Martin Audio MLA used at South Facing Festival



Enjoying their third year of providing top quality sound at the South Facing Festival, Solotech UK found themselves working with a new production team … but the result was just the same. The natural contouring of the 10,000-cap Crystal Palace Bowl amphitheatre, coupled with the power and ultimate control of Martin Audio's MLA multicellular array, once again provided a winning formula.

Method Events were the new incumbents this year, and for the production company's award-winning co-founder Will Holdoway it was a welcome reunion with Solotech account manager David Preston. "It was a pleasure to be working again with David and the Solotech team for the first time since operating shows together at Drumsheds, North London until February 2022," he reported.

Once again, the programme over the two weeks was top drawer, with - according to Preston - Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds providing the highlight. Also featured were Primal Scream and Jesus & Mary Chain, Rudimental Live, James & Happy Mondays, First Aid Kit, Raver Tots, Craig David and Sister Sledge.

Solotech UK fielded L/R hangs of 10 MLA and an MLD Downfill box on each side of the stage, while front fills comprised four MLA Compact and a pair of DD12. Subwoofers this year consisted of 12 MLX - six a side in end fire configuration (two

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stacks of three either side of the stage). The enforced change of sub design from the previous year was due to space limitations between the edge of the stage and the pontoons.



Nevertheless, stated Preston, this was without compromise. "The system worked really well and provided perfect coverage, with the HF showing its ability to throw to the top of the field more than any other box." Working once again with Matthew Baines from acoustic consultants, Vanguardia, they comfortably achieved offsite thresholds while delivering the necessary power for visiting engineers within the main bowl.

The person with the most challenging task of getting the optimum sound from Crystal Palace's amphitheatre contouring was system tech Rayne Ramsden. He set out with the same [Martin Audio] DISPLAY file due to the successful deployment of the MLA last year, adjusting only to take into account the change in subwoofer layout. "A challenge faced in a natural amphitheatre is the fact that the venue itself is shaped in a way that amplifies the audio coming from the stage, creating additional reflections both on and off-site," he said. "Therefore, we needed to monitor how the PA was interacting with the venue and how that affected the level off-site very closely, In addition, there was a steel shield running the entire boundary length of the venue, creating additional direct reflections back towards stage."

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Hard Avoid had been great at mitigating all these reflections and was a very useful tool, he said, "particularly with the ability to reduce the level of audio offsite, since there are residents that back directly onto the boundary line." He added, "The ability to control the offsite level without losing quality or intelligibility withing the coverage area, is always impressive with MLA."

Method Events' Will Holdoway agreed with the general wisdom of this deployment. "MLA is clearly still the system to beat for this venue with its combination of tight control yet significant high-end throw, filling the natural amphitheatre with ease. "We had a broader array of programming this year, with more electronic music shows, meaning that tight control was even more pertinent than in previous years." Other tech personnel involved in the Festival's success included crew chief, Harry Garcia, stage tech, Isabella Di Biase and monitor engineer, Sam Cunningham.

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