



Opposite: The tour enjoyed a Capital Sound audio rig which included Martin Audio's MLA system and Avid consoles and outboard gear included a Roland SPX990 for vocal effects. Below: Toby Donovan, Dave Roden and Harm Schopman, the audio crew; Frontman Kelly Jones with his Shure Beta 58 microphone; For the monitor mix Jones used a combination of Ultimate Ears IEMs and Martin Audio Martin LE700 wedges, which he particularly likes due to the tone and smoothness; The lighting rig from Neg Earth featured JTE and Martin Professional fixtures.



prefer to lay the song out, verse chorus type of deal, and this gives me tons of flexibility. I love running the show, with cue stacks I would just get bored."

Neg Earth supplied all the lighting; with crew chief Steve Kellaway working with Ian Lomas,

Jim Mills, Richard Armstrong, Damo Coad and the rigger was Andi Flack. Clark is keen to stress his admiration for Neg Earth. "I have been using them since 2001. Their service is always top notch. Julian Lavender has always been there for me. I can't say enough."

The video content, a mixture of abstract colour design then water footage, was mainly used for the stage gauze cloth screens. Six Barco HD20 projectors were used, two positioned at FOH, with the other four used for side screen rear projection onto screens mainly used for

STEREOPHONICS UK ARENA TOUR

WITH A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL EIGHTH STUDIO ALBUM, *GRAFFITI ON THE TRAIN* RELEASED ON THE BAND'S OWN RECORD LABEL, STYLUS RECORDS, WELSH SONGSMITHS STEREOPHONICS EMBARKED ON A UK ARENA. CAPITAL SOUND SUPPLIED A MARTIN AUDIO MLA SYSTEM AND CONSOLES, NEG EARTH LIGHTING, SPECIAL EFFECTS FROM BPM-SFX, WITH VIDEO EQUIPMENT BY XL VIDEO AND CATERING BY EAT TO THE BEAT. SIMON DUFF SAW THE LAST NIGHT OF THE TOUR AND MET A CREW AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME.

"The really great thing about working with the Stereophonics is the extent of the loyalty the band has to their core crew. Both sides have earned that respect through a lot of hard work, in all departments. The band know what they want and we all deliver" said Andy Grey, who has been Production Manager for Stereophonics since 2007.

VISUAL STEREOS

Lighting and Video Designer for Stereophonics is Brent Clark. Based in Toronto, the affable Canadian has worked for the band since 2005 with his other clients including Avril Lavigne, Tragically Hip and Nelly Furtado. For the current tour he took inspiration from the artwork for the *Graffiti on the Train* album, taking photographs and video of old train stations and working from those. Clark is as much influenced by film as he is music and the end resulting imagination is a testament to that. On

previous Stereophonics tours video elements have been to the forefront but for this one Clark and management wanted lighting elements to lead the visual feel of the show. Clark's focus was on texture, mood and harmonic contrast. The concept behind the lighting truss was itself inspired by a train station as if the band is standing on a platform looking out. It has six small arches and then one big half circle at the back. Along with a downstage truss and two spine trusses that run up to downstage. The look of the stage was complemented with two drop down gauze cloth screens used to project onto, lowered and raised at the back and front of the stage at key moments in the set.

The lighting rig included 47 Martin Professional MAC Viper Profiles moving lights and 138 MAC 101 LED Washes, together with 12 Color Kinetics Color Blast 12 TRX and 24 James Thomas Engineering Thomas 4 Lite molefay, along with four 24-inch mirror balls

and four smoke and haze fans. The Viper is one Clark's newest preferences. "I love the colours and the gobos. I think it's my new favourite profile," he said. Floor fixtures included four Martin Professional MAC Auras, three Omni floods, eight and 12-inch Color Blazes, eight Martin Professional Atomic 3000 Strobes and 23 Chromlec Elidy Panels.

Clark cut the show using an MA Lighting grandMA2 console, full size. He commented: "I love the MA1 but ran out of space on it after the last tour so decided I needed to make the jump to the 2. It's a fantastic console. There are so many great features on it including real-time control for up to 65,536 parameters per session in connection with MA NPU (equivalent to 256 DMX universes), 8,192 HTP/LTP parameters, six DMX outputs and the internal TFT wide mode touchscreens. Mix wise there are no timecode or Midi triggers on the show. I run all the songs live. There are no real cue stacks per song, I

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Below: Lighting fixtures included Martin Professional MAC 101's and Auras; BPM-SFX supplied special effects for the tour; Brent Clark, Lighting Designer, used a full size MA Lighting grandMA2 console to control the show; All the band use a combination of IEMs and Martin Audio Martin LE700 wedges; The band has recently released their eighth studio album.



IMAG. At The O2 seven Sony 2500 HD Cameras and a Grass Valley Turbo 2 video switcher were used. XL Video supplied equipment for the whole tour with direction by Paul Eggerton in association with Blink TV.

Special effects in the form of lasers, pyrotechnics and confetti were also very much a part of the show. Supplied by BPM SFX & Production, as they have done for Stereophonics since 2010. The company provided some truly special moments including atmospheric low smoke, to mood enhancing RGB laser displays. BPM very much helped set the tone even adding a bit of light hearted balloons and confetti to the mix and during the encore 15-metre long coloured flames, Co2 and streamers helping to bring the audience to a standing ovation. The special effects crew also included Paul Harris and Matt Heap with Danny Lait in charge of lasers.

SOUND WORLD

Dave Roden has been mixing FOH for the Stereophonics since 1996 a sure sign of a happy, loyal trusted band to crew relationship. Roden's other clients include work for Dame Shirley Bassey, Lissie, Ocean Colour Scene and Status Quo. Loyalty in the Stereos sound camp is further demonstrated by the fact that Capital Sound has handled the Stereophonics account since 1997. For the current tour they supplied a Martin Audio MLA line array and Avid Profile

consoles.

The main line array hang for the O2 Arena consisted of 16 Martin Audio MLA per side and two Martin Audio MLA-D downfills per side. The side-flown system comprised of 13 MLA and one MLA-D downfill per side and the ground system comprised of 14 Martin Audio MLX powered sub bass loudspeakers set up in a central castellated broadside array. Front fills consisted of 12 Martin Audio W8LM line array loudspeakers. Toby Donovan from Capital Sound was the System Tech with Harm Schopman as Audio Crew Chief. All three are hugely complimentary about the system. Roden commented: "To be honest, all the main line array systems currently available sound great pretty much straight out of the box. However the MLA's capabilities of being able to so accurately define SPL in area you want and to avoid, and artificially extend coverage in the vertical plane are extremely useful tools to have at our disposal and were really the deciding factors in my choice of system this time."

Roden's console for the tour was an Avid Venue D-Show Profile, running a total of 48 inputs. He said: "I like the user interface of the Profile, its functionality and its physical size. I used to carry some external outboard but in the last few years I have been using a combination of Venue Pack Pro and Waves Plug In effects and I am generally very happy with the results."

Commenting on his approach to mixing

the show he said: "I honestly can't define my approach to mixing because every show is different. I could make lots of vague references and throw in words like 'essence' and 'interpretation' but really I am just doing my best to deliver a balanced coherent mix at an appropriate SPL, so the audience leave feeling like they've been to an old fashioned rock concert but with a modern twist." He continued: "I do use snapshots for each song to recall just about everything except input and output patch and gains. During the show I tend not to change anything on any of my input channels, as I know that given a good sounding room they're all doing the right thing. I do a lot of adjustments using a combination of the System EQ on the Meyer Sound Galileo 616 processor we are using, my master EQ, master fader and the VCAs."

Keeping monitor world in order was the calm, quietly spoken Canadian Dave Retson, who has been with the band since 2004. His other clients include KD Lang and work at FOH but his preferred medium is monitors. He also uses an Avid Venue D-Show Profile to create his mixes using about 50 channels. The desk he is very familiar with and is very happy to use it. "You can get it any where in the world. So that's a good start!" he said. "I like the onboard dynamics and it has an excellent file management system. The reverbs and delays on board I also like"

PRODUCTION PROFILE: Stereophonics

Below: Andy Grey, Production Manager; Brent Clark, Lighting Designer; Dave Roden, FOH Engineer; Dave Retson, Monitor Engineer; Richard Huggins and Ian Tomblin of Eat to the Beat; A BPM-SFX Stadium Shot streamer, one of the three devices used at FOH.



For outboard he uses just one Roland SPX990 that he uses for one vocal effect. A distortion setting that singer Kelly Jones is particularly keen on for one song. The monitor set-up consisted of eight wedge mixes and four stereo IEM mixes including two 'technical' ones for the guitar and keyboard techs, one for the drummer and the fourth for the keyboard player as well as a side fill mix. Kelly Jones uses in-ear monitors made by Ultimate Ears, a US manufacture that Retson recommended to him. They have small holes in them allowing Jones to use both In ears and wedges for his fold back. The band use Martin Audio LE700 wedges

of which Jones particularly likes the tone and smoothness, all powered by FFA 6004 amplifier and Crown 1200 amplifiers with XTA 226 crossovers, a standard Capital Sound monitor set up. Retson runs two channels of Midas XL42 pre-amp to add substance to the vocals if needed.

CATERING

Having worked alongside Stereophonics since 1998, Eat to the Beat (ETTB), part of Global Infusion Group, knew that their 2013 arena tour was not one to be missed. Kim Joyce, Managing Director at ETTB commented: "We have built a

close relationship with the band, managers and crew over the years and everyone has always been a pleasure to work with."

ETTBs experienced crew knows all about the challenges faced whilst catering on tour. There can be very early mornings and very late nights, but its teams work hard to provide great food and service whilst aiming to make sure every expectation is met. On the tour ETTB cooks breakfast, lunch and dinner for a crew of 65 people, and also prepares dressing rooms and stock up the buses with post show refreshments.

Joyce explained on how logistics is

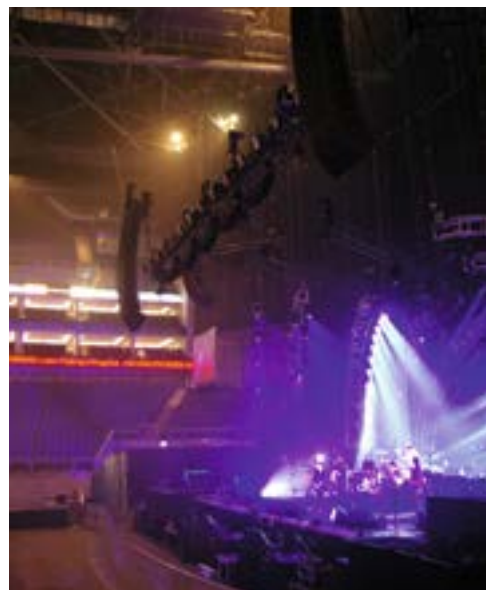
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Below: KB Events, one of six of the company's fleet of Scania Megacube Artics used for the tour; The Martin Audio rig consisted of 16 Martin Audio MLA per side and two Martin Audio MLA-D downfills per side, the side-flown system comprised of 13 MLA and one MLA-D downfill per side.



approached: "When preparing for a tour, the key at ETTB is forward planning. Luckily, our crews have access to an array of our own flight cased kitchen equipment which they pack as compact as possible in the days leading up to the tour. We endeavor to provide Stereophonics with healthy home cooked food, as with all our jobs. Therefore, before heading off from one city to another, we ensure that our crew know exactly where they'll be catering and the closest resources for fresh, local ingredients should they need to do a last minute shop."

Richard Huggins and Ian Tomblin led tour four skilled caterers. They have got to know the band and their crew's tastes well and are more than happy to cater to requests. On this tour they provided nourishing fish and chicken dishes served with brown rice for the band themselves. They also provide hearty Sunday roasts and steak and ale pie dinners for the crew to keep them going. Deserts are a favourite on this tour; in particular, banoffee pies and lemon meringue pies.

SAFETY FIRST

Showsec provided the crowd management and event security at several venues across the band's tour. This included Cardiff's Motorpoint Arena, where the Welsh rock heroes made a triumphant homecoming to South Wales with three sold out shows.

Showsec's Area Manager and venue Head of Security Martin Lewis led a team of 60 security professionals. He said: "The band clearly enjoyed being back in Cardiff with the crowd responding rapturously to the performances. Following plans made with the venue, promoter and band's management we supported their collective security requirements. We knew that local interest would be huge, so to ensure everybody had a good time in a safe environment we implemented proactive searching procedures at entry lanes, which minimised risk of prohibited items brought

into the venue. This was a key element in maintaining our duty of care to the audience."

TRANSPORT

KB Events provided trucks for the tour comprising of six of the company's fleet of Scania Megacube Artics. Stuart McPherson Managing Director of KB Events commented: "Our relationship with Stereophonics is long and established. We started working for the band in the late '90s with a one truck tour and over the years we have seen the band build up to arena and stadium shows. We not only truck production for the UK and European tours but also use a 24-tonne and sometimes a 45ft Megacube for their festival shows as well." He continued: "Six drivers are on the tour for KB Events, with one as lead driver. Because of driver hours and working time directive regulations, we have had to be clever in how we ensure drivers get their legal rest breaks and have therefore been drafting in 'show experienced' local drivers at points to facilitate load-ins and load-outs to allow the core team to get the breaks they require."

Phoenix supplied three double-deck crew sleeper buses and one single-deck band bus for the tour. "This is certainly the biggest tour we have done with the Stereophonics bus-wise, in a relationship that goes back many years," said Paul Hattin, Managing Director at Phoenix.

The crew buses were driven by John Mulholland, Jamie Gerard and Richard Deane and the band bus by Mike Fields. "On a day-to-day basis, drivers liaise with the Andy Grey for journey / arrival times, parking at gigs and so on. Before the tour goes out, we schedule in the relevant legal weekly breaks."

Rigging was supplied by (TPI Award 2014 nominee) Blackpool-based Knight Rigging Services, owned by Sven Knight.

LONG MAY IT CONTINUE

At The O2 Stereophonics delivered an

impeccable set of songs chosen from across their career to date. Old favourites such as *Local Boy in the Photograph*, *Just Looking*, *Have a Nice Day* and Mike d'Abo's *Handbags and Gladrags* all got a good airing along with tracks from *Graffiti on the Train*, which benefit from a cinematic sound with arrangements by David Arnold, faithfully recreated for the tour and at FOH by Roden.

The high point came at the end when the band launched into the pulsating, triumphant excitement of *Dakota* complete with end of song flames at the side of the stage and indoor fireworks covering the whole arena and streamers let off along front of the stage and FOH mix position.

Throughout Roden's mix delivered the power and subtlety required with exceptional vocal clarity to all areas of the arena combined with a driving bass power, mid range detail and all the directivity, and accuracy that has helped make the MLA such a phenomenal success in the last two years. In the lighting department Clark's mix and visual design enhanced atmospheres, with impeccable cue timing, with a fine heavy colour saturated look with lots of light coming from unusual angles and point sources. The lighting and video worked harmoniously together, in particular when fixture lighting and water images were fused together, with the use of the stage screens adding an extra visual power. Bring on the next tour.

TPI

Photos: Simon Duff
www.stereophonics.com
www.bpm-sfx.com
www.capital-sound.co.uk
www.eattothebeat.com
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