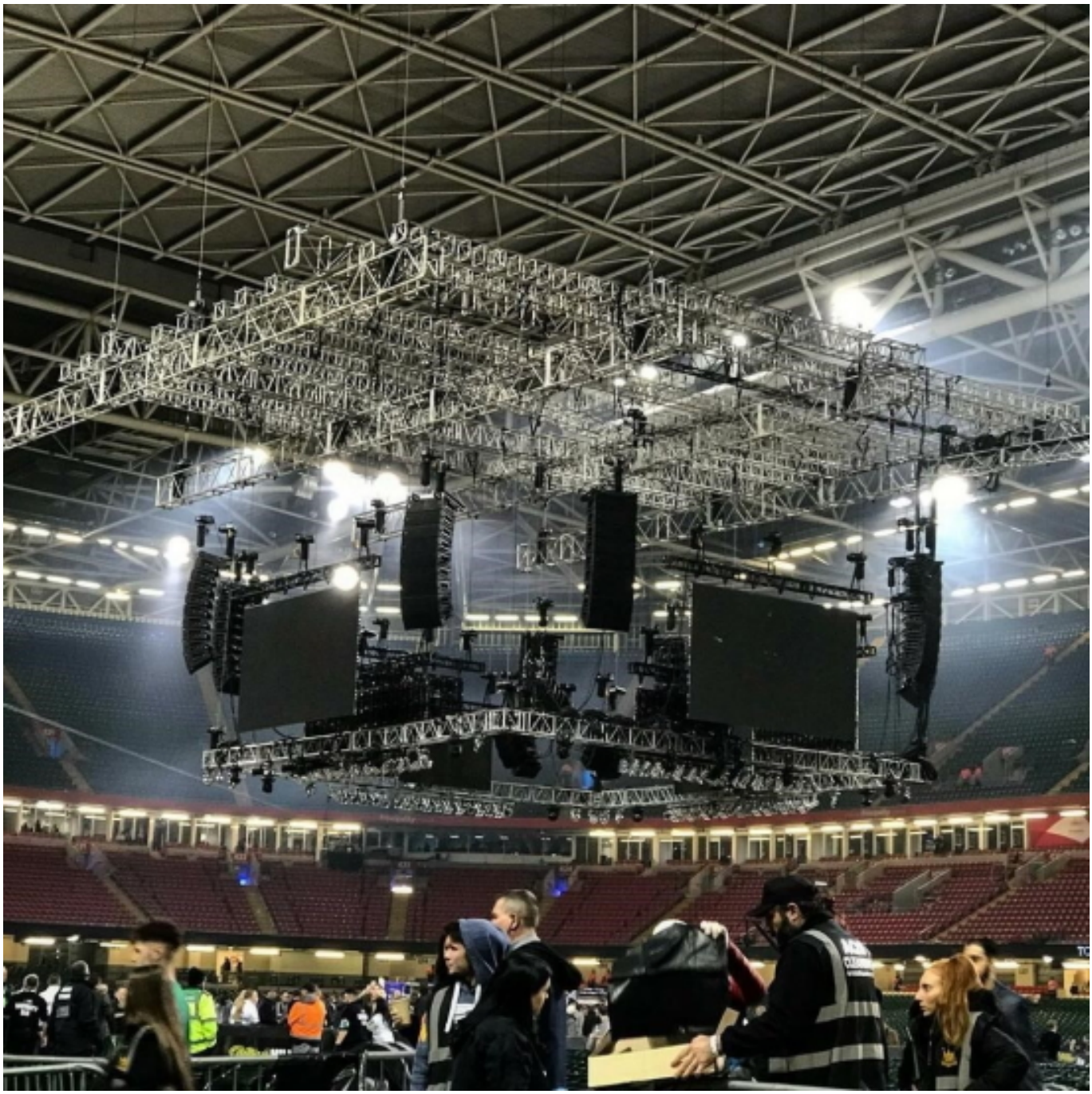
VME Increases Martin Audio MLA Inventory



For nearly a decade, Martin Audio partner, Manchester-based VME, has been providing PA for major boxing events in the nation’s arenas, on an accelerating basis. Starting out with an inventory of 48 MLA multicellular loudspeaker array enclosures, such has been the demand from this sector that the rental fleet has now more than doubled, and this month the rental company announced that it has increased its inventory of MLA family products to over 100. This makes VME one of the largest MLA rental stagers in the UK.

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Explaining the underlying reason, operations manager Aaron Harvey-Holt says that this is in recognition of the fact that his company is now servicing over 40 events a year for TV transmission through Sky Sports, BT Sports and DAZN - all in major UK venues such as Wembley Stadium, Wembley OVO Arena, The O2 Arena, Cardiff International Arena and Manchester AO Arena. Events include the IBF World Heavyweight Championships - and bouts ranging from David Haye to Tyson Fury - to the more recent high-profile Misfits ‘crossover’ series which saw YouTube star KSI going head-to-head with FaZe Temper at OVO Arena, Wembley.

Rigging a system in the round is quite unlike reinforcing a conventional pros arch rock concert. For example, the PA fly position is normally set within a 7 sq.m grid immediately above the ring and configuration can vary from hangs facing out on all four axes to distributed hangs and delays to ensure crowds of up to 20,000 have full intelligibility of all action - from the walk-in music to the National Anthem, DJ interval music and MC announcements. The Misfits event, with all the razzmatazz associated with it, was no exception.



Aaron Harvey-Holt is clear as to why MLA has become their go-to system. “It’s for the ease of rigging,” he says. “MLA is great for the tight time scale we often have to

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deliver in as sometimes we don’t have rig days.” Further to this, the flexibility it affords is vital when they are having to work around TV company constraints. Having venue parameters in their library is no guarantee that they won’t have to take new measurements each time and create a different profile.

“This is precisely why we recently purchased another 24 MLA Compact and 20 MLA,” explains the VME ops manager. For the KSI fight alone they fielded 70 MLA boxes and 24 MLA Compact. “We rigged nine hangs of MLA / MLA Compact in total … 25 boxes a side at the stage end for mains, subs and sidefills - with five MLX a side in cardioid flown, behind the two main hangs - and three hangs further down the arena for delays at the left, centre and right positions.”

The flexibility of the system has also proved a hit with VME’s project manager Mikey Greenwood and system designer Gareth Thomas - the latter working alongside Ben Marsh who is also de facto system tech. He ensures that MLA’s advanced optimisation will enable sound to be steered precisely where it’s needed - designing the horizontal projection in CAD, mapping to where the TV interviews take place, and implementing the ’Hard Avoid’ setting on any reflective VIP boxes. This also takes into account the sensitivity of the broadcast mics when it becomes essential to deaden the sound around the ring.

“With complex events such as this, having that level of control with MLA is vital,” summarises Aaron Harvey-Holt.” It provides massive benefits all round.” Plus, of course, when not on duty at their own events, there will be plenty of scope for cross-hiring MLA, such is the demand during the busy summer season.

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