

COVER STORY: HORNBILL FESTIVAL

The Hornbill Music Festival, often referred to as the “Festival of Festivals” featured numerous artists and bands performing across multiple stages. The 25th edition of this larger-than-life festival became a vibrant celebration of culture this year, thanks to JBL Professional. With its seamless sound engineering, JBL created an electrifying atmosphere, ensuring both artists and audiences enjoyed an unforgettable journey.



JBL Professional Brings the 25th Hornbill Festival to Life

JBL VTX Systems Pose as the Backbone of Exceptional Audio

With over 40 bands performing across multiple stages, the festival required an audio setup that could meet the diverse needs of both traditional and contemporary performances while ensuring seamless sound quality throughout the event. JBL's carefully selected range of equipment played a pivotal role in delivering a superior auditory experience for the festival's enthusiastic audience.

JBL Professional deployed an impressive array of systems for the event, including the **VTX A12**, **A6**, **G28 subwoofers**, and **B15 systems**. Each of

these models was chosen for its specific strengths, which were perfectly aligned with the festival's unique environment and the technical demands of such a large-scale event.

The VTX A12, JBL's flagship line array system, was the primary choice for the festival's main stage. Its high output capacity and extensive coverage were essential for addressing the large crowds spread across open and semi-open venues. The A12's versatility made it the perfect fit for the wide range of performances at the festival, seamlessly adapting to both traditional and modern music, ensuring that every corner of the venue resonated with clarity and power. With thousands of attendees and a variety of musical styles, the A12 provided the sound quality needed to deliver a



The flagship VTX A12, JBL's choice for the main stage

flawless experience.

For smaller stages and more intimate settings, JBL selected the VTX A6 system. Known for its compact design and efficiency, the A6 was ideal for spaces that required precise sound coverage without sacrificing clarity. This system integrated smoothly with the larger A12 setup, ensuring a consistent audio experience throughout the festival grounds, even in tighter spaces. The A6's role as a front-fill speaker also enhanced clarity in critical listening zones close to the stage, ensuring no detail was lost in the performance.

Low-end frequencies are crucial for creating a rich and immersive audio experience, particularly for modern musical genres. The **JBL G28 subwoofers** were chosen to deliver deep, powerful bass, which added depth to the performances while complementing the traditional rhythms. The G28 subwoofers' high output ensured that the bass resonated effectively throughout the large outdoor spaces, providing a dynamic and balanced sound profile that elevated the overall audio experience.

The festival's main stage hosted performances from the diverse array of bands, making it essential to have a sound system that could provide exceptional clarity and coverage. The VTX A12 was deployed as the main PA system, ensuring that the audio was powerful and consistent throughout the large audience area. To complement the VTX A12, the G28 subwoofers delivered



JBL G28 subwoofers chosen for their deep powerful bass



Martin MAC ONE wash beam illuminates artists at Hornbill

the deep bass required for high-energy performances, adding depth and impact to the sound. Additionally, VTX A6 speakers were strategically placed as centre fills, ensuring balanced sound and enhanced clarity in the critical listening zones near the stage. This integration of systems helped minimize potential technical challenges, as JBL's approach ensures seamless compatibility across all components, delivering uniform sound performance throughout the festival grounds.

Scalability, rugged design, and superior performance made JBL's systems the perfect choice for a dynamic event like the Hornbill Festival, offering balanced, high-fidelity sound throughout the expansive venue.

Martin Lighting Complements JBL's Sound Reinforcement With Unparalleled Superiority

Martin Lighting's contribution played a key role in elevating the festival's visual appeal, ensuring that the lighting perfectly complemented JBL's world-class sound systems to create a captivating experience for both artists and the audience.

The selection of Martin Lighting products was integral to achieving this dynamic fusion. One of the standout fixtures was the **Martin MAC ONE light**, a new wash beam light that served both as face lights and effect lights. These versatile lights were deployed across the festival's stages to illuminate the performers and enhance the visual atmosphere. Featuring an RGBL LED engine, the MAC ONE not only provided powerful lighting effects but also boosted the Colour Rendering Index (CRI), ensuring that colours appeared natural and true-to-life. This was crucial for showcasing the vibrant costumes and intricate props that accompanied the performances, especially when highlighting the visual richness of traditional acts and modern performances alike.

The lighting was designed to synchronise seamlessly with the music, adapting to the tempo and mood of each performance. Martin's lighting systems were programmed to shift between styles in real-time, allowing the visual elements of the festival to mirror the emotional intensity of the music. For traditional performances, the lighting created a warm and inviting atmosphere, using soft hues to complement the cultural richness of the acts. In contrast, for more high-energy, contemporary performances, Martin's lighting team deployed bold, dynamic effects that energized the crowd and enhanced the impact of each performance. This ability to change the lighting's tone based on the performance's genre or mood created a fluid, immersive environment where the lighting and music became an inseparable part of the experience.

Another key lighting fixtures that enhanced the visual spectacle was the **Martin Mac Aura PXL**. Known for its innovative pixel-controlled LED effects and versatile wash lighting capabilities, the Mac Aura PXL allowed artists to



Martin Mac Aura PXLs in action at the main stage

create intricate, pixel-based visual effects that complemented the audio in a synchronized dance of light and sound. As the lights moved in sync with the music, the stage transformed into a dynamic visual canvas that captured the energy and spirit of the festival.

The **Mac Ultra Performance**, another integral fixture, played a critical role in ensuring the lighting was visible and impactful from all areas of the venue. With its powerful output and sharply defined beams, the Mac Ultra Performance made its presence felt across large crowds, ensuring that every attendee, regardless of where they were seated or standing, could enjoy the full visual experience. The fixture's advanced features, including precise focus control, vibrant colour mixing, and a broad array of gobo and effects options, allowed the lighting team to craft creative, diverse lighting designs that adapted to the variety of performances featured at the festival. This versatility made it a perfect tool for an event as large and multifaceted as the Hornbill Festival, where different genres and performance styles required different lighting approaches.

Together, these Martin Lighting fixtures created a visual environment that not only illuminated the performers but also enhanced the overall festival experience. Beyond the lighting fixtures themselves, Martin Lighting's expertise in lighting design played a significant role in ensuring that the festival's visual identity was strong, dynamic, and consistent.

The lighting design not only illuminated the performers but also created a stunning visual narrative that unfolded throughout the festival. Whether it was

the subtle transitions of colour during a traditional performance or the dramatic lighting effects that accompanied high-energy acts, Martin Lighting ensured that every performance was visually dynamic and engaging.

Planning to Execution with a Dedicated Technical Team

The success of the 25th Hornbill Music Festival in Nagaland was not only thanks to the cutting-edge sound and lighting technology provided by JBL and Martin Lighting but also the incredible efforts of the technical team behind the scenes. Over the course of the festival's 10-day celebration, this team played an indispensable role in ensuring that both sound and lighting operations ran seamlessly, allowing for a smooth, uninterrupted experience for both artists and audiences.

Pre-event preparation was critical, as the team was responsible for overseeing the system design and equipment setup. This process involved rigorous testing of the equipment, ensuring that everything would function optimally once the festival was underway. System configuration, including the fine-tuning of various components, was meticulously planned so that every technical need was addressed in advance. This careful preparation allowed the team to anticipate and mitigate any potential issues before they could arise during the festival.

Once the festival was live, the technical team remained on-site, continuously monitoring the systems to ensure flawless performance. They conducted regular checks and were always on standby, ready to make real-time adjustments if necessary. This proactive approach ensured that the festival ran smoothly, allowing the artists to focus on their performances while the team handled any technical challenges. Whether it was adjusting audio levels or modifying lighting effects, the team's expertise and swift response ensured that the technical aspects of the festival never disrupted the experience for the attendees.

However, setting up the festival was no easy task, and the technical team faced several challenges during the preparation phase. The festival took place at Kisama Village, which, at the time, was still an active construction zone. The ongoing civil work presented several obstacles, such as limited space and time to rig the equipment and manage the load. These constraints required meticulous planning and creative problem-solving to ensure that everything could be set up effectively.

To overcome these challenges, the team relied on a combination of advanced tools and their own expertise. Venue Synthesis, a tool used for designing and optimizing the setup, played a critical role in ensuring that every detail of the system was accounted for, despite the space and time limitations. This allowed the technical team to plan the optimal placement of sound and lighting equipment, maximizing coverage and performance. With this tool in hand, the team was able to turn what could have been a chaotic setup into a well-executed success.

From overcoming logistical challenges to ensuring every detail of the sound and lighting setup was perfect. The team's efforts behind the scenes played a central role in delivering a festival that showcased the incredible synergy of culture, technology, and live performance. Their ability to adapt, plan, and execute under pressure ensured that both the artists and the audience could enjoy a seamless, uninterrupted festival experience.

Feedback from Artists and Audiences

Feedback from both artists and sound engineers regarding JBL and Martin's previous deployments at similar events, including the Hornbill Festival, has been



Martin Mac Ultra Performance shines bright with its sharply defined beams

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overwhelmingly positive. The JBL VTX A12 system, in particular, has received considerable acclaim for its performance, particularly in challenging outdoor environments. Sound engineers have praised the VTX A12 for its advanced waveguide technology and linear array design, which ensures uniform sound coverage across large venues. This design eliminates distortion and provides consistent audio quality for every audience member, even in expansive outdoor settings.

Artists, too, have highlighted the flexibility of the VTX A12, noting its ability to handle a wide range of music genres with ease. From delicate acoustic performances to high-energy electronic music, the system maintains its fidelity and dynamic range throughout, ensuring that every note is crisp and powerful. The VTX A12's robust performance under pressure, coupled with its ease of setup, makes it a preferred choice for large-scale events such as the Hornbill Festival. The ability to seamlessly cover a variety of musical styles with the same system makes the VTX A12 a standout product in JBL's lineup.

In addition to JBL's audio systems, Martin Lighting's solutions have also been praised for their dynamic effects and seamless integration with the audio setup. Martin's lighting technologies are designed to synchronise effortlessly with JBL's sound systems, creating a truly immersive experience for the audience.

JBL's involvement in large-scale events like the Hornbill Festival plays a key role in the company's strategy to strengthen its brand positioning and expand its reach within the Indian market. One of the primary benefits of sponsoring such high-profile events is increased visibility. The Hornbill Festival provides JBL with a unique platform to showcase its products to a broad and diverse audience, both local and international. This exposure boosts the company's recognition and ensures that its products are seen by a wide range of potential customers.

Moreover, by aligning itself with a cultural event like the Hornbill Festival, JBL strengthens its connection to modern lifestyles and youth culture, two key pillars of its brand identity. The festival, with its mix of traditional and contemporary music, perfectly complements JBL's image as a brand that is not just about sound, but also about vibrant, contemporary living. This partnership helps position JBL as a key player in the Indian entertainment scene, particularly in music and audio technology.

Live events such as the Hornbill Festival also allow for direct interaction with the brand's products, which is a powerful tool for building brand loyalty. Attendees at these events experience JBL's products first-hand, whether it's enjoying the immersive sound of JBL's VTX A12 system or using portable JBL

speakers in the festival's more intimate settings. This hands-on engagement creates a genuine emotional connection with the brand, fostering loyalty among both new and existing customers.

Strengthening JBL's Market Position in India with Brand Alignment

JBL's participation in music events also reinforces its identity as a brand deeply rooted in the world of music. The Hornbill Festival, with its live performances from a variety of bands, is the perfect venue to connect with music lovers, performers, and audio enthusiasts. JBL's active presence in such events ensures that the brand is seen as an integral part of the music scene, helping it to build a strong connection with music enthusiasts across India.

Additionally, JBL's involvement in regional festivals such as the Hornbill Festival showcases its commitment to understanding and embracing local cultures. By engaging with cultural events that resonate with local communities, JBL demonstrates that it is not just another global brand, but one that is attuned to the values and preferences of the Indian market. This localized approach helps build trust and loyalty among Indian consumers, who appreciate brands that take the time to understand their unique needs.

Partnerships with events like the Hornbill Festival are not just about short-term visibility. They offer long-term opportunities for growth and expansion. By cementing its presence at such iconic festivals, JBL is positioning itself as a leader in the Indian live events and music entertainment space. This, in turn, opens the door to further collaborations with niche events and new regions across India, paving the way for future opportunities and deeper engagement with the Indian market.

India represents a key market for JBL Professional. By connecting with audiences, aligning with local culture, and offering hands-on experiences with its products, JBL builds lasting relationships with its customers. Its continued engagement with the Indian music and entertainment scene not only positions it as a leader in the industry but also fosters growth and brand loyalty that will contribute to its long-term success in the market.

JBL Professional's contributions to the 25th Hornbill Music Festival exemplify the synergy between cutting-edge technology and cultural celebration. From the unparalleled sound quality of the VTX systems to the dazzling visuals provided by Martin lighting, JBL and its partners brought Nagaland's rich heritage to life. Through partnerships like the Hornbill Festival, JBL aims to demonstrate their commitment to providing world-class audio solutions that elevate live events.