

Peavey Versarray 112

By Paul Overson

We first saw the Peavey Versarray system almost two years ago, and have been trying to work out a road test ever since. As we have done with larger pieces of gear (including other line arrays) in the past, instead of having Peavey send out a rig for us to use on a gig, we went to a gig that had the system already on it and worked the show. In this case, that meant hooking up with Dave Albro, who is doing FOH and associated duties for the VIP events surrounding the current Tim McGraw tour. Most of the stops on the tour feature "side" events including local and regional acts, plus a VIP-only acoustic show by McGraw prior to the actual arena show, which is a Clair deal.

The Gear

Each cabinet in the array weighs in at 53 lbs. Construction is 13-ply Baltic birch. Drivers are a 12" neo Black Widow with a dual-4" voice coil and two ribbons to handle the highs. The specs say the box will go down to 100 Hz and you can put as many as 18 in a single array — although the system is really meant for small to medium venues, and you are more likely to see between four and eight boxes on most gigs.

The rigging allows for full articulation from 0 to 15 degrees between each box in 2.5-degree increments, which allows for a multitude of array-shape options. And a Versarray-specific version of EASE is downloadable from Peavey, as are project presets for Versarray systems for the Peavey VSX 26 loudspeaker manager, which was used on this gig. All input connectors are four-pin Neutrik Speakons.

For the larger of the two stages, Dave used a flybar and hung six boxes per side over three Peavey 218 subs. All amps were Crest (5200 series on the highs and 8200 series on the subs). For the smaller stage in the VIP tent, it was three-over-two with the top boxes "ground-stacked" on top of the subs.

One of the nice things about this system is that you have plenty of options for flying or stacking, and Peavey provides the gear to make it happen. If you need to fly a small

system, you can get six boxes up to 13 feet in the air without worrying about Genie Lifts or chain motors. A crankable Vermette lift, available from Peavey, will do the job and fold flat to fit in the truck.

The Gig

I was invited to go hear the Peavey Versarray 112 when the McGraw tour came to USA-NA amphitheater in Salt Lake City. I spent the day working with Albro on the Frito StyleSonic StageLine SL100 stage and the VIP Tent stage. (Side note: While this Road Test is specifically on the Versarray 112, Peavey and Crest Audio manufactured nearly all of the gear on these stages. This is a real turnkey rig.)

I arrived just in time to help setup the SL100 and then fly the six boxes per side over three groundstacked 218 subs. I could easily lift a box and — unlike some more expensive systems — it was a piece of cake to array and to fly. Pins slid right in with a minimum of "adjustment" (isn't that what you call the all to common act of shaking the array back and forth until the pin you are trying to insert lines up with the proper hole?).

The band on the SL100 was a veteran country act with both male and female vocalists. The band was made up of a drummer, pedal steel guitar, bass and electric/acoustic guitar in addition to the vocalists. The audience ranged from about 500 to 2,000 people gathered around the stage where the performance took place two hours prior to the main show.

The stage was near a beer garden, so the audience size varied quite a bit, and the system proved more than adequate for the coverage area. In fact, Albro had to keep the top two boxes and one of the subs per side turned off during the show. If he had not done this than the sound would have carried too far into the other areas of the amphitheater. The sound pressure level at 50 feet was exceeding 100 dB, so this system can keep up with loud bands.

OK, the big question we all want answered... How does it sound? It sounds really good. Plenty of clarity on the top and tons of

punch on the bottom coverage and sound was consistent on both systems.

I was very impressed with how the Versarray system worked and sounded. These musicians expected tour-grade equipment and a professional sound and they got it. Especially with the small size and myriad mounting options, I can see this system in schools, churches and other smaller venues both as a rental and installed. As the owner of an anklebiter company, I would heartily recommend this system to anyone that needs a solid, road-worthy system that is affordable and can be purchased from one vendor. **FOH**

Peavey Versarray 112
What It Is: Compact line array.
Who It's For: Smaller sound companies trying to get into the line array game and smaller HOW-type installs.
Pros: Solid construction, lightweight, easy to rig, sounds good.
Cons: None.
How Much: \$1,599 per box MSRP; \$1,749.99 for the Versarray 218 sub.



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