

Martin Audio Wavefront Precision for Pickathon



Pickathon is a highly celebrated, multi-day music and arts festival held annually at Pendarvis Farm in Happy Valley, just outside Portland, Oregon. Known for its intimate, community-driven atmosphere, the festival curates an eclectic line-up spanning indie rock, folk, bluegrass, jazz and global sounds, prioritising artists on the verge of breaking out. This year, Martin Audio Wavefront Precision sound systems, deployed by Cascade Sound, elevated quality, coverage and noise control across all outdoor stages.

Pickathon is famous for its stunning, environmentally sustainable stage designs, which use raw construction timber to create organic structures that blend seamlessly into the surrounding maple and pine forests. But with nearby residential neighbourhoods having rapidly expanded, Martin Audio's optimisation technology proved central to the festival's operational priority of mitigating off-site noise.

Every outdoor stage at Pickathon 2026 featured Martin Audio Wavefront Precision products. "It is a homogenous design to provide consistency across the entire site," explains Simon Honywill, Market Development Manager, Live Sound at Martin Audio. "The whole idea is that the Wavefront Precision quality and sound that people love maximizes audience impact while making sure the neighbours can sleep."

Joe Lima is Martin Audio's Product and Application Support Manager who worked alongside Simon Honywill and Cascade Sound to model and optimise the festival arrays. "They are inherently great-sounding loudspeakers," says Lima. "At

Martin Audio Wavefront Precision optimises Outdoor Sound at Pickathon

Monday, 19 October 2026 10:43

Pickathon, with varied topography and environmental challenges, the optimisation capability within our DISPLAY 3 software was a stand-out advantage for even and precise coverage."

Cascade became the audio supplier to the festival in 2024 having acquired the previous supplier of many years. Their Martin Audio partnership began in 2025. "I was at the point of needing to replace an aging inventory of speakers and so the timing was perfect to bring the WPC to the Paddock Stage," says Sean Rathbun, owner of Cascade Sound. "That was a smashing success. Then in 2026 there was an opportunity to make a larger purchase of Martin Audio inventory, and so this year we were able to make all three of the larger stages Martin Audio."



At Pickathon 2026, the main Paddock Stage therefore comprised 11-per-side hangs of WPC Wavefront Precision Compact line array elements. The WPC system was supplemented by a wide broadside array of 12 Martin Audio SXC118 cardioid subwoofers, designed to significantly reduce spill to the sides and behind the stage. Jason Power, Audio Manager at Pickathon, was impressed with the results. "I have been really impressed with the sound. As a touring engineer showing up to mix a band, it's fantastic to step up and not feel like you have to fight or over-process the PA." "WPC is a highly adaptable, flexible system with a clean, natural sound. It can deliver serious power, but it can also be subtle for acoustic acts," notes Honywill.

The Cherry Hill stage offered a more intimate experience, its system comprising seven boxes a side of WPC and two arrays, left and right, of SXC118 subwoofers in a

two-by-two setup. "Cherry Hill is challenging because, like the Paddock Stage, it is situated at the bottom of a hill with quite a steep rake," describes Jay Blaney, Field Application Engineer at Martin Audio North America. "Importing the topographical data into our DISPLAY 3 software allowed us to optimise coverage angles physically and electronically so we achieve even coverage from the front to the back of the audience."

The Grove Stage featured eight-per-side hangs of WPM Wavefront Precision Mini, combined with six SXH218s in a ground-stacked cardioid configuration. The stage sits on a short incline, with large trees in the audience area creating an acoustic shadow. "We maintained a standard of SPL consistency and frequency response that surpassed anything achieved in previous years - tight and musical near the stage while containing energy within roughly 130 feet," explains Blaney.

The Woods Stage - in the middle of the woods and not an easy stage to deploy a sound system on given its uneven ground - featured a ground stack of six WPS Wavefront Precision Subcompact boxes per side, mounted over four SXC118 subwoofers, with FlexPoint FP12 acting as infills. "There is an uphill incline on one side where audience members sit all the way up the hill," Blaney notes. "Our ground-stack predictions allowed us to throw audio up the slope without sacrificing quality for the listeners directly in front of the stage." "The WPS and SXC118s delivered such a smooth and full-range sound on the Woods Stage," adds Rathbun. "It covered the space so well and felt like a larger PA than it looks."

Elsewhere on-site, the Galaxy Barn was served by Martin Audio TORUS T1230 and T1215 constant curvature line array elements per side, ground-stacked on two SXC118 subwoofers, while a number of DJ setups benefited from Martin Audio's THS triaxial 15-inch point-source cabinet complemented by SXC118 subwoofers. Feedback from the on-site engineers was universally positive. Nuri Erdal, A1 on the Grove Stage, has worked Pickathon over the last five years across different stages and roles. Mixing on Martin Audio for the first time, he says straightforwardly: "That is what a concert should sound like. Compared to other systems I'm familiar with, the Martin Audio rig brings the best of those worlds together. It has a clean, smooth, non-harsh top end, punchy low-mids, and the subs delivered the exact punch needed."

Kris Geffen, A2 on the Grove Stage, agrees: "Often with low frequencies you'll hear resonant spikes on certain notes, but everything sounded remarkably uniform. I walked all around our coverage area, and the high-end clarity extended right to the back boundary of the audience space. It's a large area, and often you lose the top-end out there due to trees or hills, but the HF extension held up remarkably well."

As Joe Lima summarises, "The engineers experienced a system that was remarkably consistent front to back, giving everybody essentially the exact same mix that the engineers heard at the board. It put a big smile on their faces. The magic behind the optimisation - besides Hard Avoid and controlling noise pollution - also comes down to our SPL profile. The fact that we can maintain level and tonal consistency

front to back really unites the audience. That is what makes Wavefront Precision and our optimisation software the winning combination."

Reflecting on the successful deployment, Sean Rathbun praises the collaboration behind the scenes: "As we have been building out these systems, Martin Audio has been a pleasure to work with. Joe, Jim, and Paul have been amazing and have supported all the needs of the festival." The final words come from Zale Schoenborn, founder of Pickathon, who confirms the success of Martin Audio systems in fully achieving the festival's goals: "We took measurements around the site and listened to feedback from our neighbours, and both confirmed what we were hearing: the sound went exactly where we wanted it and stayed out of the places it wasn't supposed to go. For the audience, it was close to perfect. It's hard to believe how cleanly the sound just disappears beyond the edges. Honestly, this is how every outdoor festival should be done."

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