Martin Audio THS for Plymouth’s Junction



The 235-cap Junction live music venue in Plymouth recently upgraded its ageing sound reinforcement infrastructure, opting for a Martin Audio premium PA. The installation was carried out by locally-based Martin Audio rental and installation partner Nub Sound, and overseen by their Director of Operations, Josh Small. He recommended the manufacturer’s powerful triaxial THS 15in point source loudspeaker, combined with SXC118 cardioid subs to provide both the requisite headroom and vocal clarity - far exceeding the capability of the ancient system that it was replacing.

The long-running venue has been operated by the independent Bedford Breweries for the past decade-plus, but has been trading as The Junction for at least 20 years. The venue has been systematically upgrading its sound capabilities over the past 18 months, with loudspeakers always planned as the final jewel in the crown. Said Josh, “The venue has transitioned from being a pub that did live music, to a proper live music venue.” House engineer Dom Chiswell, another staunch advocate of Martin Audio’s signature sound, said the change of direction had been enforced as a result of the pandemic. “When we came out of COVID, we took a big hit with midweek bar sales; it wasn’t working, so we decided to focus on live shows, but make the experience a lot better for bands prepared to travel all the way down to

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Devon.” The new booking policy is now geared towards 60% touring bands.

The process to find the perfect sound solution began a year ago, with an open day at Nub Sound, whose own relationship with the venue dates back many years. Martin Audio support engineer Ben Tucker attended, and several alternative Martin Audio PA systems were considered, including TORUS, FlexPoint (and briefly CDD-LIVE). “We’d been shown THS as part of their ‘Unplugged Bug’, which at that time it was only a bespoke box. But once it came out as a production item it was clearly the right box for the room.”

Endorsed by Ben Tucker, Josh Small’s recommendation was for a L/R THS system, with one enclosure on top of a pair of stacked SXC118 cardioid subs on each side. A pair of delayed FlexPoint FP6, one mounted each side of the room, provide the necessary fills. Explaining the need for so much headroom, Josh said, “The club stages a lot of punk, metal and rock music with loud guitars, so it wasn’t only about reinforcing their low-mid, core energy but getting the vocal above that, which is why the three-way box made so much sense. I’m very comfortable with that decision.”

Processing for the THS and FlexPoint takes place within a dedicated Martin Audio DX0.6 system manager, which feeds the amps. The system was set up with manufacturer presets and tuned with SMAART and pink noise. “All I really had to do was time align the system,” continued Josh. “I didn’t need to do any significant EQing at all - we just relied on the natural voicing of the system which was great.”

The new PA has certainly been well received by visiting sound engineers. “At least three of their roster of freelance engineers phoned to say how much better it sounds, and compared with the old system, it’s like night and day. Having the cardioid subs, and bringing down the LF on stage, means that drummers are much happier, and it allows us to reduce monitoring volume and improve the sound in the room. At the same time, the pattern control on the THS is really good and that has helped improve how the room is performing.”

Dom Chiswell agreed wholeheartedly. “Feedback from engineers and bands alike has been amazing. The amount of headroom I’ve got is insane compared with what it was like before. Now I am able to hear a little bit of everything in the mix, the sound appears louder because of the added clarity, although in fact we are actually averaging about 3dB quieter than we were beforehand.” Dom Chiswell had worked regularly with Martin Audio MLA Mini and CDD during his days at university, while his time at Deep Blue Sound, who had a partnership with Martin Audio, gave him further exposure. He admits the new PA has put a smile back on his face. “It’s given me a new lease of life because I was starting to experience burn out. Putting in a new system, working with Josh and then hearing it in situ has given me a new-found love for my work.” He says he had never realised that a new PA system could have such a positive impact on his mental health.

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