dead pianist is still alive, playing the piano.” This live performance will require OCTO Mixers as well to ensure everyone plays in time with the recording.

Andrea says he considers his efforts a success so far, noting that Italian national television is filming a documentary on one of their projects. “We are probably going in the right direction.”

6th Floor Studio just shifted from an analog setup to digital. Previously, they had an analog console feeding 6 aux sends from the console, with a talkback and DAW sends from Pro Tools. Recently, they changed to the Ultimate version of Pro Tools, so now, they route through an Antelope converter that is directly connected to the Hear Back OCTO Hub. The first eight outputs of the Antelope are routed to studio monitors in the control room, and the second eight outputs are sent to the OCTO Hub.

When Andrea moved from a smaller studio to set up 6th Floor Studio, “I needed something different, something more powerful, something with a lot more signals, a lot more expandable possibilities,” he said. “And that’s exactly what I found.”

And when 6th Floor changed from analog to digital, he didn’t have to change the headphone system. “I can use it live, for example, so it has a lot of different possibilities,” he said. “I am trying to push technology to the limit for classical music (...) and so I appreciate some gear that helps me to have a lot of possibilities about what I am trying to do.”