Martin Audio WPS & TiMax for Montreal Festivals 2026



This June and July, two of Montreal's flagship festivals took place back-to-back in the heart of the Canadian city: Les Francos de Montréal, celebrating French-language artists, and the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, renowned for its diverse jazz-focused programme. As a partner of both festivals, L'Équipe Spectra equipped the outdoor stage at each event this year with a Martin Audio WPS Wavefront Precision sound system, optimized by TiMax spatial audio processing.

The popular free-admission stage, which regularly attracts audiences of thousands of people, is known as the Desjardins Stage during Les Francos de Montréal and the Loto-Quebec Club Montréal Stage during the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal. It is located at Terrain 66 in the Quartier des Spectacles, at the centre of downtown Montreal.

Given the stage's proximity to residential and commercial buildings, along with the corresponding strict noise regulations governing the site, Martin Audio's renowned optimisation capabilities have proven essential. "One of the key reasons the production team for the festivals were keen on the Wavefront Precision system is because the stages are right in downtown Montreal," explained Claus Frostell of

Phoca PDF

Canadian distributor, Erikson Pro. “With the optimisation that WPS provides, and also particularly with Martin Audio subwoofers, we’re able to localise the sound very specifically to the audience area.”

“One of the big concerns we have is noise management,” confirms Dan Meier, Senior Technical Coordinator for both festivals. “The city rules are very strict, and we need to keep good relationships with our neighbours. Good coverage, clarity and punch at medium to low volumes is crucial. The Martin Audio PA delivered very well, maximising the audience's experience within the noise control constraints.”

The deployed PA comprised eight Martin Audio WPS line array elements per side, supplemented with four TORUS T820 constant curvature arrays as front fills and two TORUS T1230 models serving as delays. Low-frequency reinforcement was provided by three SX218 dual 18in subwoofers and six SX118 single 18in subwoofers, all powered by Martin Audio iKON amplifiers.

“We had the three dual 18” subs positioned across the front of the stage in cardioid mode, with one facing backwards and two facing forwards, while three of the single 18” cardioid subs positioned on each side,” Frostell explains. “With this cardioid set-up we were able to reduce SPL to the rear of the stage by around 30dB, and were also able to narrow the coverage so that it is focused primarily on the audience area.”

The entire system was modelled and optimised using Martin Audio DISPLAY 3 software. “For the WPS arrays, we used the Hard Avoid feature for the stage area and optimised the system to concentrate coverage on the audience,” he notes. Frostell also highlights the consistent sonic performance across the system: “Both WPS and TORUS are extremely clear and well defined, and we’re able to maintain consistent frequency response and level from the front of the audience area right through to the back.”

Phoca PDF



For the first time, the festivals' audiences will also experience the benefits of TiMax spatial audio processing, extending the stereo image across a much larger listening area. "This is the first use of spatial audio at the festivals, but with the reputation of Martin Audio and our own experience, the organisers were happy to explore it," says Frostell. "Their main concern was that, because they host a lot of guest engineers, they didn't want excessive spatial movement or localisation that could detract from the engineers' mixes. We explained that we're simply enhancing the stereo image across the audience area, and once they understood that, they became very excited about the possibilities.

"Traditionally, a left-right loudspeaker configuration creates a relatively small stereo sweet spot in the centre of the audience," Frostell continues. "Using TiMax with the WPS system and TORUS front fills, we're able to expand that stereo image significantly, allowing more of the audience to experience the mix as it was intended. The engineer doesn't need to do anything differently - they mix as normal, and we simply extend what they are already doing."

Hugues Bourque is the head Front of House engineer for the Martin Audio-equipped stage at both the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal and Francos de Montréal. "I really enjoyed the tone of the WPS system," Bourque comments. "I found it very musical compared to other systems. This year the stage featured a wide variety of bands, from standard jazz ensembles requiring a more intricate mix

Phoca PDF

with a grand piano, to really loud and bassy hip-hop artists, all of which sounded great on the Martin Audio system."

The engineer particularly praises the vocal tone and sub performance, noting the positive feedback from guest engineers. "The mid-range is rich and makes mixing vocals easy," he says. "That was actually the first comment I had from other engineers: 'Vocals sounded really great in the Martin Audio PA'. I also found the subs to be articulate and precise - I loved them - and they received plenty of favourable comments from guest engineers." Bourque concludes, "We have had bad weather with lots of rain followed by scorching heat, but I never felt it affected the PA. It was a tricky area, but the system provided great coverage and performed very well for the duration of the two festivals."

www.martin-audio.com

Phoca PDF