Martin Audio WP at Iron Blossom Festival



Pictures: Roger Gupta & David Parrish

So successful was the inaugural Iron Blossom Festival, in Richmond VA, that the organisers have already confirmed that it will be repeated next year. Contributing to this success was the exemplary sound quality provided across the two stages by Soundworks of Virginia, and featuring Martin Audio's market-leading Wavefront Precision optimised line arrays. This ensured a first-class experience for headliners, Hozier, Noah Kahan, and Lord Huron - and the rest of the artistes performing. The Bon Secours Training Center provided the venue for the Festival, organised in a joint venture by Charlottesville's Starr Hill Presents, Virginia Beach's IMGoing and Richmond's Haymaker Productions.

Working in conjunction with Haymaker Productions owner, Tom Beals Soundworks chose Martin Audio's large-format WPL for main stage and WPC for the second stage - run in 2-box resolution from Martin Audio's matched iKON multi-channel amplifiers. This design was perfected by the company's Grant Howard and Bryan Hargrave in the belief that an event of this nature deserved the best system components available.

The exact deployment on main stage comprised 14 WPL elements per side, with 16 SXH218 subwoofers, in cardioid array, with four WPS frontfills and a pair of delay towers, each with eight WPC enclosures - flown at a trim height of 22ft, and each set at around 220ft from the stage. For the subsidiary stage they flew 12 of the smaller footprint WPC elements per side, with eight SXH218 in cardioid array, and

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four WPS as front fills. This provided even coverage for around 14,000 people (over the two days) spread across around 400ft x 400ft of open field, with unrestricted noise levels.



Great attention was paid to tuning and optimisation, with Hargrave undertaking all the site measurement, prediction and design in Martin Audio’s proprietary DISPLAY 2 software, before loading the files into the iKONs using Venue. “Meanwhile, we are

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closely watching the development of DISPLAY 3," observes Soundworks CEO, Steve Payne, "and look forward to being able to make the move over to the 3D software, especially since the Beta is now available for Mac OS." Many of Soundworks' events are outdoors, and Grant Howard notes, "On these shows we rarely touch the house EQ. Visiting engineers may make small tweaks to taste, but as often as not they are totally happy walking into and mixing on a flat Wavefront Precision system."

Promoter, Tom Beals was certainly delighted with the outcome. "I've been working with Steve Payne and Soundworks of VA as our exclusive audio vendor for over 20 years now. Their transition to Martin Audio-based systems a few years back stepped up the overall quality of production for all our shows. That quality was on full display at the Iron Blossom Festival, giving every single patron in the 12-acre venue a concert quality audio experience no matter where they were."

On duty at the event were Grant Howard (FOH, main stage); Bryan Hargrave (monitors and overall system tech), Jay Holland (patch). Ensuring smooth operation on the second stage were John O'Donnel (FOH), Garrett Milich (monitors) and Toor Clark (patch).

Reflecting on another successful deployment of all their mainline Wavefront Precision systems, Steve Payne said, "We have been very happy with the results of all three of our WP systems. This provides us with a lot of flexibility in choosing the right tool to fill a client's needs. In addition, the voicing on all of the systems is very much the same which allows us to seamlessly combine different boxes for different duties such as Main PA, Outfills, Frontfills and Delays.

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