Martin Audio WPS for Top Gun: Maverick – In Concert



Martin Audio partner, dBS Solutions recently provided sound reinforcement for The Hallé Orchestra at their resident venue, The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. A regular fixture in the dBS Solutions diary, this time the focus was Top Gun: Maverick – In Concert. This brought back fond memories of the Tom Cruise blockbuster for a near sell-out audience in the 2,355-cap hall. The show originally premiered at the Royal Albert Hall in late summer, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, attended by Tom Cruise.

In Manchester, under project manager James Roberts, dBS Solutions provided a Martin Audio scalable resolution WPS line array featuring14 elements a side, driven in optimum 1-box resolution by Martin Audio iKON iK42 amplifiers. Martin Audio FlexPoint FP12 sidefills (two per side) provided foldback for the SFX and dialogue to accompany the score. dBS worked closely with creative producers, ESK Film Services, who oversaw all technical elements with the orchestration and track separation. Roberts explained that the principal musicians, percussion section and conductor, were all on click tracks.

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But a large concert hall, with an unconventional shape and four-level tiered seating, presents its own difficulties where amplified music is concerned. “It’s obviously a more challenging acoustic environment than you’d expect in a venue that is designed for classical music,” he said. “All the orchestra were miced, so the aim was to get optimum gain before feedback - which is why we used the Wavefront Precision.”

dBS also deployed the ‘Hard Avoid’ feature on the stage to keep stage levels down. Rear rejection was further achieved by the deployment of four (2 x 2) SXCF118 cardioid subwoofers - a formula adopted by dBS Solutions for all their orchestral work. Aside from the rear rejection, says Roberts, by employing a generous 14 WPS per side they could get consistent coverage from the front row to the very back. Although the trim height of the rigs was higher than they would have preferred - to avoid obscuring sightlines to the video screen, the splay angles were correctly calculated using a combination of Martin Audio’s proprietary DISPLAY software.

In summary, dBS Solutions MD, Chris Bogg, said, “It’s gratifying that we’ve now become Hallé’s trusted partner for this type of orchestration.” Talking of the event, Lucy Turner of the Hallé commented, "We've worked with dBS Solutions for some years now on our amplified concerts. The team there really understand what we and our players need when amplifying an orchestra. The sound of the Top Gun performance was a superb balance of orchestra and film, covering every seat in the hall. It was dynamic throughout without being too loud or bass heavy for our players on stage. We look forward to working with Chris and the team again soon.”

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