Martin Audio WPL for IDLES European Arena Tour



When IDLES embarked on their 2024 Love Is The Fing European tour, their production included a large complement of Martin Audio’s Wavefront Precision line array elements for the main PA. FOH engineer Chris Fullard first requested the platform back in 2019, when Solotech provided the award-winning MLA, but when the band later played the West Stage at All Points East in 2022, it was through the newer tech of Wavefront Precision, in the shape of the largest format WPL, with its scalable resolution.

For the 2024 European campaign, Solotech Account Manager, David Preston, specified the WPL/WPC/WPS system after conversations with IDLES’ production. This fully-optimisable solution duly won the approval of production manager, Shaun Kendrick. After a couple of warm-up nightclub gigs - at Pryzm in Kingston and Marble Factory in Bristol (where the band hails from) they were ready to take on Europe to promote their new album, Tangk, on what was the band’s biggest EU tour and first full production tour.

With venues ranging from around 5,000-cap up to 10,000 the PA was scalable, ranging from 16 elements of WPL per side for the main hangs, eight WPC side hangs per side and 16 SXHF218 subwoofers at the largest configuration. Eight further WPS were carried in the truck for front fills and four XD12 for outfills - with the entire

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inventory powered by 20 Martin Audio iK42 process-controlled amplifiers and processed through DirectOut Prodigy.



System tech duties were entrusted to the experienced Rayne Ramsden. He observed that the venues played were often notoriously bad with regards to reflections and therefore ensuring that that the audio was delivered consistently to the audience in each venue became paramount. “Some venues were sonically great, with baffles behind FOH and some even with baffles in the roof, while others were concrete domes with many reflections,” he acknowledged. “Using Hard Avoid tools and FIR filtering thus became a key element that Martin Audio has in the toolbox, and that certainly assisted us in getting as close as possible to the same audio in each venue. I am glad that they have carried forward the use of these tools from the MLA into the WPL.”

As always subwoofer configuration was vital in its impact on the overall sound, with 15 of the SHX218 deployed in a vertical Cardioid Sub Array configuration to maximise rejection on stage. “This allowed me to steer the low end in the venues, especially in arenas where the audience was almost 90 degrees off centre to the PA. In some of the longer halls, where there was not so much of a side audience, I was able to control how much of the low end was steered towards the walls and potentially out of the venue into the surrounding areas. “So in order to perfect the steering angle and delay times the DISPLAY Sub array tool has definitely been very useful.”

As for venue optimisation, each space was mapped and verified at load-in with DISPLAY, enabling Ramsden to maximise coverage and consistency before loading

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the presets into the iK42 amplifiers, where all the delay and crossover filtering are handled. Any venue-dependent system tuning takes place in the Prodigy processor at FOH. Having had much experience of both the MLA and WP platforms, the system tech notes improvement in the rigging system with the newer PA. “The 3-point rigging system has definitely shortened the time from build to tuning,” he says. “On this tour there have been two of us flying PA, namely myself on stage right and Jonny Buck on stage left [both men doubling as PA techs]. We have managed to get the entire rig in, with some local hands, in about two hours - very useful in a touring scenario with back-to-back shows, and a sizeable journey between each location.”



Added production manager, Shaun Kendrick, “At mini arena level the Solotech team perfectly delivered the Martin Audio WPL system’s potential and capability with power, clarity and a real overall quality reinforcement. This ensured that our FOH [engineer] Chris [Fullard] was happy every step of the way. “Regardless of venue size, capacity and layout, WPL delivered a solid overall sound, easily highlighting the band’s latest album, Tangk's more subtle electronic elements right alongside the old IDLES faves.” Other key personnel on the tour included Dom Green (stage tech) and Robin Genetier (tour manager). Now the European leg has been completed IDLES head off to North America before returning to the UK for shows,

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including Glastonbury, where they will headline the second stage.

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