

Martin Audio WPL for DSL & Van Dik Hout



Dutch rock band Van Dik Hout, one of the Netherlands' most successful and enduring acts, recently brought their acclaimed live show to Amsterdam's AFAS Live as part of their ongoing touring schedule. Since breaking through in the mid-1990s with iconic songs such as *Stil In Mij*, the band has earned a reputation for powerful, emotionally charged performances. Long-time audio production partner DSL Geluids- & Lichtverhuur deployed a Martin Audio Wavefront Precision WPL system at AFAS Live and throughout the tour, providing consistent, high-performance sound reinforcement.

Due to a long-standing relationship with the band and its production team, DSL has a detailed understanding of their expectations and workflow. "Our scope extends far beyond supplying a PA system," explains Gert-Jan Gomes, Director and Co-Owner of DSL. "We maintain and prepare the touring package, transport the equipment between shows, manage storage and logistics, and provide technical support throughout the production cycle."

The sound system must faithfully reproduce the band's signature sound while providing the flexibility to adapt to everything from intimate theatres to large outdoor festival stages. "The primary requirement for the tour is to deliver a consistent, high-quality production regardless of venue size," says Gomes. DSL operates one of the largest Martin Audio rental inventories in the Netherlands, with WPL forming the backbone of their large-scale event and touring systems. "Over a twenty-year period, Martin Audio has become the foundation of our loudspeaker inventory and an integral part of our approach to live sound reinforcement," explains Gomes.

For the Van Dik Hout tour, Martin Audio WPL arrays were selected for their ability to deliver exceptional vocal clarity, high output capability and consistent coverage across large audience areas. Depending on venue size and audience geometry, the system could be scaled while maintaining the same sonic signature and overall performance. At the AFAS live venue, a total of 32 WPL cabinets were deployed. "One of the major advantages of the Wavefront Precision platform is the ability to optimise individual enclosures within an array," notes Gomes. "We can precisely control how energy is distributed throughout the audience area. This allows us to achieve excellent consistency in both SPL and frequency response from the front row to the rear of the venue. For a touring production such as Van Dik Hout, where every venue is different, this is particularly valuable."



Low-frequency reinforcement is provided by Martin Audio SXH218 hybrid horn-loaded subwoofers. "Low-frequency performance plays a major role in any Van Dik Hout production," Gomes explains. "While the band is known primarily for its strong songs, powerful vocals and guitar-driven sound, the impact and energy of the rhythm section are equally important in creating the live experience audiences expect. At AFAS Live we deployed twenty-four Martin Audio SXH218 hybrid horn-loaded subwoofers, configured as twelve cardioid stacks of two cabinets high. The stacks were positioned across the front of the stage with approximately one metre spacing between each stack, creating a broad and evenly distributed low-frequency source."

Front-fill coverage was provided using Martin Audio TORUS constant-curvature loudspeakers, ensuring a seamless transition between the front rows and the main arrays. The entire system was powered by Martin Audio iKON amplifiers and managed through the manufacturer's advanced optimisation platform. "A key design objective was consistency," says Gomes. "Whether the band performed in a theatre, concert hall, festival tent or outdoor festival environment, the audience should experience the same powerful, detailed and balanced sound. The combination of WPL, SXH218, TORUS and iKON amplification allowed us to achieve that objective while providing the flexibility required by a modern touring production. The cardioid configuration significantly improved rear rejection, creating a more comfortable working environment for the musicians and reducing unnecessary low-frequency build-up behind the array."

For DSL, the accuracy of Martin Audio's DISPLAY software modelling is cited as a major advantage: "The correlation between the software model and real-world performance is remarkably accurate," Gomes describes. "When we deploy a system based on a Martin Audio prediction model, we know with a high degree of confidence what the outcome will be before the first measurement microphone is connected."

DSL credits the success of the tour to both the technology and the preparation involved in flagship arena schedules. "Projects of this scale demonstrate that successful deployment is about much more than loudspeaker performance alone," Gomes says. "It requires a combination of detailed preparation, experienced personnel, efficient logistics and reliable technology. The WPL platform proved to be an important part of that process, delivering both the sonic performance expected from a flagship Martin Audio system and the operational efficiency required for a demanding arena production schedule."

The feedback from the band's production team and engineers was extremely positive, noting in particular the headroom and vocal intelligibility of the WPL arrays. "For us, one of the best indicators of success is when nobody is talking about the sound system during the show," Gomes concludes. "The audience is focused entirely on the performance, and the technology simply supports the experience. That was certainly the case at AFAS Live. "The event once again confirmed that WPL is not only a powerful loudspeaker system, but a complete solution. The combination of prediction software, optimisation tools, efficient deployment and outstanding sonic performance allows us to deliver the same high standard whether we are working in a theatre, an arena or on a major festival stage."

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