Martin Audio WPS for Hof Cultural Centre



Located in downtown Akureyri, Hof Cultural Centre is at the heart of the northern Icelandic music and performing arts scene and provides visitor services across the entire north-east corner of the country. Architecturally, the circular building also provides one of the town's great landmarks. Inspired by the Icelandic igneous rocks, Hof Cultural Centre attracts tourists all year round.

Owned by the Municipality of Akureyri, and with operation of the Centre in the hands of Akureyri Culture Company, one of the key features is its new Martin Audio sound reinforcement upgrade in the main auditorium, provided by Reykjavik-based Atendi - the manufacturer's territory distributor. According to Atendi project manager, Gunnar Gunnarson his company bid successfully on a public tender put out in December 2023 and were duly awarded the contract in September this year.

The requirement was for a system to replace the original sound system, which had been in situ since the venue's original opening back in 2010. It needed to provide even coverage for the 509-seat auditorium and deliver 103dB(A) with 18dB headroom, and a differential in SPL not exceeding ±3dB at any seat from FOH. This was achieved by specifying Martin Audio's scalable WPS line array. "We managed 104.6dB(A) @FOH without going to the limit of the system and +3dB / -0,7dB

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measured at the venue’s seats,” Gunnarson reports. The system also needed to be supremely versatile, not only providing reinforcement for concerts of all types - as well as conferences and theatre performances - but also be mindful that the venue is home to the North Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, when it is then used for concerts with Icelandic artists ranging from classical concerts to dance music.

The system design was a cooperation between Atendi and Martin Audio, while Atendi undertook the installation, with assistance from local subcontractors and Martin Audio product support engineer, Ben Tucker. He assisted with predictions, visualisation, programming and tuning of the system. Tucker confirmed that the venue acoustics were perfect. “I always start by keeping the Hard Avoid on stage, and having a listen before moving it. After a walkaround and a bit of tuning, I found no reason to move it from the stage.”

Gunnar Gunnarson admits the project was not without challenges, largely due to limited space, since the stage is heavily populated by equipment, surrounding it on all sides. “We were able to use existing hanging points for the main PA and at the same time create additional points for the subs. The components themselves comprised Left/Right hangs of 10 WPS, with a pair of SXCF118 subs flown behind each main hang, which provided excellent sub coverage throughout. Providing front fills around the stage lip were eight FlexPoint FP4. The system was driven by three Martin Audio iKON iK81 multichannel, process-controlled amps and an iK42.

Stated Akureyri Culture Company technician, Árni F. Sigurðsson, “The tender documents were quite demanding, and we had high expectations for this installation. These were fulfilled as the new system is a game changer with regard to both headroom and sound coverage. I can confidently say that we have the most evenly distributed sound coverage of any of the bigger venues in Iceland and I’m looking forward to receiving feedback from guest engineers. We stage everything from opera, musical theatre, conference and corporate shows to rock, dance music and metal. Having sufficient headroom to present all of these genres will truly set a new standard for the venue. “First impressions are very promising and Ben Tucker, who designed and tuned the system did an incredible job. It’s amazing what Martin Audio was able to offer for the price.”

Aside from giving Martin Audio another highly prestigious installation of its class-leading Wavefront Precision series, it also has the honour of being its northernmost location—located less than 100 kilometres from the Arctic Circle.

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