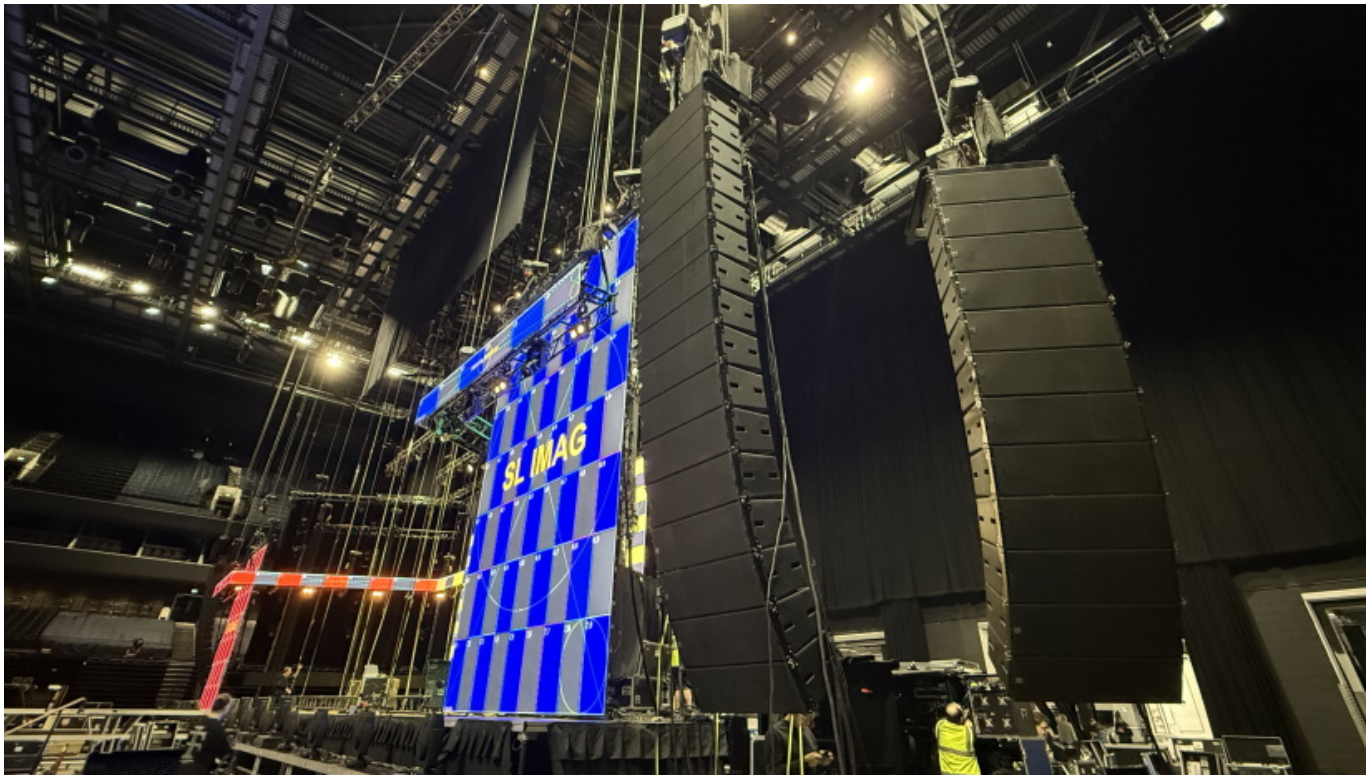
SWG Events expands Martin Audio WPL Inventory



Bristol-based event production company SWG Events has continued its investment in Martin Audio with the addition of a further 24 WPL large-format line array elements, bolstering an already extensive inventory that spans WPL, WPC, WPS and TORUS systems. SWG's relationship with Martin Audio stretches back many years, with a large-format journey that began with Martin W8LC, and then in 2022 - driven by post-COVID demand - a significant investment in 24 WPL, alongside XE500 wedges and SXH218 subwoofers. Since then, the company has continued to deepen its commitment to the Martin Audio portfolio, adding Wavefront Precision WPC and WPS compact and sub-compact systems, as well as the TORUS Series.

"When demand ramped up very quickly, it was a no-brainer to invest," explains SWG’s Head of Audio, Simon Purse. "We would have been hiring all year, so it just made sense to invest in the company and let us scale up." For Purse the rationale of ownership is clear, providing multiple operational advantages to the company and its clients: “Owning the inventory gives us far greater control. We’re not tied to availability, prep time or additional hire costs, and it allows us to be more competitive and flexible for clients.”

The latest addition of a further 24 WPL elements was, again, demand-led. "Looking at the calendar and the way the year was shaping up, we really needed to do this to manage the workload coming in," he says. "We're still hiring additional stock where needed - but we're now able to run multiple large-format stages simultaneously, and we can combine all the WPL, WPC and WPS systems for even larger events."

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The scaleability of the Martin Wavefront Precision ecosystem allows for deployments that can be tailored to any venue size. “Wavefront Precision is a very flexible system that scales to any application,” says Purse. “In terms of voicing, they just get bigger, louder and a little lower, but they're very consistent. If you use WPC on outhangs for WPL, for example, when you walk across the stage you get a very even response. They work extremely well together."

Outside the summer season, SWG maintains rental relationships with various partners for term-time installations. "The WPS goes into Cardiff Students' Union during term-time, for example, and comes out to join the other systems for the summer," Purse explains. SWG’s amplifier inventory has also grown in parallel, with around 30 iKON amplifiers now in stock. “The optimisation, networking and control all work exactly as we need,” he describes. “And support from Martin Audio is excellent - on the rare occasions something does go wrong, it’s how it’s handled that matters, and they always deliver.”

The expanded WPL rig was put to work almost immediately, deployed just a week after arrival, at the MOBO Awards at Manchester's Co-op Live Arena. The system at the MOBOs comprised 16 WPL per side as main hangs, with a further 12 per side on outhangs, 20 Blackline X12s handling front fill along the thrust, 18 SXH218 subwoofers in a broadside array - nine wide, double-stacked - with TORUS providing stage side-fills and XE500s on wedge duties.

Reviewing the event, Purse praises WPL’s pattern control and effective rear-rejection. "Even in the Co-op Arena - a very modern but acoustically dry space - when you stand behind the array you're listening to the room, not the array directly." mAs Production Manager for the event, Rob Smalldon, Production Director at Marvellous Incorporated Ltd, noted the dynamic power of the WPL system. “The performance in the arena was fantastic,” he says. “It delivered an incredible physical presence - like being massaged and slapped in the face at the same time.”

SWG’s diary is filled with festivals throughout the summer, many at historic sites where Martin’s noise control tools become essential. "At certain historic venues we have to be very specific about how we set the system up - there are listed artefacts, windows and structures we need to be very careful of," Purse explains. "Setting Hard Avoid in Martin Audio's DISPLAY software means we're able to satisfy noise consultants and councils while still delivering great results in the venue. It’s about the skill of our technicians, but it's also thanks to Martin Audio's hardware and software combination."

Deployment efficiency is another key advantage. "It goes up really quickly and comes out really quickly," he says. "We can pre-rig angles if we have the system design in advance, and while we always tweak things on site, it's very fast and very safe. It’s a very elegant solution." For SWG Events, the focus remains firmly on growth. "The trend for us is more large-format, bigger shows," concludes Purse. "We're always pushing to deliver high-quality, high-end production, that's our expertise. It's just about managing how many of those shows we can run

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simultaneously in house and with this latest Martin WPL investment we're able to do more."

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