REDBACK A4480
AUDIO MATRIX SWITCHER
CLOSED ARCHITECTURE, OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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As far as open architecture architectural audio DSP units have come, they're still pretty expensive when you compare them to something of a fixed processing configuration. They also typically take longer to install due to the fact you need to program them. In many applications they're overkill, and something simpler is required.

The A4480 is an 8x8 audio matrix switcher, and it's designed to fit perfectly into the aforementioned market. Clubs, pubs, bars, shopping and function centres are typical applications where this product would be ideal.

The A4480 defies typical installation product build in the sense that the rear panel is populated with XLR and RCA connectors – not Phoenix types as found on many other install products. That makes it a little more time consuming to install, unless you want a drop-in replacement for another product with similar connections. The 8 inputs are all equipped with dual RCA, with the addition of an XLR for inputs 1 and 2 (switchable phantom power included!). All 8 zone outputs are on XLR. In addition to the line inputs, there's an emergency paging input plus an alert/evac input. Around the front are recessed trim pots for each input, with bass and treble controls for the line inputs. An LED confirms signal presence for each source, and once all the inputs are properly trimmed and adjusted, a screw-on Perspex cover discourages unwanted changes to these. The centre of the front panel has a level control for each zone output, and adjacent to these is an LCD screen which shows the routing matrix, as well as facilitating various preset and setup functions.
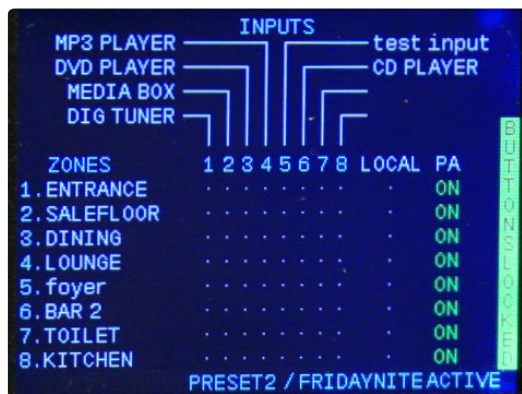
Choosing which source routes to which zone is done by simply pressing the zone button to step through the sources for that zone in sequence. Individual sources can be excluded from specific zones. While the A4480 stands up well on its own, it's better when you add some accessories.

A selection of wall plates allows source selection from within zones, as well as facilitating local source input. Connecting a local source to a wall plate mutes any line source already routed to that wallplates zone. Wall plates connect to the A4480 via Cat5 on a single RJ45. The local input plate just links into the back of a source or preset control plate – so there's no need to run another audio line.

A desktop paging station allows paging of one or all zones (complete with chime), and there's an emergency page everything function. The A4480 has a priority muting system, whereby the most important signals (emergency announce, alert/evac) will override any other signal.

A host of useful other connectors on the back allow for things like a USB keyboard (used to name inputs and zones on the LCD screen), and contact closures to trigger the internal chime, alert and evac tone generator. Another very appealing point about the A4480 is that the documentation is excellent – the spec sheet on the web tells you exactly what it can and can't do.

Designed and manufactured in Australia, the A4480 is backed with local service and a 10 year warranty. That's a lot to like.