

Martin Audio leads the Way in on-site University Training



One development starting to impact our industry in a post-COVID world is the growing commitment to training at grass roots level. Typically ahead of the curve in that regard are Martin Audio, whose complete systems, software and control have been touring selective universities this spring. The idea was the brainchild of Martin Audio Product Support Engineer, Paul Connaughton, who proposed the move shortly after joining the company 18 months ago.

“Everyone agreed it was a good idea, especially after the pandemic where we saw a huge drop in numbers with regard to skilled workers, crew and suppliers,” he said. “It is extremely important that we not only support future users but also the courses and educators on the ground to help supplement the training and education that is provided within the wider industry.”

This will ensure educators, course providers and employers have access to all new avenues available for effective staff recruitment, and that graduates enter the industry with a wide knowledge base of practical product implementation. His clear objective in designing the course was to make training resources more accessible.

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Monday, 12 June 2023 11:58

“We will then offer application-specific learning to run alongside these courses, as it is important, they understand how Martin Audio systems work, and are able to deploy and use these correctly when working within the industry.” The main product focus for Connaughton has been Wavefront Precision. “Where possible, we are working with rental partners, not only to give training but also to create those networking connections to local companies and employers; this will only benefit all parties.”

The take-up from universities has been hugely impressive. The first phase has seen the Support Engineer visit 12 establishments, culminating in The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Belmont University in Nashville. “They are travelling from the US to spend a day at HQ to complete training and a site visit as part of their pro audio manufacturer training.”

Others have included ACM Guildford; dBs Music Bristol; Leeds Beckett University; ACM Birmingham; BOA Birmingham; University Of South Wales; Nottingham Trent Confetti; Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts; dBs Plymouth (where Paul was originally a lecturer); Spirit Studios Manchester; Gloucester University and Southampton Solent University. A further 15 universities are already looking to schedule dates for the next academic year.

“All universities jumped at the chance to work together as experiences like this are just so hard to find in education,” he continues. “The time that learners are able to get hands on with equipment and engage in discussions with regard to software, electronics, equipment etc are invaluable. These really help to make this more than just a day of manufacturer training.”

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The course itself also covers the practical use of DISPLAY software, focusing on optimisation and coherent design. This is followed by rigging and hardware, including cabling, workflow, electronics, power supply “and pretty much everything that comes with knowing how to set up and deploy a Martin Audio loudspeaker system.” The journey then shifts into control territory where amplifiers are connected to a computer network for control via the proprietary VU-NET control software. This is followed by time alignment to ensure the system is phase coherent, and finally a listening session combined with the use of DISPLAY to show the effect of Audience Coverage vs Hard Avoid function.

Martin Audio is now in the process of developing an accreditation system to work alongside partners to develop a training module that can be delivered by both them and the local rental supplier or integrator. Completion of the one-day university training will prepare students for the full two-day official training at Martin Audio, where they will gain further experience.

In summary, Paul Connaughton says he is delighted with the way in which this initiative has initially been received, born out by the many positive testimonials he has received. “The visits to date have been a great success, and we are already planning new sessions beginning October 2023 onwards. It is something we are looking to continue year on year, and we have also been asked by some educational providers to become a core part of their curriculum.”

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