Wavefront Precision in full bloom at Shrewsbury Flower Festival

BSB Sound up the ante for one of the UK’s premier events



Visitors attending the plethora of county and horticultural fairs that take place during the UK’s outdoor season, deserve the same quality of audio as hardened

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music fans revelling at the UK’s premier festivals.

BSB Sound owner Martin Bickley, whose company specialises in providing PA for all manner of outdoor shows, was looking for a fresh approach to deliver first class audio for the annual Shrewsbury Flower Show as the previous design of public address system was no longer suitable due to the mounting bases for the loudspeaker masts becoming unsafe. He therefore approached a long-term associate, Robin Dibble, who also happens to be one of the Martin Audio product support team.

The show is one of the country's premier events of its kind, attracting top exhibitors from all over the UK to the site on the banks of the Severn. After a site visit to investigate the event and its requirements, Dibble specified two hangs of Martin Audio’s WPL array cabinets to be flown from towers, with a spaced broadside array of SXH subwoofers between. This he knew would provide not only high-octane audio but evenly distributed, site wide coverage.

To supply the equipment, Bickley contacted Bristol based Martin Audio partner, SWG Events, who were pleased to sub-hire their powerful and ground-breaking Wavefront Precision WPL optimised line array. The two towers were also provided by SWG, whose head of audio, Simon Purse, assisted with the set-up.

“We needed to ensure we had consistent quality and intelligibility over the 150m throw distance whilst keeping levels contained on site, with a 74dBA limit at the borders of the event site,” noted Dibble. “The site itself is in a natural bowl and the results of any events in the show ring during the day needed to be broadcast with absolute clarity by the commentators, while in the evening both military and contemporary bands took over the stage, followed by a laser display. This is where the subwoofers—a broadside array of 12 SXH218 (2x18”) enclosures—came into their own.”

The DISPLAY 2 files were prepared by Robin Dibble and loaded into the amps ready for use by Purse, with some tweaks on set-up days. “The main challenge,” Dibble continued, “was getting accurate site information because of its unusual shape, and the fact it was the first time we had worked here. So we undertook terrain mapping with SketchUp, adjusted with on-site surveys during set up.”

Sound was mixed from a desk in the commentary box, set 50 metres behind the speakers, and Robin Dibble, who took responsibility for the overall site design, was more than happy with the outcome. “This event was all about achieving consistency of coverage rather than pushing level. It worked extremely well and sounded fantastic.”

Martin Bickley agreed. “Shrewsbury Flower Show is a favourite event for us at BSB Sound and is bigger than many realise, typically with over 10,000 people sitting on the bank enjoying a wide variety of entertainment from the main show ring.

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“The results were a revelation; the improvement in consistency and quality throughout the audience was a real eye opener. All the BSB Sound team were impressed with the results, and we are looking into the possibility of purchasing a WP based system of our own on the back of the equipment’s performance at this event.”

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