Sennheiser helps Arcadia at Glastonbury 2024

Pictures: Matt Eachus



This year’s Glastonbury festival saw performance art collective Arcadia Spectacular inaugurate the sensational Dragonfly Stage, featuring a giant metal insect built from a former navy helicopter and repurposed machinery. Founded by creative engineers Bert Cole and Pip Rush, Arcadia debuted at Glastonbury in 2007, and has been given a permanent area since 2014. Supporting music festivals and cultural events around the globe, the collective hosts the world’s biggest DJs to its oldest indigenous communities, and draws talent from across the arts, theatre, and circus disciplines. Supporting the visual spectacle was Sennheiser’s Evolution Wireless Digital EW-DX system, delivering crystal-clear, detailed sound for the Dragonfly Stage.

Kevin Gwyther-Brown, Sennheiser’s Business Development Manager, has always been fascinated by Arcadia’s extravagant shows and met Cole earlier this year. “When Glastonbury was approaching, Bert reached out to see if Sennheiser was interested in supporting Arcadia’s new project. We definitely were! He then introduced me to Jacob [Kuenzler-Byrt, Deputy Technical Manager at Arcadia], at which point I also involved Marcus [Blight, Technical Application Engineer at Sennheiser] for additional support,” says Gwyther-Brown.

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The stage design included MCs on podiums, requiring a large RF coverage area. Sennheiser based the specifications around this, giving Arcadia full coverage across their area within the Glastonbury festival site. The MM 445 capsules were chosen because there was a potential that the microphones would be used in front of the main PA. “The biggest challenge was getting coverage for both in-ears and microphones across such a large area,” Gwyther-Brown explains. Working with Arcadia’s rental partner, AF Live, the team provided a total of four channels of EW-DX with MM 445 capsules, and six channels of the 2000 series IEM, which was used for MC foldback and monitoring.



Blight specified and prepared the equipment to be deployed by AF Live. “EW-DX offers uncompromised audio quality, ease of setup, and a small form factor. Battery run time was a key factor, given how long Arcadia runs through each day and night of the festival. The high input dynamic range of the handhelds ensured that any loud MC would not overload the transmitters, avoiding the need to set transmitter sensitivity, which would be required with legacy systems,” says Blight. “Additionally, Sennheiser’s MM 445 dynamic capsule allows for the highest sound source inputs whilst providing incredible feedback rejection. It perfectly captures vocal details, making each performance even more enveloping.”

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AF Live’s Director, Paul Rose, expresses his gratitude for Sennheiser’s support on the new Arcadia Dragonfly project, stating, “It was great to have Sennheiser with us this year. It’s a complex setup with the mics being situated in the middle of the soundfield and inside the Dragonfly’s head itself. We have stocked Sennheiser products for years, and the EW-DX, combined with MM 445 capsules, delivered excellent performance with good vocal clarity across the arena. The EW-DX system was complemented by 2000 Series IEMs, offering clear monitoring for the artists performing within the spectacular structure,” he says.

“Sennheiser has been massively supportive of the Dragonfly Stage,” says Kuenzler-Byrt. “They provided us with expert advice and high-quality RF equipment. It’s an incredibly loud environment inside the Dragonfly’s head, and we were all very impressed by EW-DX with the MM 445 capsules. It provided excellent rejection while maintaining high audio quality.”

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