Martin Audio for Ashton Gate Stadium

Pictures: Ryan Bass



SWG Events joined forces with fellow Martin Audio network partner 22live recently to field a massive 80 premium loudspeakers from the British manufacturer at Ashton Gate, home of Bristol City FC, over a memorable weekend. The Saturday event, called ‘Ashton Gate Presents BS3’, saw American singer-songwriter Ne-Yo headlining an all-star 10-act bill, that included Craig David, Jess Glynne, Dizzee Rascal, DJ Spoony and local legend, Roni Size, which had the 27,000-capacity crowd in raptures. The staging then changed for the Sunday, which saw Kings of Leon playing the venue as part of their ‘Can We Please Have Fun’ world tour.

SWG Events’ head of sound, Simon Purse explained the PA design, which he had overseen. Left and right main PA comprised drops of 16 WPL, supported by two outhangs of 12 elements in each. There were a further two delay towers of 12 drops each, making a total complement was 80 flagship WPL line array cabinets deployed. These were driven in 2-box resolution from Martin Audio’s process-controlled iKON amplifiers. A further 24 of the smaller Martin Audio WPS arrays provided frontfills, with TORUS on sidefills and XE500s as optional reference monitors for those artists not on IEM. Reproducing the low frequencies were a total of 40 SXH218 - 30 in a split broadside array across the front of the stage, to enable a stage thrust to move in on the Sunday, with a further three in each delay position and a monitor for the DJ.

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Simon Purse’s original CAD design was transposed into Martin Audio’s D3 software, where system tech Ryan Bass took over. “I made a few tweaks, but everything was largely based on Simon’s original design,” he said. Purse added that the biggest challenge had been in mitigating typical stadium reflections. “There were a lot of hard surfaces, a lot of weird roofs, strange reflective screens that we had to try and avoid. But we used Martin Audio’s modelling software to optimise where and how we deployed and pointed the system. “At the same time we used ‘’Hard Avoid’ [in

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the D3 software] in the areas that we were actively trying to get rid of. So a mixture of PA design and software enabled us to achieve full system optimisation once everything was in place.” The cooperation with 22live, he said, had been 100% successful.

Simon Purse reflected further on the success of the event. “The PA design worked really well; we had excellent intelligibility across the entire site, and while being noise considerate of the neighbours, we made no compromises to the audience. “There are a few gigs every year where I stand back and think what an awesome rig this is - and this was one of them.”

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