Martin Audio O-Line for First Presbyterian Church



First Presbyterian Church in Battle Creek, Michigan, has recently transformed its worship experience and vastly improved audio intelligibility for its congregation with the installation of a new Martin Audio O-Line sound system, supplied and installed by local specialists BC Sound. The original First Presbyterian Church chapel was built in Battle Creek in 1884, with the first cornerstone for today's magnificent church laid in 1927. Extensive renovations to the sanctuary in 2014 renewed the worship space and through partnerships with local musical organizations and schools, the worship space regularly welcomes neighbours from throughout Battle Creek.

When the church decided to take the next step in its technical evolution to further support their needs, they turned to BC Sound and co-owners Adam Kane and Matt Kaynor. Kane explains, "We've been working with the church for several years, providing incremental upgrades to their aging audio and video systems. The main speaker system has been the final piece of the puzzle."

The existing left and right column PA was sufficient for spoken word when it was installed years ago, but it never well-suited for modern music that has been gradually working its way into their Sunday services. Additionally, there were failing drivers and amplifier modules that had left large portions of the seating area without proper coverage. "The leadership of the church were looking for a system that addressed the obvious current needs for consistent coverage but also

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possessed the fidelity and output capability to handle a variety of musical content." To meet these exacting requirements, BC Sound specified a Martin Audio O-Line system.

"We initially looked at O-Line because of the form factor," says Kane. "The building is beautiful and well-maintained, so aesthetics came into play early on in our conversations with the leadership at the church. With the help of Martin Audio, we were able to get our hands on a demo rig to set up in the room so we could compare that with the existing system. We knew the look was right, but once everyone heard what those boxes were capable of, it made for an easy decision. It's a highly reverberant space, so being able to use the Hard Avoid® feature to keep undesired energy away from certain parts of the room was a game changer."

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Designed specifically for architectural applications where aesthetics and pristine audio are equally paramount, Martin Audio’s O-Line is a highly versatile 2 x 3.5" passive micro line array. Inside First Presbyterian Church, a central hang of 16 array elements is flown elegantly from the 60ft high ceiling, delivering precise, even coverage across the congregation.

Supplementing the O-Line system, low-end extension is provided by two Martin Audio SX118 subwoofers, whilst a pair of Martin Audio FP4 enclosures act as dedicated front fills, with another pair of FP4’s on mic stands serving as side-fill

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monitors for those on stage. Additionally, four CDD5’s are used for under-balcony fills, with another pair providing coverage in the foyer. All speaker zones are driven from a pair of IK81 amplifiers.

“The one thing that struck me about the system was how good it sounded right out of the gate once we had the DISPLAY data loaded into the amplifiers,” Kane adds. “When tuning, I found that I spent very little time adjusting EQ which left me more time to get the relative levels and delays between speaker zones optimised. All of the speakers have a very similar voicing so walking between the different coverage zones sounds seamless.”

Reflecting on a highly successful installation, he concludes, “This was our first installation using Martin Audio equipment and to say we’re impressed is an understatement. The leadership and sound technicians are pleased knowing that they now have a system that they can rely on to handle whatever they ask of it well into the future.”

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