

Martin Audio CDD6-WR used for Immersive Christmas Trail



The Christmas season traditionally brings with it magical and immersive eco-trails, with lighting and imaginative soundtracks replacing the more natural effects. Principal among these is Eden Project's Music & Lights after dark experience, which runs during the month of December. Based nearby in Cornwall, technology specialists (and Martin Audio partners) TruCru were brought in to provide a seamless audio experience. According to Project Manager, Toby Bodman, after much deliberation this was achieved by deploying Martin Audio's weatherised CDD6-WR in a flown configuration to create seamless transitions and ensure maximum intelligibility of both the narrative and a soundtrack that varied from orchestral to ambient music.

This year, the sales and rental company turned its attention to the Rainforest Biome after having also helped stage events previously in different areas across the site. They have also undertaken a series of audio-visual installations at Eden Project - often drawing on Martin Audio's CDD (coaxial differential dispersion) technology - while at the same time systematically being engaged to spice up the client's live events. To keep the trail experience fresh, this year the emphasis moved more from the Med Biome to the Rainforest, and with it came a brief to avoid some of the

hotspotting apparent in previous years. "Rather than a rapid drop off in sound from zone to zone, they wanted a nice even coverage across the whole Biome, so we started to approach things quite differently.

"We weighed up options at the design stage, including [Martin Audio] ADORN and Blackline, and quickly found that for a number of reasons the CDD range would be best with its IP rating and dispersion pattern. And because we knew Eden Project actually owned CDD6-WR's, it would also save them on the hire costs." Thus they were able to deploy multiples of CDD6-WR held in general resource (while others are permanently installed elsewhere across the complex). TruCru provided all the rigging infrastructure, system design and installation, as well as six of the Martin Audio ADORN A40 and eight ADORN A55 from their own rental stock. Toby Bodman stressed the importance of IP-rated speakers and weatherproof covers in view of the high humidity, the use of sprinklers and the fact that the Rainforest Biome is exactly as it says on the tin.

Installation itself required a creative approach. "Previously we'd not considered flying [a sound system] in the Rainforest Biome because of its size but last year in the Med we hung a small line array which was quite effective. One of the site team asked if we could repeat that with a couple of hangs, but our issue was practicalities in the Rainforest, and we struggled to see how that would be achievable with one big line array in the roof." Instead they suspended the CDD6-WRs strategically, in several small clusters. "This enabled us to create a 360° sound source from the ceiling, and by being able to fly it quite high from the hexagonal frame - 50ft at its high point - with the speakers angled down, we could overcome any hotspots." The other advantage of flying, he says, "is because on the floor the tropical ants like to infest electrical equipment!"

A further advantage was that TruCru were able to model the installation in Martin Audio's proprietary DISPLAY 3 3D software "and it came out exactly as we had modelled it." The entire cohesive trail lasts around two hours, while the Rainforest Biome experience is timed at 40 minutes (with a soundtrack provided by lighting company GLX Productions to match). GLX provided the playback rig and all track source in a continuous mix, that is appropriate to the environment.

In summary, Toby Bodman says the versatility of the CDD6-WR is what will make the visitor experience so special. "I've been blown away by how well it's been performing, particularly since a lot of sections are speech heavy. "The brief was to achieve an SPL level which on the one hand would create an immersive environment but at the same time allow people to converse comfortably. CDD is handling this extremely well without having to drive the system hard. In fact we couldn't be happier, and we know the client is delighted with the quality of audio."

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