

Martin Audio's Maureen 'Mo' Hayes Signs Off



One of the pro-audio industry's most enduring and endearing characters signs off her last press release and says farewell to the workforce at the end of this month. After 26 years at Martin Audio - mostly spent in managing marketing and PR - Maureen 'Mo' Hayes is taking retirement. She has been the longest serving member of the Martin Audio staff by a clear stretch.

"Giving up something that's been part of your life for such a long time is certainly going to feel strange, and I can't imagine not having it in my life," she concedes. "But while I will miss the camaraderie, I feel comfortable that I am leaving the company in good hands, with a blend of experienced people and new blood coming in to keep things fresh.

"Dom [Harter] has brought some much-needed stability to the company, as has the Focusrite Group. Martin Audio today is very different from the company I joined in 1997. "Over the years I've been privileged to work with some really great

colleagues, both at Martin Audio and the industry in general.” But for all that Mo will miss her colleagues in High Wycombe there is a global industry of partners and friends who will equally miss her warm smile, her friendly Scottish dulcet tones and deluxe coffee dispensation to wake them up at international trade fairs. By the time Mo joined Martin Audio she was already something of an industry veteran, having spent the previous 12 years working first for Otari, and then Sterling Audio and Focusrite. “In that respect, with the company now owned by Focusrite I’ve virtually come full circle (if you exclude Otari),” she says.

Her first job at Otari came after getting her degree in Social Sciences, a temporary position quickly turning into a permanent one in sales administration. Then when they closed their UK office and moved to Germany one of their dealers, Andrew Sterling (of Sterling Audio) offered her a job. “I left Otari on the Friday and started there on the Monday. “

But the daily commute to Kilburn proved too much and after 18 months she suggested to Sterling that it was no longer sustainable. He, in turn, was friends with Focusrite founder Phil Dudderidge, and this became her next port of call, initially working as Dudderidge’s secretary before moving into sales administration. With the company’s expansion from Bourne End into High Wycombe’s Cressex Industrial Estate, where they became Martin Audio’s neighbour, her job role changed, and with Phil Dudderidge’s consent, she applied for a sales admin position, for which she was familiar, at nearby Martin Audio, then under the stewardship of MD, David Bissett-Powell

“I worked to develop the sales administration department at Martin Audio, which was very primitive back then, but after getting it to the stage where there was nowhere further for me to progress, I was all set to leave.” That’s when the company’s charismatic Sales & Marketing Director, Rob Lingfield, asked if she would be interested moving over to his department, with the departure of the previous marketing manager. “So it was Rob’s intervention that stopped me from leaving,” she exclaims, adding a special tribute to the “much loved and much missed” Rob.

Mo grasped the new marketing opportunity with both hands, first obtaining her certificate in marketing and later her diploma. As the company moved in and out of corporate ownership, at the behest of venture capital money, she fondly reflects on several landmark events. The first was when her own band JUMP, in which she has played keys for 33 years, was invited to Birmingham’s NEC, specifically to launch Martin Audio’s W8L line array in 2002.

And when the company was ready to launch its ground-breaking MLA in 2010, she was part of a press junket to Antwerp, where the company and its Belgian dealers, Ampco Belgium, took over the main town square and delivered a masterclass in multicellular control. She remembers how visitors stood in disbelief as the stage volume and atmosphere were ‘contained’ within the square itself while tapering it to near silence immediately outside the sound field - thus avoiding encroachment on the surrounding houses and businesses. It marked the beginning of a slew of the

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world's A-list bands and promoters systematically adopting the groundbreaking technology.

Well known to Mo's colleagues is the fact that her career at Martin Audio has run parallel with her career in the aforementioned cult British rock band JUMP. In fact her arrival at Martin Audio coincided with the band's support tour of former Marillion frontman Fish's 'Sunsets on Empire' UK tour. This is one of many highlights that has seen her work with any number of rock legends from Marillion to Rick Wakeman, Steeleye Span to Hawkwind, and The Searchers to Kajagoogoo.

Retirement, she hopes, will allow more space for the development of those keyboard motifs that weave in and out of the band's twin guitar attack! And that may not be an end to her talents. "While I want to spend more times with my family, I may also take up another hobby," she suggests. "There may be a Picasso in me ... you just never know!" Marketing Director, James King, was full of praise and admiration: "Having worked with Mo for ten years, I can honestly say she is the loveliest person I have ever worked with, and she has contributed so much to the marketing team and to Martin Audio. We are all going to miss her dearly."

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