Adlib

Festivals

BBC Summer Social

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Dave Eldridge, Senior Account Manager, Adlib

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The Requirement

Having worked on several high-profile BBC events including Radio 1 Big Weekend, BBC Biggest Weekend, BBC6 Music, and Radio 2 All Star Party, Adlib already had a good relationship with the BBC Events team. This made them a natural choice for full service technical production across the multi stage site that hosted the CBBC Summer Social and BBC Radio 1 Presents The Lewis Capaldi Symphony.

The first show, the CBBC Summer Social, ran over two days and offered an immersive experience for children and families on the site of Croxteth Hall in Liverpool. This included several small stages featuring exhibition style spaces like the ''Dr Who Experience'', and immersive tents with presenters telling bedtime stories. The main stage was filmed for broadcast by BBC partner, Televideo, and featured BBC presenters and live music.

The second show was BBC Radio 1 Presents The Lewis Capaldi Symphony. This was also a broadcast show and utilised the main stage on the same site. Production appointed Ross Chapple to work with Lewis Capaldi and the BBC Broadcast team to put a video and lighting design together for the main stage. Adlib worked closely with Ross to ensure that his design fitted and, where possible, adapted it to cover the requirements of the CBBC shows.

The Solution

Planning

Adlib's approach in the planning phase, and commitment to the overall vision of the two events, was key.

Adlib's Dave Eldridge said: "The ability for us to look after all elements of production under one roof was really helpful. The site visits and the way we advanced the project with our crew and the team that delivered the event on site was key to the project's success. The level of detail in the prep and planning of the video control systems, the lighting design to cover the CBBC show and then change to work for the Capaldi show, and the advance prep and planning for the orchestral package from the audio team was critical."

Speaking to some of the specific challenges presented by the event Dave Eldridge adds, "There were some limitations on access, particularly for the small stages where we had to cross load the systems into smaller vehicles to get to the breakout areas. The biggest challenge was creating a system for the CBBC days that could easily be rescaled and moved to achieve the design for Capaldi. This involved a video and lighting turn around followed by the setup of a full orchestral audio package."

With careful planning, Adlib overcame the challenges by working closely with the BBC production team and Ross. With audio, lighting, and video all from their own stock and

managed by their own team it was easy to collaborate between disciplines and make sure everything worked together seamlessly.
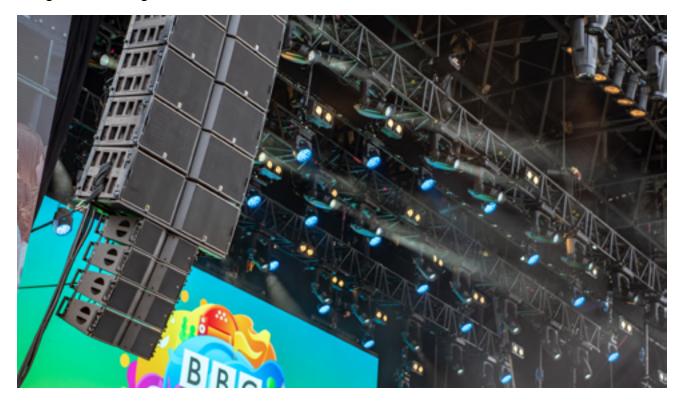
Audio

Adlib supplied an L-Acoustics K1 FOH system for the main stage with KARA downfills, and KS28 subs on the ground. A combination of Arcs II and KARA speakers covered fills. System processing was via a standard Adlib control rack containing Lake LM units for front end EQ and signal distribution, with L-Acoustics network manager taking care of system optimisation and time alignment.

The audio control package needed to be flexible to cater for a wide range of artists (anyone from Pixie Lott and John Newman to Mr Tumble and The Next Step). An A/B line system was deployed to minimise changeover time. This allowed one artist to be performing, whilst another was setting up and line checking backstage.

Two Digico SD12 consoles with SD Racks were provided at FOH and monitors. The Monitor system comprised L-Acoustics sidefills (2 x KS28 and 2 x Arcs II per side), Adlib MP5 wedges, and Adlib MP4 subs.

A large festival microphone package allowed for multiple acts to be set up simultaneously backstage.

From an RF point of view, 12 channels of Shure UHF-R (8 x B58a handhelds and 4 x beltpacks with DPA 4066 headsets) and 12 channels of Sennheiser 2000 series IEM were provided. This covered the needs of all artists, and allowed capacity to be flexible when things were changed or added into the show.

For the Lewis Capaldi show day, this was the first time his full band had played alongside an orchestra. Adlib made use of the bulk of the existing control package from Summer Social, but changed one of the mixing consoles at each end to Allen & Heath to meet the Lewis Capaldi spec. This meant that the act's touring engineers could focus on mixing duties for Capaldi, leaving Adlib's Chris Snow to take care of mixing the large orchestra from FOH. Chris Snow also provided mixed stems for Capaldi's monitor engineer to use on stage.

A mirror of this setup was provided for a rehearsal at BBC Media City in the run up to the event to allow everyone to get a head start on dialling things in, as well as allowing the artist to work through the arrangements for the first time with the BBC.

In addition to the main stage, Adlib provided a number of smaller audio systems at other locations on site, complete with crew to operate them.

Video

Adlib worked closely with the broadcast team; the camera specification and FOH position were all led by broadcast requirements. This meant ensuring that the creative control of video was split effectively between live and broadcast. For the Capaldi show that required a separate mix of broadcast cameras to the central screens, controlled separately to the live camera feeds to the IMAG screens.

All screens were Unilumin UPADIIIH05 with Novastar processing and Barco E2 / EC30 for screen management. The camera system comprised 4 x Sony HD camera channels (2 at FOH with Box Lenses) and Ross Carbonite PPU. Playback was handled by Resolume and QLab media servers.

The CBBC show had a single up stage screen as most of the content was in a standard 16:9 – either branding or videos. For Capaldi this screen was split into three strips and moved upstage to create space for the orchestra.
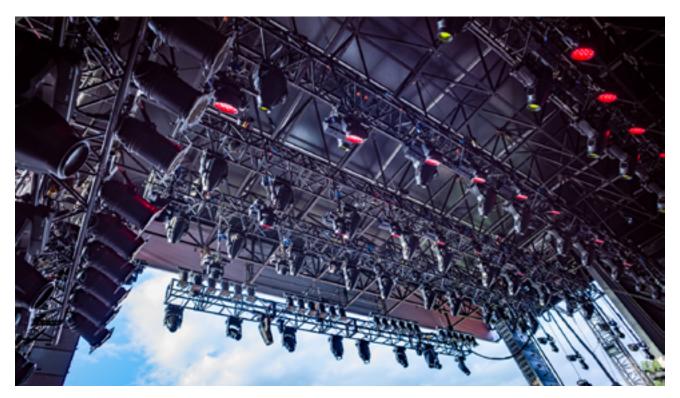
For IMAG Adlib worked with a combination of their own feeds, and feeds from broadcast.

For Capaldi, the system was a little more complex. Dave Eldridge explains, "When we split the upstage screen into three strips to work to the design brief for Capaldi, we received three mixed cuts and then routed them via mini ME's. This allowed us to facilitate the' 'black and white'' look for use by broadcast on the upstage screens to cover the creative elements and also allowed broadcast to cover this element whilst we continued to handle the IMAG mix. Having a system that we could use like this massively helped to facilitate creative control across both us and broadcast simultaneously.'

Lighting

Lighting was two designs: one adapted for CBBC that included a tab track to create a changeover space that could be opened and closed, the second that opened up into Ross Chapple's complete design for Capaldi.

The main bulk of the rig was Martin MAC Viper Spots with Martin MAC Auras and Cuepix WW2 blinders on doughty modular drop bars.

For CBBC, the design was adapted with the Auras and 2 light blinders working great as eye candy during the daytime.

For the Capaldi show side trusses were added along with an additional upstage truss and a floor package of GLP X4 bars, Adlib JW1s, and Vipers in order to complete Ross's design. This framed the orchestra and stage perfectly with the Cuepix blinders offering loads of really great camera friendly effects.

Consoles were an MA2 fullsize with MA2 tracking back up.

Followspots where ROBE Robo spots to keep things as neat as possible, especially as there wasn't a FOH position for spots.

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