Martin Audio Wavefront Precision for Iron Blossom Festival



Returning for its fourth year, the Iron Blossom Music Festival has cemented its position as a major cultural staple in Richmond, Virginia. With a varied programme of artists performing across two stages over a two-day period, the 2026 edition featured headline performances from LCD Soundsystem and Jack White. Providing the sound for both stages was local production company Soundworks of Virginia, Inc., deploying full Martin Audio Wavefront Precision (WP) sound systems.

Soundworks has provided audio for the festival since its inception in 2023, but their relationship with Martin Audio's WP platform stretches back to 2019, notably as the first adopters worldwide of the flagship WPL line array. "We had Paul and Brad from Martin Audio at the event, and we walked them over to the array and showed them serial number one," smiles Soundworks' CEO Steve Payne.

Recalling their early investment made alongside sister company Southard Audio he says, "We've had a long history with [Martin Audio Managing Director] Dom Harter and with [Martin Audio Director of Strategic Projects] Brad Stephens. We'd been using a 10-inch box for years, and we decided this was the time to up the ante a little bit and go to a 12-inch box. Martin Audio did not have a 12-inch box at the time, but Brad told us, 'We've got it on the drawing board. How about I demo the 10-inch box for you, because the 12 is going to sound the same, just bigger.'"

Following a shootout at Brown's Island - a venue Soundworks frequently services in Richmond - the decision was easy. "Martin Audio brought in the WPC rig and it was

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a no-brainer; the WPC was the clear winner," Payne notes. "It was really consistent throughout the entire listening field, sounded really nice, had lots of level, and just ticked all the boxes. Based on that, we invested in WPL before it even existed."

Since then, the company has fully embraced the Wavefront Precision platform. From an initial investment in 24 WPL elements and 12 SXH218 subwoofers, Soundworks' inventory today stands at over 120 Wavefront Precision elements across the WPL, WPC, and WPS ranges, alongside 52 SX-Series subwoofers.



At Iron Blossom, the two stages were served by WPL on the Main Stage and WPC on the second stage. The Main Stage comprised two hangs of 14 WPL, with six WPS elements acting as front fills, and 16 SXH218 subwoofers deployed in a castellated array. On stage, 12 XE500 wedges provided foldback, with the entire system driven by 28 Martin Audio iKON iK42 amplifiers. Meanwhile, the second stage featured two hangs of 10 WPC as mains, supported by four WPS elements for front fill and 12 SXH218 subwoofers, all powered via nine iK42 amplifiers. Notably, the system's exceptional throw and coverage eliminated the need for delay towers. "We deployed delays in the first year but quickly realised they were unnecessary, a testament to the Martin Audio performance," notes Grant Howard, President, Soundworks.

System design and calculations were handled by Soundworks' Head Engineer Bryan

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Hargrave, using Martin Audio's DISPLAY 3 software. "We took good measurements the first year, and luckily it hasn't changed substantially," he explains. "In the second year, when the delays went away, we made the PA throw a little further, but the shape of the venue hasn't changed. DISPLAY reliably provides accurate predictions, so we're really only tuning on site for changes in temperature or humidity."

Programming-wise, the festival featured wildly contrasting headliners, with the electronic-dance of LCD Soundsystem on Friday and the driving rock of Jack White on Saturday. "I think that's one of the nice things about the Martin Audio rig: it sounds very pleasing for any genre," says Howard. "We don't think about tuning the PA particularly differently regardless of whether we're doing symphony or hip-hop. We might put a little more bass up, but the PA just sounds good and the engineers can pretty much get whatever they want out of it." "I think everybody walked away happy," Hargrave confirms. "All the comments I heard were people saying it sounded great."

Reflecting on the scalability of their Wavefront Precision inventory, Steve Payne concludes: "The WPL served us so well that we really jumped in with both feet and bought WPC and WPS - we've never looked back. With those three boxes in inventory, we find we've got the appropriate tool for almost everything we do. We've got some Martin Audio CDD-LIVEs when we need a little point source. But anytime we need a line array, we've got a Martin Audio 8", 10", and 12" solution. For us, and for our clients, that really works well."

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