# DiGiCo SD7B truck set as timing master speeds Mountbatten Festival broadcasts and recordings



The Mountbatten Festival of Music returned to the Royal Albert Hall with a technically ambitious audio rig that balanced the demands of live theatre, broadcast and commercial recording. According to the original report, the production used two DiGiCo Quantum7 consoles supplied by Terry Tew Sound & Light for house and monitors, while a DiGiCo SD7B ran the outside‑broadcast (OB) truck where Zen Broadcast captured the festival for live streaming and a commemorative DVD and album. Ben Milton mixed front‑of‑house, Bill Birks handled monitors and Andy Deacon oversaw the OB mixes and recording session — a compact team delivering audio across multiple platforms for sold‑out audiences.

Speaking to rAVePubs, Andy Deacon described the OB truck as “built around the SD7B, and before that, the SD10,” and explained the practical advantages of using the truck as the timing master. He said the team sets the truck’s racks to the lowest Optocore ID so they become the sync source, allowing every unit on the Optocore loop to clock to the truck automatically — a workflow the engineers characterised as an elegant solution for a show of this size. ProSoundWeb’s coverage of the same production corroborates that the SD7B was central to the truck configuration and to the show’s clocking and network strategy.

The production’s relentless schedule — three performances in two days with a recording pass completed before the first concert to produce the album — shaped all technical decisions. Milton told rAVePubs that keeping the same Quantum7 consoles from rehearsals in Portsmouth through to the Royal Albert Hall saved crucial time on site and meant the FOH team arrived fully prepped. This approach also helped the event’s fundraising mission: the Mountbatten Festival is staged as a multi‑performance gala to maximise revenue for Royal Navy and Royal Marines charities, and has been a Royal Albert Hall fixture since its inception in 1973.

All three engineers highlighted features that speeded workflows and reduced complexity under pressure. Birks told rAVePubs that console‑to‑console communications were invaluable: he takes the majority of inputs individually but can quickly request or hand back channels to the FOH desk when a performer unexpectedly needs them. The team also relied on functions such as Copy Audio and Snapshots — routing tools that allow raw multitrack feeds to bypass channel processing for clean recordings and instant recall for the musical director’s in‑ear monitors. Industry write‑ups note these capabilities helped the engineers provide immediate playback and accommodate artists with varying levels of in‑ear experience.

The choice of DiGiCo hardware reflected a wider rationale about reliability and familiarity. DiGiCo’s product literature emphasises FPGA‑based engines for high channel counts and low latency; the Quantum7 family is presented as a seventh‑generation platform with expanded processing and I/O capacity, while the SD7B is positioned as a broadcast‑grade console with redundant engines and extensive analogue, AES and MADI connectivity plus an Optocore loop as standard. In editorial terms, those claims explain why the manufacturer’s desks are a common choice for hybrid live/broadcast events, but they should be read as vendor specifications rather than independent measurements.

Zen Broadcast’s own materials confirm the SD7B is the work surface for its ‘Little Buddha’ truck and list Andy Deacon among its sound supervisors, underlining the operator‑level continuity between Zen’s fleet capabilities and the festival’s production needs. The company’s fleet page also notes that other trucks in its stable carry different consoles such as SSL and Studer, underscoring that the SD7B was selected deliberately for this particular OB brief.

The result was a tightly run audio operation that married the pageantry of the Massed Bands of His Majesty’s Royal Marines to the technical demands of modern multi‑platform delivery. Engineers described adapting a large, traditionally acoustic ensemble to in‑ear monitoring and fast turnarounds as challenging but ultimately manageable with the chosen consoles and workflow, enabling the charity‑raising festival to reach audiences both in the hall and beyond while creating a commercial recording of the event.

### 📌 Reference Map:

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[2]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[3]](https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/), [[6]](https://zenbroadcast.com/trucks/), [[7]](https://rmacb.org.uk/mountbatten-festival-music/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[3]](https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/), [[6]](https://zenbroadcast.com/trucks/), [[4]](https://digico.biz/consoles/sd7b/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[2]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[3]](https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/), [[7]](https://rmacb.org.uk/mountbatten-festival-music/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[3]](https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/), [[5]](https://digico.biz/consoles/quantum7t/), [[4]](https://digico.biz/consoles/sd7b/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://digico.biz/consoles/quantum7t/), [[4]](https://digico.biz/consoles/sd7b/), [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[3]](https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://zenbroadcast.com/trucks/), [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[3]](https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[2]](https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/), [[7]](https://rmacb.org.uk/mountbatten-festival-music/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ravepubs.com/mountbatten-festival-of-music-utilizes-two-digico-quantum7-and-an-sd7b-for-complex-royal-albert-hall-gala-events/> - This rAVe [PUBS] article reports on the Mountbatten Festival of Music at the Royal Albert Hall, describing how two DiGiCo Quantum7 consoles (supplied by Terry Tew Sound & Light) were used for house and monitor duties while a DiGiCo SD7B operated in an on‑site outside broadcast (OB) truck. It details Zen Broadcast’s role in capturing live streams plus a DVD and album, with Andy Deacon supervising mixes in the truck, Ben Milton on front‑of‑house and Bill Birks handling monitors. The piece highlights workflow advantages such as Optocore clocking, Copy Audio for multitrack recording and the consoles’ FPGA processing power.
3. <https://www.prosoundweb.com/digico-keys-the-sonic-approach-for-the-mountbatten-festival-of-music-in-london/> - ProSoundWeb’s write‑up covers the same Mountbatten Festival production, emphasising the deployment of two DiGiCo Quantum7 desks for front‑of‑house and monitors and a DiGiCo SD7B in the OB truck for broadcast, recording and streaming. It names Ben Milton as FOH engineer, Bill Birks on monitors and Andy Deacon overseeing the OB mix, and explains how the OB truck is configured around the SD7B. The article also notes operational efficiencies — console‑to‑console communications, Optocore clocking to the truck, and use of features like Copy Audio and snapshots to speed recording and playback for the musical director.
4. <https://digico.biz/consoles/sd7b/> - DiGiCo’s official SD7B product page outlines the console’s heavy I/O and broadcast‑grade feature set. It describes the SD7B’s extensive analogue and AES I/O, redundant engines and power supplies, multiple MADI ports and an Optocore loop as standard, supporting large channel counts and high reliability for OB work. The page lists processing channel counts, matrix capability, integrated Waves SoundGrid options and detailed specs such as motorised faders, high‑resolution touch screens and sampling rates. The SD7B page conveys why the desk is chosen for outside broadcast trucks and complex live/broadcast hybrids, thanks to flexibility and robust connectivity.
5. <https://digico.biz/consoles/quantum7t/> - DiGiCo’s Quantum 7 (Quantum 7T theatre variant) product page explains the console’s seventh‑generation FPGA‑based engine, its expanded processing capability and high channel counts. The page describes features such as Nodal Processing, True Solo, extensive aux and buss options, a full 48×48 processing matrix and multiple I/O options including Optocore and UB‑MADI. It highlights the Quantum engine’s use of multiple large FPGAs for dramatic increases in processing and I/O capacity, plus modular DMI slots for AoIP, making the Quantum7 suitable for large touring, theatre and broadcast events that require both scale and familiar DiGiCo workflow.
6. <https://zenbroadcast.com/trucks/> - Zen Broadcast’s trucks page describes the company’s fleet of outside broadcast vehicles and their core console choices. It specifically notes the ‘Little Buddha’ truck is equipped with a DiGiCo SD7B (Quantum) work surface, while other trucks carry SSL and Studer systems depending on job requirements. The site explains the fleet is designed for rapid deployment across classical recordings, live broadcasts and music productions, and the team page linked to the trucks section confirms personnel such as Andy Deacon work as sound supervisor/mixer and oversee mixing, recording and post workflows from these mobile facilities.
7. <https://rmacb.org.uk/mountbatten-festival-music/> - The Royal Marines Association / Royal Marines Band Service page on the Mountbatten Festival of Music outlines the event’s history and charitable purpose. It records that the massed band spectacular began in 1973 as part of the Royal Academy of Music’s 150th anniversary appeal and has since become a long‑running Royal Albert Hall fixture. The page explains the festival showcases the Massed Bands of His Majesty’s Royal Marines, features a mix of marches, overtures and popular medleys, and supports military charities such as The Royal Marines Charity, often staged as multiple performances over two days to maximise fundraising.