BG Event deploys Puskas Arena with Martin Audio



No fewer than 260 Martin Audio loudspeakers were on duty for a series of concerts at the Puskas Arena in Budapest recently. Spread across three weekends, with three sets of artists, BG Event staged one of their biggest productions ever in the 67,000-cap multi-purpose stadium. The first weekend saw 22-year-old singer songwriter Azahriah, the latest Hungarian sensation, playing three shows, such was the demand for tickets, to a total of 120,000 people. This was followed by long-serving band Hungaria with their 1950s rock and roll style, and the final band was Halott Pénz (Dead Money), celebrating their 20th anniversary with this show.

It was the first time the production company had worked at this venue. Closed from 2002-2019 for a complete rebuild, according to BG Event's Gábor 'Mazsi' Bácskay, "The team of architects failed to take into account the acoustic requirements of a concert and focused solely on sports events." He described the new manifestation as being "like a large chimney with loads of reverb and echoes. We experienced a 6-8-second reverb at any position, and no curtains or any attenuation were built in."

Faced with such a large box count, BG Event turned to their alliance partners Solotech, with whom they have worked many times at the predominant Sziget Festival main stage. "But as an independent company these [latest] shows were the largest full-service audio jobs we have done." The planning phase began back in

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November 2023, and the demands were quickly defined. Mazsi was determined to use Martin Audio “rather than just any gear that was available”. Knowing they would need to be deployed for between four to five weeks they needed to make hard decisions, not only about sourcing further MLA enclosures “but also not many production companies would have 50m chain length for hoists or looms for 70-plus metres.”

Fortunately, earlier in the year they had boosted their MLA stock in readiness for the season. “Therefore we almost possessed everything we needed. However we rented a few MLA Compact cabinets for the ring delays from our long-term partner Szatyi Stage Team. For the rest we had a large number of Merlin processors and distros so that we could prepare the complete optical chain in our warehouse, enabling just a quick setup at the venue.”

Nevertheless, on site BG’s tech team needed to work closely with the light designers and the next challenge was identifying hang positions without interfering with the LED screens and lighting trusses. “Finally, there were obvious acoustic disadvantages due to the basic properties of the building and we had to do our best to counterbalance them and provide the audience with the best coverage possible. “

The main PA hangs comprised 17 MLA (plus an MLD Downfill) on each wing and an identical configuration for the outhangs. The MLX subs were unable to be flown due to the design structure and so were arranged in 14 stacks - three MLX per stack, with the bottom one reversed - and this cardioid principle produced a successful result. At the rear of the stadium they rigged four delay towers, comprising 12 MLA (and MLD Downfill) on the outers (LL-RR), 11+1 MLA/MLD on the inners (L-R). They also fielded eight ring delays to cover the third tier. “Although the house has installed a lot of speakers since the direction of those cannot be changed, we preferred to have four delay hangs of eight MLA-C MLA each, and another four delays with 10 MLA-C, giving a total of 72 boxes. A further 24 MLA-Cs were used for front fills across the stage lip, depending on show set up. A large auxiliary (17mx17m) ‘B’ stage formed part of the week one design (removed for later shows).

Mazsi admits that the B stage performance had provided a challenge for Azahriah’s sound engineer due to the artist’s quiet vocal. “But we were able to assist with the main hang zones - making a second zone from the last four boxes, and preparing a separate EQ to kill any feedback.” Overall, he was delighted with the sound containment. “Having the subs in cardioid stacks worked well, and we achieved good response at the rear seating as well. With DISPLAY 3 [software] it is easy to calculate the delay times. We didn't need to use Hard Avoid, but everyone was surprised how consistent the coverage was throughout the whole arena.”

BG Event provided full FOH system support. First week for Azahriah, Zoltán Osztheimer was at FOH, second week for Hungaria, Dániel Tóth and Zsolt Gyulai were on duty, and the final week Zalán Ősz was at FOH. They report that all visiting sound engineers really enjoyed working with the PA, remarking on its consistent

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coverage and straightforward transfer. At pre-config stage BG also consulted with Marci Mezei, as often in the past, and for the professional set-up the entire BG tech team can be applauded. This was all coordinated by Gábor ‘Mazsi’ Bácskay himself. Finally, Mazsi credits BG Event owner Gergely Szentiványi for his foresight in investing further in the MLA fleet. “The company actually owns more than 120 MLA - an outstanding quantity in a region of this size!”

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