

JBL BY HARMAN POWERS THE VH1 SUPERSONIC EVENT IN INDIA

The audio brand delivered exceptional acoustic solutions for three out of five stages for the VH1 event in Pune & Bangalore.

Held from 24th February, 2023 to 26th February, 2023 in Pune and on the 26th February in Bangalore, the **VH1 Supersonic** is a melting pot where the finest international and homegrown talent come together to deliver the best in music genres, cultures, culinary experiences, and more. With exceptional music sensations such as Prateek Kuhad, Nucleya, Pentagonam, Soulmate, and several others, coupled with foot-tapping international acts such as Jackal, Ablin Myers, and more, the event sets the stage for people from all walks of life to gather under a single roof and enjoy a wide range of music, food, and fashion. Since VH1 Supersonic is primarily a music festival enveloped in a host of other fun activities for the audience to indulge in, it was imperative that the Pune edition of the fest be equipped with the most avant-garde, futuristic, yet highly reliable and sturdy pro audio system. That's where **JBL by HARMAN** enters the picture.

The brand provided pro audio solutions for three out of five stages at the VH1 Supersonic in Pune, India. PALM + AV-ICN spoke to **Yogesh Nambiar**, Director, Integrated Marketing, India, HARMAN International India Pvt. Ltd. and **Sudarshan Srinivas**, Co-Founder & Technical Director, Lewminadio to find out more about the sound design of the event, the challenges faced by the installation team, and the pro audio equipment used to power the event.

The VH1 Supersonic Brief:

Speaking about how JBL was approached for the VH1 Supersonic, Yogesh Nambiar commented, "JBL sponsored this festival as an official audio partner. This was an event where we were approached from two perspectives – One being the pro audio side and the other being the popular consumer brand that JBL is. Both sides of the business had presence in the

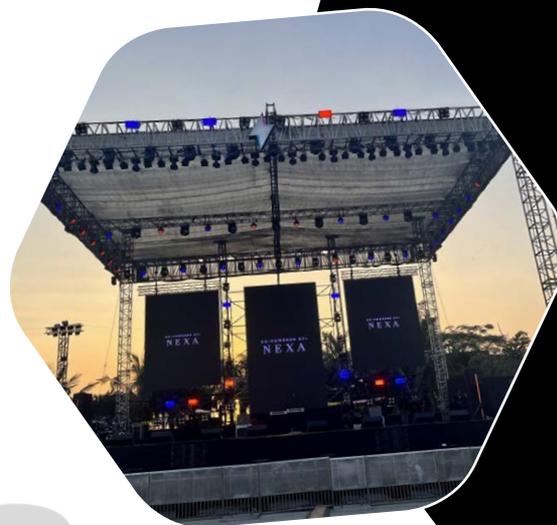
festival."

Lewminadio was tasked with the stage sound design and audio installation by HARMAN. Sharing about how Lewminadio has a long-standing professional relationship with HARMAN Audio, and how their past associations helped the team at HARMAN place their trust in Lewminadio for the stage sound design, Sudarshan Srinivasan said, "Lewminadio has worked with HARMAN for many prestigious events. HARMAN appointed us with the task of deploying and optimising systems for three stages at VH1 Supersonic. They later designated me to take on the role of Festival Engineer."

Sudarshan Srinivasan further elaborated on the brief Lewminadio received from the client for the VH1 Supersonic, "The client had the concept of multiple stages in a single venue and gave us the plan for the venue along with the stage locations and the technical riders for the bands that were going to perform at the festival. We were also provided with venue drawings and plan well in advance. Since we already had prior experience of the venue, a non-occurrence of a recce due to decision at the eleventh hour still didn't simmer the performance as we knew what to expect."

Major Challenges:

Deploying a sound system for an open-air event is easier said than done. Powering the stages at the VH1 Supersonic posed its own set of challenges. One of them was to ensure that the external air traffic noise doesn't drown the sound emanating from the JBL sound system. Sudarshan Srinivasan shared, "The open-air venue was located on a large piece of land, which was then divided into multiple stages. The close proximity of the venue to the Pune Airport also meant that the system had to be loud enough to drown out the noise from the jet engines. The main



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The NEXA Stage was equipped with 12 units of the **VTX A8 Full Range Line Array elements** on each side, while the PA was enriched with 16 units of **VT4880A subwoofers** placed in an **End-Fire configuration**.

acoustical requirement was to have consistent SPL coverage and tonal quality throughout the venue. At the same time, we had to make sure that the sound from one stage does not bleed into the other stages."

But every problem has a solution; and with a superlative quality audio system such as JBL, these challenges were not impossible to overcome. Sudarshan Srinivasan commented, "To overcome this problem, we carefully placed the speakers so that the sound does not carry forward to other nearby stages. We also made sure the system was aimed to hit the back of each venue and not any further. The subwoofers were configured in an End-Fire configuration - this was to reduce the amount of Low Frequency Spill into other areas. These sub arrays were further steered to keep the coverage consistent."





The PA for the Main Stage included 15 units of **VTX A12 Full Range Line Array elements** on each side, a flown subwoofer array consisting of six units of **VT4800A** in an End-Fire configuration, in addition to 30 units of ground-stacked **VTX G28 Subwoofers**, and 4 stacks featuring two units of **2 x VTX V20 Full Range Line Array elements** as front fills.

The JBL Sound System:

Since the JBL sound system was deployed on three stages at the VH1 Supersonic, the stage layout and design played an even more crucial role in the entire process. Sudarshan Srinivasan explained the entire stage sound design for the event, "The PA for the Main Stage consisted of **15 x VTX A12 Full Range line array elements per side**, a flown subwoofer array of **6 x VT4800A** rigged right behind the Main PA in an End-Fire configuration. The flown subwoofers made sure that the audience area had consistent coverage everywhere. This was further complimented by an additional **30 x VTX G28** subwoofers which were ground stacked. Front Fills consisted of 4 stacks with **2 x VTX V20 Full Range Line Array elements**."

He also talked about the sound design for the NEXA Stage and the BUD-X Stage, "When the bands on the main stage finished performing, everyone turned to the left to watch the performance on the NEXA Stage. The NEXA Stage was a changeover stage for the audience to witness one band play right after the other without waiting for the changeover. The NEXA stage consisted of **12 x VTX A8 Full Range Line Array elements per side**. Although these boxes are small, they packed quite a punch to make sure frequency response across both stages remained consistent. The PA was complemented by **16 x VT4880A** subwoofers in an End-Fire configuration. The End-Fire configuration was used to ensure the sound does not travel from one stage to another, and helps the artist to hear themselves better. The BUD-X Stage which was also referred to as the Techno stage consisted of **9 x VTX V25II Full Range line array elements per side**. This was reinforced with **18 x VTX G28 Subwoofers** which were ground stacked

along with **4 x VRX 932LA** as front fills."

The main stage at Bangalore was powered by **24 x JBL VTX V25II tops**, **18 x JBL VTX S28**, and **12 x JBL VT4880A**. The systems were driven by **Crown Amplifiers**.

Commenting about the efficacy of the JBL sound system that powered the VH1 Supersonic, and why the brand was just the right choice to be deployed at the event, Yogesh Nambiar shared, "Besides the fact that the JBL pro audio inventory is perhaps the only one that could cater to such a massive requirement, the dynamic range offered by JBL Pro line arrays that were deployed catered to the multitude of artists that were featured at the festival. Since the genres were diverse, our audio systems were a perfect fit because of the adaptability of the products."

Sudarshan Srinivasan affirmed the same while talking about the crowd's response to the JBL sound system, "The overall response from the crowd was very positive, since the SPL coverage throughout the venue was consistent, while audio within each stage was isolated to give a completely seamless experience."

Final Words:

Both Yogesh Nambiar and Sudarshan Srinivasan were pleased at the success and praise JBL sound system received at the VH1 Supersonic. Yogesh Nambiar concluded, "As always, it is a pleasure to hear our systems in action, being tested to the limit in terms of adaptability. We were glad to have been able to power one of the best music festivals in India."

Sudarshan Srinivasan had closing remarks along similar lines, "Every music festival brings its own set of challenges, it's the way we manage it as a team that makes the experience so rewarding. We would like to thank Harman, Soundmindz, Soundeffects – rental sound companies who provided the equipment for the three stages - and the entire crew of Supersonic to be the forces behind the success of this event."



JBL, the official audio partner for the **VH1 Supersonic** in Pune, India, set the stage for an unforgettable listening experience at the venue.