Martin Audio WPL for Plaza Hotel

The iconic Plaza Hotel in Sydney has recently been transformed, positioning it as a premier global entertainment venue. Originally opened in 1930 as a movie theatre, the Plaza has undergone many iterations over the years. Featuring a striking Spanish mission-style façade, under the ownership of the Winchester Hotel Group, with creative direction from Sarah and Ryan Maloney, the theatre has been thoroughly revitalised. The operation now boasts six distinct areas (including a revived, classic 1930s theatre). Ryan Maloney conceived Level One as a nightclub inspired by Ibiza - recognised around the world for a top-tier sound, lighting and videowall infrastructure that would attract renowned, globally-recognised DJs and performers.

The installation project was awarded to Brendon Fava from Xcite Audio Visual and the sound - chosen to fulfil the brief of a premium product line that would meet international rider specifications - came from Martin Audio. The manufacturer’s Australian distributors, Technical Audio Group (TAG), worked closely with Fava, and the aim of TAG’s technical director, Anthony Russo, was to give everyone on the dancefloor a true immersive experience.

He therefore opted for a six-stack solution to ensure everyone within the

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dancefloor’s sound field could enjoy a unique 360° experience. A total of 24 WPL line array elements were deployed in six hangs, with Russo noting, “People rarely experience a high-powered, concert-style cabinet that operates well within its limits, while maintaining significant headroom. This is crucial for efficiently handling the massive dynamic range produced by international DJs.”

To complement the arrays, a six-stack configuration of 18 Martin Audio SXH218 (2x18in) hybrid subwoofers was selected. The main sub stack stands at 2.5 metres, allowing patrons to experience the full force when dancing next to it. However, this installation is not purely about brute force, as Brendon Fava emphasises. “It’s about delivering precision, power and consistency. It’s designed to hit hard, sound clean and perform flawlessly all night.”

Away from the dance floor, the bar and VIP booth delay areas are served by 16 Martin Audio THS 15-inch 3-way coaxial cabinets. These cabinets provide the necessary sound levels as a delay system, ensuring a seamless transition from the dance floor. Notably, the DJ booth is equipped with what Anthony refers to as “the Martin SRM System, a Super Reference Monitors 4-way DJ system”. This setup comprises a pair of THS cabinets mounted on custom-made brackets, paired with two SX218 subwoofers that can meet the most demanding requirements while also keeping pace with the main front-of-house (FOH) system. Anthony further comments, “A three-way coaxial means the DJ receives the extreme detail and timing needed for a perfect performance. The clarity and power of this setup will undoubtedly become a rider requirement.”

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The SPL is maintained in the foyer where 11 Martin Audio Blackline X8 have been installed supplemented with three SX112 subwoofers. Further considerations were vibration control and minimising disturbances to neighbouring properties. To ensure this every cabinet was suspended using Embelton spring isolation or set on specialised floor mounts, while custom rigging was designed and installed by CVAV Sydney. The Allen & Heath system processor powers 14 Martin Audio iKON DSP multichannel amplifiers on a Dante network, creating an enviable 250kW of available power.

Elsewhere at Basement level, Sarah Maloney has created a stunning, moody subterranean vinyl bar. This exclusive atmosphere is sensitively enhanced by the specification of another six-position immersive sound space. This time it is scaled back to feature six Martin Audio CDD15 speakers, eight CDD10 for fill and two SX218 subs. DJs have also been catered for, with powerful stereo CDD15s provided as monitors.

The venue has got off to a dynamic start following its pre-Christmas opening, having already hosted prominent local and international DJs - including Chris Stussy and Mind Against - while increasingly finding favour with VIPs, celebrities and partygoers alike.

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