

Grand Central Recording Studios hosts evening with Neil Brand



Recording

21 May 2015: By [Matthew Fellows](#)

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Audio Media International had the pleasure yesterday of attending 'The Big Bang Theory: An Evening with BBC's Neil Brand', hosted by Grand Central Recording Studios (GCRS) in Soho, London.

Following a tour of the six-studio complex with its numerous AMS Neve DFC Gemini consoles, the evening was opened by GCRS managing director Carole Humphrey, who shared the facility's sentiment that 'audio is more important than ever', before introducing renowned composer and writer Brand, who brought all the experience garnered over his lengthy career to deliver a presentation centred on 'sound in space, and making space for sound'.

Brand expounded on how the advance of technology has become a double-edged sword in the industry; while it has expanded the palette for artists to virtually unlimited levels, it has also created the issue of 'too much decision-making' in audio production and post. The evening took place in GCRS' Dolby 5.1-certified Studio 8, which worked to illustrate Brand's arguments on immersive sound and how it relates to and shapes listener experience. Clips were also interspersed throughout the night, specially chosen by Brand to elucidate his narrative. These clips included classic works as well as some of GCRS' own projects, with some of the house's engineers on hand to explain the creative decisions which went in to the finished products.

Of particular note was Brand's use of the introductory scene from the 1961 film *The Innocents*, an opening memorable for its use of ambiguous sound against a distinct lack of visuals, designed to leave the viewer reliant on sound for cues as they try and piece together what is happening. "The opportunity for us to make connections ourselves is very important," he explained. "If you hear two sounds at the same time, our mind will try to make sense of them, but you have to allow space to do that."

The night also included short musical interludes by Brand himself on piano, as he illustrated the framing devices utilised in Nelson Riddle and Frank Sinatra musical numbers.

Brand was keen to champion measured use of today's technology throughout the evening. 'It's not about complexity, it's about simplicity,' he asserted, explaining that the most effective pieces of art are those that paint entire pictures 'with a single brush stroke'.

The session was the first in a series of Summer of Sound events due to take place in 2015 throughout GCRS.

<http://www.grand-central-studios.com>