Martin Audio WPL for Brighton Pride



Despite train strikes and inclement weather, Brighton & Hove Pride 2023 enjoyed another successful year, raising money for the Brighton Rainbow Fund supporting LGBTQ+ groups and organisations within the local community, as crowds of around 250,000 people descended on the seaside resort. It is estimated that more than £25m was brought into the city's economy over the Pride weekend.

With more than 150 LGBTQ+ artists performing across 12 different stages, attention was largely focused on the main 'Fabuloso' stage in the 63-acre Preston Park. Here first night headliners Black Eyed Peas were followed by Steps on the Sunday, with Solotech UK for the second year providing their flagship WPL line array. Working once again alongside production manager Dean Parker, at Wilde Ones International Events, their sound design was based around main PA hangs of 18 WPL per side, with a stage right side hang of six of the smaller WPC, and a larger drop of 12 WPC elements stage left.

According to crew chief and system tech Joseph Pearce this was in response to general site sensitivity, and with the stage pointing parallel to the road, the proximity of the housing on the right side. Eight of Martin Audio's smaller WPS enclosures provided near fill coverage while low frequency extension was provided by 20 powerful 2x18 SXHF218 subwoofers, designed in a castellated cardioid broadside array across the front of the stage.

Solotech provided stage monitoring in the shape of 16 of Martin Audio's popular LE1500 floor wedges, with six TORUS T1215 constant curvature arrays and four SXHF218 subs on stage. Set some 70 meters back from the stage were three delay

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towers. These comprised a further 24 WPS set across the three positions, with three SXHF218 subs on each mast providing LF.



Once again Solotech worked alongside Robert Miller of F1 Acoustics to set, and achieve, both the onsite and offsite sound thresholds, with audio crew chief and system tech, Joseph Pearce optimising the sound in Martin Audio's DISPLAY software. Miller confirmed that the offsite level had been set at 78dB(A) Leq15 at the nearest problematic area. Following propagation, Joseph Pearce set a firm strategy, setting relatively low SPL caps, rising incrementally to 100dB(A) for the headliners. "You have to give yourself room - you don't want to experience a noise infraction early in a programme that starts at 2pm," he explains.

With the presence of fairground carousels and the second stage/dancefloor tent set 300m in front of the main stage, 'Hard Avoid' function in the DISPLAY2 software was certainly put to the test, used judiciously and meticulously on all the hangs, even taking the precaution of avoiding potential reflections off vendors' booths. However, the experienced crew chief - on his fourth outing at Pride - said they were able to call on last year's measurements …"since we hadn't moved the PA. The only slight adjustment took into account the fact that the bleachers were slightly smaller. Martin Audio's optimised platform, starting with MLA, has proven a real winner on such a sensitive site. "We did [Pride] one year without a Martin Audio PA and this showed in the results, which were poor."

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Joseph Pearce was supported at FOH by William Phillips, who confirmed the successful deployment of the various Wavefront Precision line arrays. “WPL displayed extremely even coverage right across the park - the drop-off was minimal and even with rather high winds and wet conditions, the HF was still extremely present. “The close residential properties meant we needed to be considerate with levels, although no guest engineer found their mix to be limited, due to the sheer impact of the system. All were impressed by the overall sound, and this was helped by Martin Audio’s technology and offsite steering.”

The cardioid broadside set-up for the subs packed punch and impact without overpowering the mix, he said. “The low end was even across the field and a set of three subs in cardioid pattern at each delay tower allowed those at the back to experience a full mix as well. The cardioid array also helped with low end rumble on the stage which meant any wedge mixes were unaffected and allowed the monitor engineers to have a clean stage sound.”

In fact, down in monitor world Miles Jarrett and Alastair Hellard were on hand. Tim Grasse was stage technician along with Dan Holland, who was also patch engineer. Everything ran as smoothly at the stage end as at the FOH position, under the

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direction of stage production manager, John Pryer. Solotech senior project manager Martin Connolly had confirmed last year that adoption of WPL at both Glastonbury and Hyde Park had paved the way for its adoption in Brighton.

Robert Miller agreed that this had resulted in a satisfactory outcome, adding that the site sensitivity had been even more profound since the police had closed off the main road running alongside Preston Park. “With no traffic there was nothing to mask the sound [towards the housing],” he said. “On the main stage itself there was no bleed as the sound was very well controlled, whereas with another system it could have been a lot worse. This was definitely the right system for the job.” As a result Solotech UK were able once again to report highly positive feedback from the army of visiting FOH engineers in support of acts that included Mel C, Zara Larsson, Confidence Man and The Vivienne.

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