

HK Audio for The Island Festival



On a private island off Croatia's Dalmatian coast, an intimate electronic music festival marked the closing chapter of summer with five days and four nights of house, techno and community - powered by HK Audio systems from the shoreline and forest to the open water. Taking place from 3-7 September, The Island Festival returned to Obonjan with around 700 guests. There are no day tickets - once attendees arrive by boat, the entire island becomes their home for the duration. More than half of the audience returns year after year, helping the festival retain the close-knit atmosphere that has led its organisers, artists and guests to describe it as a "family affair."

Marco Lucarelli, organiser of The Island Festival and Managing Director of Crystal Collegium Travel GmbH, commented: "More than half of our guests come back year after year. We want to maintain that family tradition, so we ask people to bring their friends and allow the festival to grow organically. It isn't overcrowded or over-commercialised; there is something special in the air when everybody comes together again after a year apart."

HK Audio returned to Obonjan at the invitation of Lost Thought, whose co-owners and technical leads Tobias Rauhut and Stefan Lovrić worked alongside the

manufacturer to deliver sound across the festival. Karel Noon, Application Support Engineer at HK Audio, said: "When the Lost Thought team asked us to join them again, it was an immediate yes because we had fallen in love with the festival. The surroundings are wonderful, the artist booking is almost insanely good and every show takes place somewhere different. There is so much variety that it is very difficult not to fall in love with it."

Rather than running several competing stages simultaneously, The Island Festival programmed music in one location at a time. This prevented sound from different systems spilling across the compact island, but it also created a shared experience in which the whole festival moved together. As each session began, the sound naturally drew guests towards the next location. Whether travelling through the pine trees, gathering around the pool or following the music towards the waterfront, the audience moved as one. For the DJ, it meant having the entire island in the palm of their hand.

Rauhut reflected: "What I love most is the freedom. You are surrounded - or almost lost - on an island with hundreds of like-minded people, and you simply make the best of those five days. After the second night, it feels like one big family. You go to the beach the next day and everybody says hello. If you continue coming back year after year, that bond only gets stronger."

HK Audio was on site throughout the festival, supporting the deployment and programming of the systems across five distinct settings: the Amphitheatre, Bar, Pool, Forest and Noir party boat. The rotating programme allowed the equipment to be reconfigured as the music moved around Obonjan, with each setup adapted to the size, layout and acoustic character of its location.

At the Amphitheatre, the main system comprised six CS 218 subwoofers and six CONTOUR X CX 210 LT long-throw point-source loudspeakers, powered by two C-DRIVE 8 PS X4 amplifier racks. Two CX 12 cabinets provided monitoring, while two CX 8 frontfills and two LINEAR 5 MK2 308 LTA outfills extended coverage across the audience area.

The stone and concrete structure presented a particular acoustic challenge. The CS 218 subwoofers were configured in a cardioid arrangement to reduce unwanted low-frequency energy behind the system and help prevent feedback from the vinyl turntables. The six CX 210 LT units were also configured to concentrate coverage within a 75° area, limiting reflections from the surrounding stone walls. "The main priorities were avoiding feedback, reducing reflections and making sure the system remained completely reliable," explained Noon. "We also wanted the artists to hear a natural representation of what they were delivering to the audience, so they always knew exactly what was happening out front."



For the Forest sessions, the passive system was redeployed using six CS 218 subwoofers, six CX 210 LT loudspeakers and two C-DRIVE 8 PS X4 amplifier racks, alongside a CX 12 monitor. Systems from HK Audio's LINEAR series supported the remaining locations. At the Bar, two LINEAR 9 118 Sub BA subwoofers and two LINEAR 9 210 LTA units formed the main system, with two LINEAR 5 MK2 115 FA cabinets handling monitoring and outfill duties. At the Pool, four LINEAR 9 118 Sub BA subwoofers and two LINEAR 9 210 LTA units were accompanied by a LINEAR 5 MK2 115 FA monitor, bringing clear, bass-driven sound to the wooded area surrounding the water.

One of the festival's most memorable settings was away from the island itself. The Noir hosted an all-day boat party, taking around 500 guests out onto the Adriatic for a continuous programme of electronic music surrounded by open water. Six LINEAR 9 118 Sub BA subwoofers were paired with four LINEAR 9 210 LTA mid/high units and two LINEAR 5 MK2 115 XA cabinets on board. With only a narrow window available between accessing the vessel and its departure, speed and predictability were essential. Noon continued: "On the boat, we had around one hour from gaining access to the vessel until it departed - and that included approximately 500 people coming on board. We didn't have much time to set up and tune, so it was vital that the system could be deployed quickly and sound great from the very beginning."

The programme moved through house, techno and bass-driven electronic music,

with a line-up including Âme live, Dirty Doering, Denis Horvat, Marcus Meinhardt, Luna City Express and a 3000Grad showcase. For DJ and producer fka.m4a, also known as Jay Jackson, the combination of the system's clarity and low-frequency performance complemented the energy of the audience. He commented: "The HK Audio system has been absolutely incredible. It was super clear and really well balanced, which is very important to me as both a producer and a DJ. I'm very low-end focused - I like it low and heavy - but the system never felt overwhelming and the crowd responded beautifully." Jackson added: "I've been coming to The Island Festival for the past three years, and there is such a beautiful sense of community, family and togetherness. I feed off the energy around me, so those moments when everybody feels happy and connected are exactly what I need as a DJ."

The project also continued a relationship between HK Audio and Lost Thought that began when the team purchased its first HK Audio system second-hand and used it for weddings and small parties. As its ambitions grew, Lost Thought approached HK Audio directly and began working closely with Noon and Sebastian Huber.

Rauhut and Lovrić said: "We started with an HK Audio system we bought on eBay. When we decided we wanted to develop the business, we wrote to HK Audio and met the team - and the support has been amazing ever since. It isn't only about the products; the people behind the company want to develop alongside us." They continued: "HK Audio is still flying under the radar in this part of the industry, but the systems can compete with the big players. The sound is clear, the bass is powerful and it keeps improving. When you see everybody dancing, that is the best feedback you can get."

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