Martin Audio WPC for Flaming Lips



One of the more unusual events in Soundworks of Virginia's busy summer concert schedule was the recent show at the spectacular Koka Booth Amphitheatre in Cary, NC, when the Flaming Lips performed Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots live in concert. Referring to the title of their latest album, the psychedelic band played two distinct sets. After performing the album faithfully from front to back, they followed up with a typical concert set from their general repertoire. The long-serving band held the stage throughout, with no support act. Hired by the venue (and working with the band for the first time), Soundworks brought with them Martin Audio's WPC line array.

Nestled in a grove of stately pines, and owned by the town of Cary, Koka Booth Amphitheatre is unique. " It seems they cleared just enough of the forested area to plunk down the venue and left all of the surrounding trees and foliage intact - which makes a lovely setting," said Soundworks senior tech, Bryan Hargrave. "Technically, loading dock, power and rigging are all straightforward and completely adequate. It was a very easy space to work in."

They were confronted with a 5,000-cap audience out on the grass, and a 75ft travel distance from stage to FOH. "We shoot the PA 225ft and use the house delays for the very back of the venue. The PA will easily cover 250 ft if we tell it to, but we opt to use the house delays for the last bit and that works fine."

In this case the PA comprised 12 WPC elements per side and eight SXH218

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subwoofers. For sightline purposes these were arranged four-a-side (two wide, two high) bridged. As Hargrave explained, "The downstage is curved and has steps down to the audience level, so we were unable to place any sub arrays in front of the stage." However, they set four WPS along the front stage lip and another two on the stage left subs as outfill to cover the asymmetrical audience arrangement. In addition, they provided XE500 wedge monitors and CDD-LIVE 15s atop SXP218s for sidefills.



The service providers are no strangers to Koka Booth, having produced shows with Little Feat, Collective Soul, Switch Foot, Trombone Shorty and Big Boi in the past. "After the first time in, we had an accurate slice [calculated in Martin Audio's proprietary DISPLAY software] so it's easy to generate the necessary files to load into the iKon amplifiers," continued Soundworks' tech. "We just change for temperature and humidity, although we may move DSP allocation for 'Hard Avoid' based on the act, and whether they feel they are getting any slap from the back wall."

By this he is referring to the covered bar/seating area with a wooden wall 250ft away from the stage. "The house has delays installed that do a pretty good job covering that area," he explains. "We stop the audience area in DISPLAY in the middle of that seating area, which draws most of it in a little closer sonically without hitting the back wall too hard. If the band's FOH tech has an issue with the slap, we will simply move the Hard Avoid from stage to the rear wall and the problem disappears."

Bryan Hargrave reports that the FOH team expressed excitement when they saw

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the rig through which they would be piloting the show. "They stated how happy they were to be back on a Martin Audio rig as they hadn't been on one in a while. They were disappointed that the venue had a 95dBA limit at FOH mix position, stating, 'It's too bad they put a governor on your Ferrari!'" In addition to Hargrave, Soundworks were represented by FOH tech, Jeff Kane.

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