



ISLE OF DELIGHT

HAVING CREATED A MUSICAL LEGACY AND A MAJOR FIXTURE IN THE EUROPEAN EVENTS SCENE, THE ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL CONTINUES TO COMBINE AUTHENTIC CHARM WITH AN ASSORTMENT OF PERFORMERS TO CATER FOR ALL TASTES. TPI'S ZOE MUTTER DONNED HER WELLIES AND HEADED TO THE ISLAND TO HEAR THE EVENT'S ENLIGHTENING STORY DIRECTLY FROM THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE 2012 INCARNATION A MUSICAL TREAT FULL OF QUIRKY CHARACTER, PRODUCTION MAGIC AND MAMMOTH HEADLINERS.

The enchanting atmosphere and charm surrounding the Isle of Wight Festival and its ability to secure an array of superstar artists, has kept a constant flow of music fans ferrying themselves to the island for the past 14 years. The event was revived by Solo Music Agency in 2002 - 40 years after the original Isle of Wight Music Festival - and with Pearl Jam, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and The Boss himself, Bruce Springsteen, confirmed for this year's edition, the event had as much pulling power as ever, attracting a crowd of 52,000.

Having previously only attended the event as a member of the crowd, I arrived at the Newport-based site this year yearning to find out about the creative and technical expertise responsible for producing an iconic festival that never fails to draw in the crowds.

"We have a different flavour at the Isle of

Wight; it's more demanding in its design than some events. There's an element of attention to detail that is present here and is always of the highest level," explained Production North's, Steve Levitt [Live Aid, Nelson Mandela Concert, Capital Radio's Summertime Ball], as we sat in the production office surrounded by his bustling and highly efficient team.

Levitt seems to have perfected the organisation of the four-day event, having production managed the festival for the past six years. He continued: "I will not run more than one festival a year because I want to give this my full attention as it's all about how this event looks and feels for the festival-goers. I work on this for eight months a year, have several meetings on site and then I'm here for three weeks. I'll be on the island after the festival as well to look at the land and its reinstatement and to deal with the council. You're constantly

working on this event, especially when you have the line-up months before, it's too big not to."

Levitt regards landing the role of PM on Solo Music Agency Promoter John Gidding's festival as one of the greatest achievements of his career. "John was Westlife's agent when I started working with the band and then I came onto Isle of Wight by his request four years later. So in that time I had gone from being an unknown to him to running his 'baby'. I was really proud of getting the gig and it's a completely different type of contract to running bands on tour."

Although the Isle of Wight is the only festival to which Levitt devotes his attention, the Production North team is kept constantly busy by a whole host of tours. For instance, at the same time as the festival, the Leeds-based company Levitt set up with fellow production expert, Iain Whitehead, 14 years ago was

Opposite: The crowd rejoiced as Bruce Springsteen headlined on Sunday, performing for nearly three hours; Jessie J rocked the main stage; Sunshine and blue skies followed the rainfall, delighting the crowds; Wretch 32 performed at the Big Top; Lana Del Ray belted out her hits.



also touring around the US with boy band One Direction and had more crew at Dublin's 82,500-capacity Croke Park venue for Westlife's farewell performance.

When on site at Seaclose Park for the festival, Levitt is supported by a close knit production unit including Main Stage Production Manager, Ant Carr [Keane], Big Top Production Manager, Mike Clegg [One Direction], Production Coordinator, Nina Chochoiko, Production Assistant, Francine Hough, Transport and Accommodation, Sharon Lee, and Office Assistant, Lucy Tunn. Building up this strong network of staff is fundamental to the smooth running operation, explained Levitt: "We're very loyal and retain the same crew because we have some great people working for us."

One of the members of the team playing a crucial role was Stage Manager, Mike Grove [Diamond Jubilee Concert, The Brits, MTV EMAs] who has been with the festival since 2005. "So I was here before the current production company, Production North, who have kind of inherited me along with the fixtures and fittings," he explained. Grove is responsible for all aspects of the main stage production load-in and load-out, and for the smooth running of the shows, to try to give the artists whatever they need to put on the best performance possible.

Said Grove: "Steve Levitt is a good friend and good man to work for. Ant Carr did his first year as our Main Stage Production Manager this year, and is one of my new favourites. I also work alongside Frank Moran who runs the Stage Miracles posse of show crew, through wind and rain - a cracking team I wouldn't ever want to be without."

Working closely with the Stage Miracles team, Grove was able to triumph in the most demanding situations. He explained: "Our Saturday involved the last four acts having quite major productions, for a festival changeover, with their own lighting towers, stage sets, flown set pieces, their own monitor rigs and line systems. They even brought their own backline. But we all like the challenge. As Frank says, 'Bring it on!'"

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

"The production design changes yearly and John [Giddings] tries to make the event bigger every time," explained Levitt. "However, the confining factor of this festival is the amount of space we have to operate. The site is long and thin and has its problems because on one side there's a river so there is no access from that direction and then on the other there's a main road that brings us backstage. We're lucky in the respect that we have tarmac behind us to get things into the Main Stage but the negative

is we only have certain roads we can use to access other stages."

Those working within the festival sphere are only too familiar with how much their day-to-day lives are dictated by the weather. But despite the heavens opening and winds picking up as the Isle of Wight Festival was about to kick off, the crew's will to join forces and succeed ensured rain didn't stop play.

The unfortunate weather conditions this year no doubt tested the crew, but it was a challenge that brought them closer as a unit and taught them how valuable each member was. In the last six years, the festival has only experienced rain on one day, which was a load-in. "This year, however, we've had constant rain, which highlighted things we've never seen before. What we need to do in future goes back to the access thing again. We need to look thoroughly at what happens to these access routes when it becomes wet," continued Levitt.

Having worked on multiple Isle of Wight Festivals, Stage Manager Grove agreed the weather this year was a force to be reckoned with: "It was worse than ever, with 55mph winds, horizontal rain, and all the problems that come with it. At one point we were waiting for a band's production team to turn up on stage, only to find they were bobbing about in the Solent in a queue of ferries waiting to dock because the traffic was backed up so far."

ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: Viewers at home could enjoy the festival coverage in HD and 3D thanks to Sky Arts and Blink TV; Hackney rapper Professor Green treated fans to an action-packed set; The Show and Event team oversaw the festival-goers; Midas XL4 consoles were used to mix at FOH for the Main Stage; An Avolites Pearl Expert supplied by Prism Lighting was used at the Big Top.



BIGGER AND BETTER

Over the six years Levitt has been a part of the festival the event has evolved and grown in size allowing crowds to enjoy an eclectic mix of acts spread across the Main Stage, Big Top tent and Garden Stage and to lap up the entertainment at areas including The Hipshaker Lounge and Dance Tent. As a result of this growth, Ant Carr production managed the Main Stage at this year's festival and Mike Clegg took on the role of PM at the Big Top.

Kit supplied throughout the event was also sizeable, with around 80 power generators spread across the site, a main PA that was more than twice the size of a typical arena system and a Main Stage lighting rig that was one and a half times bigger than an arena rig. The Big Top tent also boasted a full arena-size PA system with two desks at FOH and in monitor world.

"We've had stages on different parts of the site before but we've now put them all in one space and then the area for the Main Stage is separate. This year we have added a complete field to the entertainment site at the top, which includes attractions such as Life's A Beach, which literally is a beach with 600 tonnes of sand. It was here last year, but half the size and in a different part of the site," said Levitt.

"We've had the four-poster Big Top for three years now and it also doubles up as the silent disco. At the top of the entertainment field you also find attractions such as the Garden Stage

and the Last Chance Saloon spiegel tent, a German-style bar featuring bands."

But all of this wouldn't be possible without a network of reliable suppliers such as AJ Big Top Hire, which was brought on board, with Site Manager, Keith Morris, who books all big tops for the festival. Morris also introduced Vital Spark into the mix seven years ago to provide power generators. Elsewhere at the event, Pyrojunkies was chosen to lend its pyrotechnic expertise for a selection of performances. "Pyrojunkies were thrilled to supply the special effects for Production North at the festival. We cooled down the Dance tent with our giant Co2 Powerjets. The jets are capable of producing a 20m Plume of cold Co2 on demand and were a real crowd pleaser!" said project manager, Dan Motts.

Bus company Jumbocruiser, which Production North has used for tours and festivals, also provided their services. "They took the festival on three years ago and they have never let me down. We also have a great relationship with Matthew Kibble who supplied a vast number of trucks and provide the back-up I need," said Levitt.

Snakatak, a regular fixture on the touring and festival circuit, took on all catering duties. Continued Levitt: "John Giddings said he wanted to make it the best place possible and for the bands to enjoy it and one of the things I think is really important is catering. If you work 18 hours a day in potentially bad weather and

muddy fields and go into catering and end up with cheese on toast, it isn't ideal. Snakatak isn't a typical festival catering company; their food is normally very high up the ladder in quality and they've been here as long as I have. It can be a chore each year because we think we're feeding 300 and it turns into 600, but the quality never stops."

Supplying staging for the main stage was industry super force Stageco who, according to Levitt, is "one of the best staging companies in the world". After supplying its stages to the festival for the past decade, this year Stageco provided its classic 25m by 20m and 16m height 4-Tower Festival Roof stage with PA wings and front of house. A total of 10 Stageco supervisors worked resiliently through the unpredictable and challenging weather conditions to load in and out 10 trailers of Stageco equipment in six days whilst the stage withstood strong winds and heavy rain.

A TRIED AND TESTED FORMULA

Having supplied audio equipment since 2005, Wigwam now has a tried and tested formula to make sure the days run smoothly thanks to the kit it provides on the Main Stage and spread across multiple areas of the site. "Having the right amount of crew on each stage and the right mixture of characters and expertise makes a huge difference and keeps everyone happy even when the working day is long," said Paul 'Boyo' Manuel, Monitor Engineer for the

ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: The Vaccines looked out at the sea of fans that came to see them play the Main Stage; Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds delivered a triumphant performance; Staging responsibilities were put in the capable hands of Stageco.



Main Stage, who first worked for Wigwam after a chance meeting with Managing Director, Mike Spratt, at a gig.

In monitor world, Manuel and fellow freelance engineer, Sammy Murphy, used a pair of Midas Heritage 3000 boards set up as an A/B system, where one board is live onstage while the other is line-checking the next band. "We share common EQ - XTA GQ600 - and a common set of amps, wedges and IEMs. We both have individual outboard dynamics and effects for each console. Compressors and gates were from Drawmer, XTA, Klark Technic and dbx and simple effects required at monitor world for this gig are easily handled by a pair of Yamaha SPX990's in each rack," said Manuel. "On this gig we have the pleasure of using the Midas analogue boards, which makes for easy hands on dialing it in for those quick turn-arounds between acts."

Murphy added: "The set-up is tailored to suit each year and I have implemented an output changeover system via Radial SW8 switchers which allows greater independent flexibility between

each console, enabling us to bus visiting artists into our system via a remote panel well in advance of their slot without comprising the active signal flow. Wigwam's equipment is packaged very well and advanced to great detail by the project managers so we have every option covered with ultimate flexibility."

A front line of wedges made up of five pairs of d&b audiotechnik M2's were used on stage, driven by D12's. "They are mono feeds but we can make them stereo should an artist require. This covers the main downstage area where most of the acts have their performers. To back these up, and provide more general onstage coverage, we are using left and right sidefills consisting of two d&b J subs, two d&b C4 sub and two C4 tops," added Manuel.

Upstage there were another five mixes of M2 wedges available where required, and two drum fills, each consisting of two d&b C4 subs and one C4 top. Manuel and Murphy came up with a generic wedge footprint for the stage by looking at the artist riders supplied to pre-production

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ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: Production Manager, Steve Levitt; Isle of Wight Lighting Director, Andy Hurst (centre), with fellow LDs, Vince Foster and Dave Hill; Show and Event Head of Security, Richard Douglas; The production team: Francine Hough, Ant Carr, Lucy Tunn, Sharon Lee, Steve Levitt and Nina Chocholko; Blink TV's Ray Gwilliams, Romek Sudak, Gary Tepper and Head of Operations, Tim Clark.



and then seeing who needs the most or which changeover of artists is going to require the maximum amount or least amount of wedges. In addition to the wedges, Sennheiser G3 IEMs were chosen, with a total of 14 mixes plus eight mixes of IEM being generated.

VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

Meanwhile, over at FOH, engineers Jon Digby and Nigel Fogg, were mixing from Midas XL4 consoles. "We had dbx 160's, Amek 9098's, Drawmer gates, Lexicon, Yamaha and TC Electronic reverbs and TC and Roland delays. When the sound leaves the desk it follows an analogue path through the Midas Heritage console, matrix mixer and a custom line-driver to the d&b amps," explained Digby. "I love what I do and at this festival we had happy visiting band technicians and it was a pleasure, as always, to be working as part of the Wigwam team."

Amplification at the event was d&b, with a PA system comprising a main hang of 18 J8's and 10 J subs. Each delay was then made up of eight J8's and four J12's, with nine C4 infills. Lending their valuable expertise was Systems Technicians, Sid Rogerson and Nick Mooney on site and RF Technician Andy Squibb, who has been a crucial part of the festival for the past seven years.

"On this occasion I am overseeing all the RF mainly used towards the Main Stage end of the site whilst keeping another eye on what

is happening elsewhere. We have our house radios, mics and in-ear systems to cover the basics. With so much RF going on onsite on a couple of occasions when artists turned up we couldn't get enough frequency together for their in-ears so we loaned them our entire house system. So it acts as a back-up plus our RF scanning kit," said Squibb.

Squibb's job is to make artists feel at ease when they turn up at the site, referring to the information that Wigwam's Client Manager, Geoff Muir, has prepared in the lead up to the event. "Artists just turn up with whatever they are touring with and then we have two systems - the Sennheiser G2 range and Shure UHF R K4E - that are far enough apart that we have some room to move things around. At the moment today's plan has about 150 frequencies and it's going to get interesting tomorrow because Springsteen is about 78, which is brave on a festival site," added Squibb.

Choosing Wigwam to supply kit for the Main Stage was an easy decision for Levitt: "I just think they are the best sound company in Europe and are capable of catering for all my needs. They have a sound system on at least five stages on this site."

Stage Manager, Mike Grove's working day was also made easier thanks to the help from the audio team, he explained: "Wigwam are a fine bunch of people and proper hard working geezers. They always deliver in good time for me to put a band on with no dramas."

THE BEST SERVICE POSSIBLE

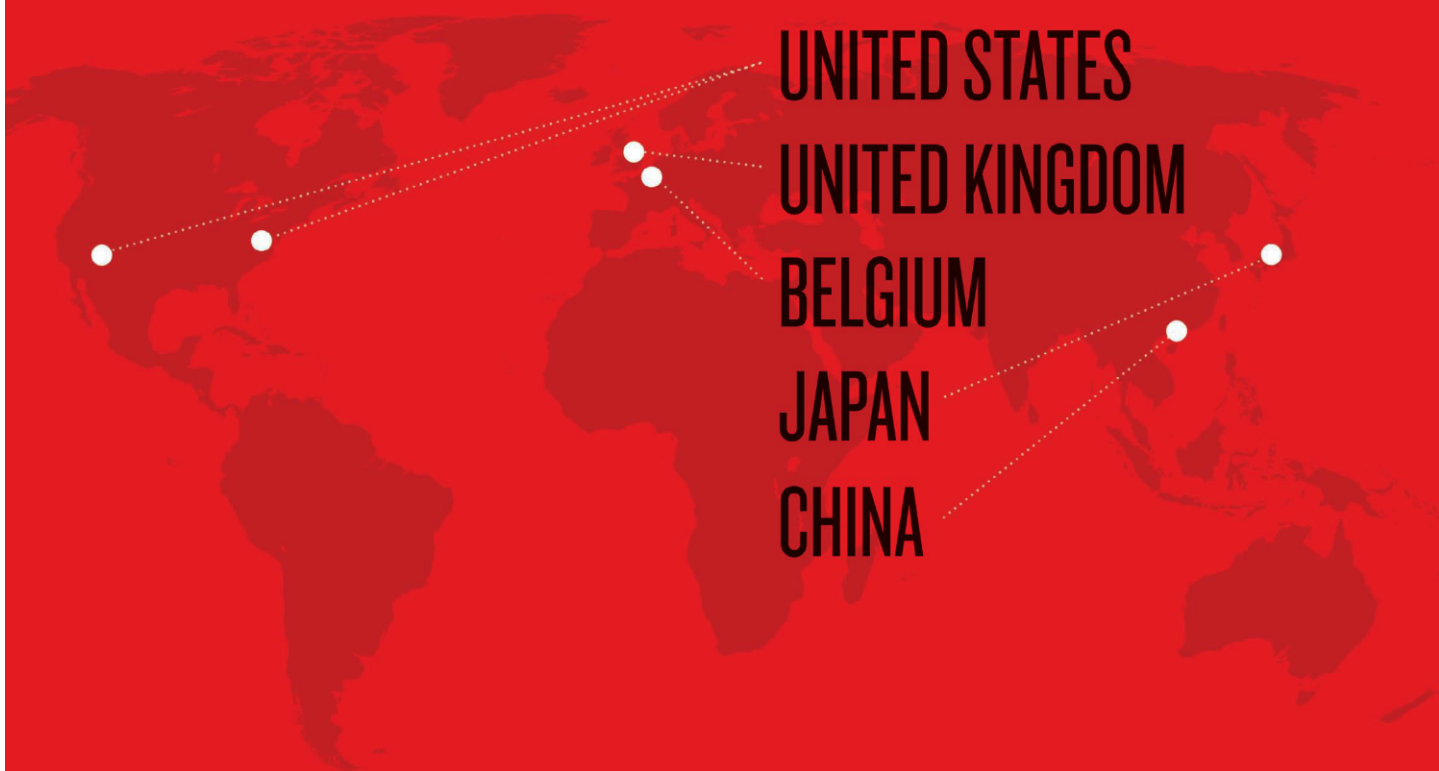
For the fifth consecutive year, Skan PA, which is subcontracted to Wigwam, provided audio equipment to the Big Top. Wigwam's Geoff Muir and Chris Fitch, Director at Skan PA, discussed what is requirements in the run-up to the event to try to offer the best possible service to all guest engineers. "I chose most kit for the Big Top, but in particular Yamaha consoles were selected because they are reliable, well-known and simple to operate. This year we chose the new d&b V system, which is smaller and hopefully more in proportion with the structure of the tent," said Fitch.

Making up the Skan PA collective was PA System Designer, Matt Vickers, FOH Engineers, Toby Donovan and Tree Tordoff, Monitor Engineers, Chris Barton and Eleonora Romano, Patch Master, Craig Bruce and Terry Essen and Julian Tulk looking after microphones. Heading up the audio team over at the Big Top was Skan PA Crew Chief, J Summers [Interpol, Norah Jones].

"Chris Fitch prepares all of the advanced input lists, which we hang like wallpaper on the SL monitor wing. It lists the band, set time, input and mic requirements. Any questions about a band, all you have to do is look at the big picture. Kim Bickell [Skan Office] generates binders for every Skan crew member. These contain the detailed overview of the bands requirements for the entire festival run. Sort of our audio guidebook for the week. If it's not in

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ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: Stage Manager, Mike Grove; RF Technician, Andy Squibb; FOH Engineer, Nigel Fogg; FOH Engineer, Jon Digby; The Stageco team; Monitor Engineers, Paul Manuel and Sammy Murphy.



the book or on the wallpaper, we'll find out on the day and make it happen," said Summers.

At FOH, two Yamaha PM5Ds were chosen for the visiting engineers and Skan PA crew to mix on. "Each PM5D has its own rack of external processing available for visiting engineers to use," added Summers. These also featured external effects including XTA GQ600, Drawmer DS201, Avalon VT737sp, TC Electronic D2 and TC Electronic Reverb 4000. "Both PM5Ds come into a Midas XL88 and then out through the d&b system processing."

A selection of Sennheiser gear could also be found on stage including G3 handheld transmitters and receivers. Elsewhere at the Big Top, the main d&b V12 system comprised 12 V12's per side, eight regular Q-fills on the front stage, six J subs and eight V subs, driven by d&b D12 amps.

In monitor world, the Skan PA team again opted for Yamaha, but this time it was a pair of M7CLs with a selection of Drawmer, dbx and TC Electronic kit for effects. A total of 20 d&b M4 wedges were available along with six C7's for sidefill, two more C7's for drum subs, which were driven by nine D12's.

"The d&b system was chosen because it is our house PA and with this new d&b V rig, we can tailor it to create a much smoother sound in the tent. It's extremely easy to rig as well," continued Summers.

As festival Patch Master, freelancer Craig Bruce's job is to get everything plugged in correctly. Most large festivals will have two alternating control systems, known as A / B

systems, which enable the next band to be plugged up and checked behind the curtain whilst another act is playing on stage. "When you start to consider that there are mixing positions at FOH, on-stage monitors and in the TV truck, let alone any bands that want to bring in their own consoles, you can imagine that it could get complicated. It is the Patch Master's job to deliver the correct inputs to the correct desk channels for all consoles, according to the information supplied by the bands' sound engineers or production managers," said Bruce. "I'm in constant communication with the other members of the sound crew and the TV truck, and I have to be seriously on the case to address any problems that might crop up. For the duration of the show, I'm the central point in the coordination of the sound crew."

The microphone collection was a mixture of Sennheiser 904's, 609's, 901's, AKG 414's on drum overheads; Shure B91's, B52's, SM58's, B58as, SM57's, B56as, B57as; KSM 44's, SM81's, KSM 137's, SM7's and Beyerdynamic M 88's. "Mics were chosen to try to provide a few options for the bands," explained Skan's Microphone Technician for the event, Julian Tulk. "We had to set up and place the mics on all the bands' backlines, help their technicians out and be the run around guys onstage during changeovers," added fellow microphone expert Terry Essen.

Over at FOH, working alongside FOH Engineer, Toby Donovan, UK specialist for Yamaha digital mixing consoles, Tree Tordoff, was also on hand to help any engineers. "Skan

first employed me for the Isle of Wight Festival five years ago when they decided to use all digital consoles at a major festival for the first time. Having someone with my experience is great for them and at the same time I learn from their set-up and by watching and helping visiting engineers," said Tordoff. "In those early years Skan offered a choice of consoles at FOH, but since then they have settled on the PM5D-RH. This console sounds great, is rock solid in the tough conditions and still has the widest rider acceptance of all the digital offerings. These days experienced engineers are familiar with the PM5D and most have a memory card for it."

AN ACCOMMODATING RIG

Master of illumination, Andy Hurst's role on the festival has developed with the event. Back in 2002, he took up the reins as Crew Chief and then became FOH Lighting Operator in 2005 before taking on his current position of Lighting Director for the Main Stage in 2006.

Hurst explained how he produced this year's design: "I look at the headliner specs and from there come up with the fixture selection for the festival rig. We use a large range of fixtures that change from year to year and it's always important to add in the headliner design to our festival system whilst allowing space for the various acts during the day with their respective floor packages."

PRG's Account Director, Yvonne Donnelly Smith, who has been involved since 2000, used her considerable experience of the touring

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ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: Skan PA's J Summers and Patch Master, Craig Bruce; Monitor Engineers, Chris Barton and Eleonora Romano; Microphone Technicians, Terry Essen and Julian Tulk; Lighting Operator, Tom Lesh, and PRG Crew Chief, Ben Holdsworth; Lighting Technicians Harry 'Henry' Gillet, Luke Jackson and Hamza Rattigan.



and large festival circuit and the relationships with band LD's to enhance the communication between lighting production and the festival. Rich Gorrod, Head of Event Services, compiled the technical drawings required for the festival and implementation was then left in the capable hands of Crew Chief, Ben Holdsworth.

Making a debut appearance at the festival as Lighting Operator for the Main Stage was Tom Lesh who was invited by Andy Hurst to look after the visiting LDs and FOH consoles and programme busking pages for the bands. Lesh worked on a High End Systems Road Hog Full Boar, which according to Hurst is a "good all round console and very easy to adapt to visiting LD's needs and requests".

The main priority for Lesh was coping with the rain and high winds and ensuring all lighting equipment stayed warm enough to evaporate any water. "Luckily there were minimal casualties and I was overcome by the dogged persistence of all the punters who turned up to have a good weekend," said the Lighting Operator.

"I was also impressed by Bruce Springsteen's Lighting Director, Todd Ricci, who turned up with no lighting production," he continued. "Instead he elected to busk a three-hour show with the festival system, which showed testament to an artist who commanded the stage and beyond, and his team's trust in being able to deliver the goods on the night with just a backline and riser set-up."

FULFILLING THE BRIEF

Supplying fixtures for the main stage to bring Hurst's designs to life was entertainment technology specialist PRG. The rig was primarily Vari-Lite with a sprinkling of Martin Professional for the big blinding looks. Moving lights PRG supplied to the Main Stage included six Vari-Lite VL1000's, 64 VL3500 Washes, 34 VL3000 Spots and 28 GLP Impressions on the side trusses.

Another 32 James Thomas Engineering Par 36 2-Lites, 44 PAR 36 8-lites and 30 Martin Professional Atomic Color Scrollers were then added to the rig as conventional lighting fixtures. Also featuring in the set-up were three Avolites ART 2000 dimmers and four Jem ZR33 smoke machines.

Lighting Crew Chief, Ben Holdsworth, oversaw the PRG team, which comprised Dave Mathieson, Luke Jackson, Jamie Gorman, Hamzah Rattigan, Nick Knowles, Carl Cresson, Jason Harvey and Henry Gillett. Holdsworth started in the lighting industry 15 years ago working with the likes of The Cure, Kylie and Stereophonics before crew chiefting his first Isle of Wight in 2005.

"PRG has been involved in the lighting side of this for the last 10 years and supplied all fixtures and their own stacking truss this year although the consoles were provided by Andy Hurst," said Holdsworth. "Lighting is slightly different at a festival because you have to accommodate so many acts coming in and they all want to bring their own kit so as a design concept you have to

come up with an idea that fulfills the brief and enables everyone to bring equipment in and out quickly."

The rig certainly needed to be versatile to accommodate this year's headline acts who wanted to incorporate their own additional equipment. Four trusses worth of extra lighting came in on the Friday night for headliner Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and Saturday's headline act, Pearl Jam, had an additional six lighting trusses of kit.

"So the challenge is to decrease the footprint as much as possible by instead of hanging the lights on the truss, putting pipes down the middle to keep the footprint of the fixture within the width of the truss," added Holdsworth. "As a festival house lighting supplier, we're trying to create a generic look that everybody else can come in and use. It has to be a simple rig in terms of fixtures because anybody visiting needs to be able to clone the fixtures easily," said Holdsworth.

"I would always work with VL3000 Spots and VL3500 Washes at a festival because they are very bright and robust and even in the shocking weather conditions we've had, we've only had to swap out one light so far. The GLP Impressions are also very important for the televised shows as the camera loves them."

The sheer number of acts on the main stage makes the festival demanding for all crew involved, which influenced Levitt in picking PRG as lighting vendor. "PRG being the biggest

Below: Big Top Operators Mark Jones-Roberts and Tim Eastham; Rigger, Martin Jones; Big Top FOH Engineers, Tree Tordoff and Toby Donovan.



lighting company in the world has made the choice easier. We've had the Rolling Stones, The Police and REM play on our Main Stage in the past and PRG being the size they are makes it quite likely the main act could be one of their clients. When we inherited the festival PRG were there already and they've never let me down so they're still here today," said the PM.

BIG TOP ILLUMINATIONS

Over at the Big Top, lighting design duties were handed over to Dave Lee [One Direction, JLS and Westlife]. His concepts were realised through fixtures provided by Cheshire-based Prism Lighting and Lighting Operator for the past two years, Mark Jones-Roberts who also this year took on the Crew Chief role for the Big Top. Joining him as operator this year was Tim Eastham, another Prism Lighting regular. Prism Lighting's technical needs in the Big Top were looked after by Stuart Wright and Colin Emerson.

Jones-Roberts said: "I've been in the lighting sphere for over 20 years working on events around the world and got involved with Prism when I ran my own corporate production company. I've worked as a Prism Project Manager alongside Ian Tobin for eight years.

"Ian Tobin [Prism Project Manager] has been doing the Big Top since its inception," explained Jones-Roberts. "So we have always had structure and lighting in here, with it growing each year. Last year we were asked to supply stage and lights for the Garden Stage as well as two other venues - the Silent Disco and Last

Chance Saloon. This year Life's A Beach was added, so, bar the main stage, we now supply all the stage lighting at the festival - seven trucks full in all."

Like the Main Stage, the Big Top required a versatile design that could encompass all types of artist. The 2012 incarnation of the tent had an Extra Heavy Duty Truss grid on six 20" towers. The grid used 16° angles in the rear bay to help follow the Big Top's shape. PA was flown from the system along with cantilevers for Fastfold Projection Screens. Starting with Dave Lee's initial lighting design, Jones-Roberts added six columns of five Showtec 5x5 Matrix Blinders, which were tracked behind the video screen during band change overs. A Catalyst media server fed both the Matrix and the onstage LED video screen.

Fixtures on the stage included 20 Martin Professional MAC Wash 700's, which joined 28 MAC 700 Spots, six Vari-Lite VL3000 Spots for TV key light, six GLP 120 Impressions, 14 Martin Atomic Strobes and two 48 Way Avolites ART dimmers. "Apart from a few fixtures, it's predominantly a Martin Professional rig. This is for brightness, speed and reliability. During the five years Prism have been supplying the Big Top we've had no failures from the Martin products," added Jones-Roberts.

Out front, Jones-Roberts operated along with Tim Eastham from a High End Systems Hog iPC desk, his console of choice when on the touring or festival circuit. "In the festival situation we use the scene directory where we can record whole looks, releasing the faders for

groups bumps, chases etc. At the same time we can run multiple effects. The stacking, macros and playback options that the Hog 3s offer is second to none, in my opinion," said the lighting operator. "We are not working with set cues apart from a couple of bands. With Katy B for example, we were given a synopsis of the songs and each had an individual look which can be useful if you are not familiar with all of their music, but does imply limits to your creativity." Prism supplied overnight crew, Chris Wilkes and Chris Curran, to allow LDs to pre-programme the Big Top rig.

Elsewhere on the site, Prism used their modular Total Fabs roof for the festival's Garden Stage. Lighting on this stage was powered from battery packs charged each day from solar panels. Fixtures using this solar power included 30 Colorado Tri Tour washes, 30 ChromaQ Colour Block DB4's, 16 Martin Professional MAC 101's and 6 Mac 301's. All were effortlessly operated by Dave Gibbon using an Avolites Pearl Expert console.

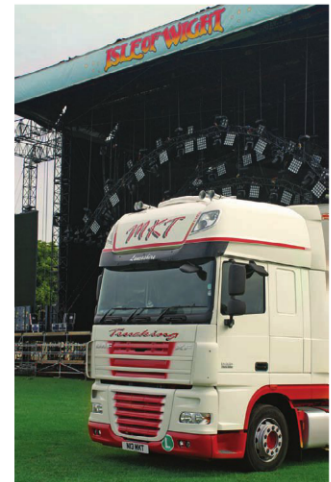
Stage deck, truss and lighting were installed in the Disco 2000 tent along with fixtures in the Last Chance Saloon. Both areas were programmed and operated by Ben Eastham and Steve Foden. Prism also supplied lighting, ground support and technician Ian Clare, to Blink TV for four of their presentation areas.

SERVICING THE FESTIVAL'S VISUAL NEEDS

The visual aspect of this year's Isle of Wight was multi-faceted; on top of screens appearing on either side of the main stage, the Big Top

ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: Yamaha PM5Ds took pride of place at FOH over at the Big Top; Amplification at the event was carried out through a d&b system; Matthew Kibble supplied a vast number of trucks.



and scattered across the site along with video consoles and cameras, the collection of artists from one of the country's leading festivals was broadcast live to Sky Arts and Sky3D viewers.

Last year, the event made history when it became the first UK music festival to be broadcast live in 3D. As per last year, as well as getting the chance to see all the action from the stages in HD and 3D, viewers could watch interviews with the acts live from the onsite studio, located to the side of the Main Stage.

Tim Clark, Head of Operations for Blink TV - the company supplying video equipment in conjunction with XL Video and also filming the event - filled me in on the firm's involvement in the festival: "We specialise in filming music festivals and tours. With this event being filmed in 3D, it makes things a little more complicated, not least from a screens point of view. The Main Stage screens are portrait and some 3D framing involves subjects on the left and right so you have to be careful you don't end up with

an empty bit of the stage on the screens. Plus the way cameras move for 3D is slightly different and it's important to make sure we service the festival's needs from a screens point of view."

Despite having supplied screens to the festival for many years, 2012 was the second time Blink TV had broadcast from the Isle of Wight, producing six hours of programming for each of the event's three days. "Video is very important here and we've worked closely with Steve Levitt and promoter, John Giddings, both of whom are very passionate about the fact the portrait screens are becoming quite a defining thing for the Isle of Wight," explained Clark as he sat on the production buggy that allows him to zip around the site, keeping a constant check on the extensive selection of Blink TV's equipment. "It's a concept that we've maintained for the last three years and we work closely with John in the way they're used, making sure to integrate visuals Solo use for their tickets and leaflets so that the in-house

graphics and animation Blink produces is familiar and accessible to the public and themed to the festival."

Levitt and Giddings determine the spec for the screens and choose what they want to appear so that Blink TV can work out the best way of tailoring it to suit the event. "It's constantly evolving, but the basic concept is that we use a Catalyst system to vary the size of the live camera picture-in-picture on the screens. The height of the image is increased towards the end of each day with the Headliner having a full height image, therefore building the impact of the screens as the day progresses," said Clark.

The two large portrait screens either side of the Main Stage were made up of 196 panels of Lighthouse R7 each. Over at the Big Top, a relay screen outside the tent comprised 48 panels of Mitsubishi D8, with 104 panels of Pixled F12 used for the upstage screen. Projectors for the 16ft by 12ft Fastfold screens at the Big Top were

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ON THE ROAD: Isle of Wight Festival

Below: Professor Green and Wretch 32 performed at the Big Top; Jessie J.



Barco R12's, and the lighting department used a Catalyst server to feed the onstage screen via Folsom ImagePro-HD signal processors.

"Luckily XL Video are masters of getting the show on the road and making sure that all kit we need is here. They supply our screens and screen control equipment so I work closely with their project managers to make sure we have the right specification and then it turns up on site and away we go. XL do a lot of our projects and have always worked on Isle of Wight for us," added Clark.

Screens Director, Gary Tepper, and Catalyst Controller, Romek Sudak run the main stage screens presentation, with Tepper calling the shots and Sudak running the Catalyst whilst also using Final Cut Pro to play the content in. "It's just a single output to the screens - Gary gets seven individual camera feeds from the broadcast out of a total of 10. When we go portrait we also have our own camera in the pit that is under Gary's control for specifically framed shots," said Clark.

The Blink TV crew breathed a sigh of relief when the winds dropped because of the problems it presents for the screens. "We have procedures in place to make sure they're safe because they are massive sails in effect. Although the elements have been against us, a few technical tweaks and we were raring to go again," added Clark.

Blink TV's on site presence included over 300 crew and three 3D OB trucks from Telegenic for the event with 10 cameras on the main stage, six on the Big Top and five more in the presentation areas as well as two site-wide RF 3D cameras.

"We've done the festival from a screens

point of view for around 10 years, although it's my third time here, but each year our relationship with Steve Levitt and Site Director, Keith Morris, has been incredibly helpful to us because as the project grows, so do our requirements from the site. Last year we had four or five portacabins and we have 15 this year. Everything is much bigger, including the number of people we have and Keith, in particular, has been so helpful with assisting us in this," said Clark.

TAKING PRECAUTIONS

Security responsibilities were split between campsite and stages, with AP Security looking after the camping areas and Show and Event overseeing the rest of the festival. Explained Levitt: "I brought Show and Event in when I started because I knew Managing Director, Tony Ball, from working with him on the Capital Summertime Ball. Prior to this, having one company cover the campsite and main arena could be problematic. The key to a good security company is management of the people on site and this is what both Show and Event and AP Security do well."

For the fifth successive year AP Security was providing safety and stewarding services for the festival's campsites and played a key role in significantly reducing the festival's crime rate yet again. "The conditions were testing, but everything still went remarkably well. I think the old Dunkirk spirit kicked in," said Chris Hollands, who headed AP's team at the event.

"Despite the weather, we reduced the crime rate by 30%, which is something we are really proud of. Our working relationship with the police, all the partners and authorities at the

festival has got stronger every year and this has been key in progressively reducing the crime figures year on year.

With around 690 Show and Event crew on site who arrived over a week before the festival, the event was well covered. "There are meetings going on for months beforehand and we bring the supervisors over a day early so they can be allocated the zones they will be working in and can look at the site as a whole while we produce our briefing documents," said Richard Douglas, Head of Security at Show and Event.

Despite the heavy duty nature of the structure at the Big Top, it needed to be evacuated by Show and Event Security due to severe weather conditions as a precaution. With all team members uniting and a sterling effort from the security crew, the operation was a complete success. "Although nothing blew down, this was a necessary precaution and it went very well indeed," added Douglas.

Skan PA's J Summers, who worked at the Big Top was "blown away" by the security team's achievement: "Steve Levitt made the announcement through our emergency microphone and the security crew had everyone out in minutes. There were a couple of boos but it was for their health and safety so it needed to be done."

AN EXCEPTIONAL SKILLBASE

Production North opted to entrust HSL with rigging the festival, having developed a strong relationship with the company on previous tours. "They're reliable and have great gear and they support us as a company," enthused PM Levitt. Head Rigger for the Main Stage, Seth Cook, and his team spent two and a half days

Below: Lana Del Rey captivated the Big Top crowd.



rigging the kit supplied by PRG and HSL. "We did the job with just four of us - my team of riggers, my 'angels', Tim Banford, Martin Jones and Kieron Holbeche. The weather, the rain and the mud only affect sight logistics, which slows everything down, but for me the wind is always the big issue. Stageco - Markus Olma and his team - and their stage were fantastic as always, but constant wind monitoring means you can never relax. Once the rig is up you spend the rest of the weekend dealing with wind bracing solutions," said Cook.

Also working on the event was freelance rigger for the Main Stage, Martin Jones [Biffy Clyro, Chicago], who elaborated on the service the riggers provided on site: "HSL provided hoists for the PA, video and incoming artists, while PRG provided all the hoists for the festival lighting package. We had 101 points, but that got increased because Tom Petty put in three extra and Pearl Jam put in four more," said Jones. "It wasn't just HSL that has pulled out all the stops though. Stageco are great guys and some of the best people to work with on site".

Time was invested by HSL to ensure festival-goers were safe in windy conditions, by taking precautionary measures such as strapping kit. Added Jones: "We've braced everything. Take the video screens for

example, they have a huge surface area and can blow in the wind so we spent - between us and Stageco - 15 hours bracing the two main stage screens along with the various PA towers.

"The show always has to go on and the weather has made this quite a tough one but the skill base of everybody here has been exceptional. I have never worked in a team that has pulled together so much and overcome difficulties caused by the weather," concluded Jones. "The desire to get the job done has been amazing. The teamwork involved is superb and everybody has mucked in to get the job done, unlike anything I've ever seen before."

TPI

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