

Classic Martin Audio Modular Rig Supports The Misery Portal at the ICA

Ace Vintage Systems' classic speakers celebrate manufacturer's 50th year



Vintage Martin Audio modular stacks have helped support an experimental work at the acclaimed Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in central London.

It is fitting that as the manufacturer celebrates its 50th year, Alex Czechowski of Ace Vintage Systems should be commissioned to provide a classic Martin Audio rig from yesteryear, exemplifying its formidable history.

Created and performed by influential dance and performance artist, Samir Kennedy, it was show designer, Simon Vincenzi, who came up with the idea of using speakers to create a 'portal' or proscenium for The Misery Portal.

Simon is a London-based theatre director, choreographer and designer who has created a huge body of work over the past 20 years. He searched far and wide on the internet and came across the Ace Vintage Systems website which provided him

with inspiration for the show, together with his requirements. They were then approached by lighting designer and production manager Marty Langthorne, who confirmed that “Simon was set on using Martin Audio for the vintage look of the speakers.”

Czechowski designed the sound system around eight Martin Audio 215 Mk3 bass bins and three Martin Audio MH212 ‘Philishaves’ per side, together with top boxes. Amplification for this totally analogue system was provided by the equally iconic BGW Grand Touring amplifiers.

Working with him on this project was sound engineer Dave Callanan. Alex said, “It was great to show the capabilities of the iconic Martin Audio Philishave, together with the Martin Audio 215 Mk3 bass bin, the best bass bin ever designed by the great Dave Martin.”

Explaining the concept behind the show, Marty Langthorne added, “Our week at the ICA was a research and development period for this new performance piece, The Misery Portal, an opera of sorts where a lone performer sings melancholic songs from an ancient time, grappling with feelings of grief, loss and inner turmoil. The performer’s outline is barely visible in this dark and hazy portal, slowly dancing their way through this state of mind. The sound world is full and held with tension as the speakers pulse out the hugely varied composition throughout the piece.

“Working with vintage Martin Audio speaker stacks and Alex’s incredible expertise was a huge part of this performance and allowed the sound world that Samir created to be heard in its full potential through speakers that you know have had a history.”

In summary, Alex Czechowski said: “It was a pleasure showing Simon, Marty and Samir, amongst others, my system design. We all enjoyed listening to the dynamic combination of power and clarity from the system in the theatre space at the ICA.

“Thanks to everybody involved including staff from the ICA, and Emma from Edwin Shirley Trucking.”

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