



MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS

Pictured: Sound Moves transported cargo on Beyoncé's Formation World Tour 2016 across Europe and America.



Sound Moves is one of the most successful freight solutions companies in the world. With its London base in Hounslow, it has dispatched kit for some of the highest grossing music tours of all time.

James Wood reports

From cancelled flights and pilot strikes to treacherous weather conditions and even the occasional erupting volcano, freight solutions for big events not only require meticulous planning but the obligation to react quickly to unforeseen circumstances.

Global cargo company Sound Moves, which has its London base in Hounslow, has been building a reputation as one of the best freight solutions

companies in the world for more than 20 years. Its roots are in helping to transport kit for some of the globe's most successful bands and musicians.

A notable example was U2's biggest ever world tour between 2009 and 2011, which involved 131 shows in 78 cities on five continents. Over a 20-month period, Sound Moves transported 750 tons of freight for a show that featured a 360° stage surrounding the audience – a feat never before achieved.

According to Sound Moves, the tour was the highest grossing of all time and research found that it has been contracted for six of the top 10, including a previous U2 tour, two from Rolling Stones, AC/DC and Madonna.



Most recently, Sound Moves was selected for Beyoncé's 2016 Formation World Tour, which involved 32 stadium shows in North America and 17 in Europe. The staging consisted of a 60-foot tall rotating LED cube referred to as the 'Monolith'.

The organisation has branched out into other markets over the years, always quick to tap into emerging trends across the globe. Recent examples include transporting cargo for electronic gaming, drone racing and extreme sports events.

Sound Moves was established in 1996 by three partners with considerable experience in freight solutions: Wayde Daniel and Duane Wood, based in New York and Los Angeles respectively, and Martin Corr in London.

Corr says: "The knowledge we have gained over the years is crucial. One important thing is that we're very particular about employees. We appoint a 'tour principal' and that person puts together a workable routine, anticipating any potential problems and working out solutions for ensuring everything gets to where it needs to go – in time and on budget."

Scheduling can sometimes run into problems when religious holidays take place in different countries and there are also demands posed by varying crew sizes. Teams can range from three people "trying to find a local Travelodge" to searching for a place big enough to sleep dozens of people.

"It's like a very elaborate game of chess," says Corr. "Another consideration is airport security policies. We're very adept at working with the customs people and we have a great relationship with Heathrow airport, which is really helpful.

"Being based near the airport [in Ashford] also puts us at a strategic advantage from a business perspective. That quick access it gives us to global markets is crucial."

Sound Moves works all over the world. As Corr points out, with the advent of the internet, musicians

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now make more money from concerts than from record sales and bigger and longer tours have boosted its business.

Western music has grown in popularity because of the internet too, with people across the world having better access than ever before. Corr points to the evidence of Sound Moves' trip to Mumbai in India for the Global Citizen festival, headlined by Jay Z and Coldplay, which was attended by 80,000 people.

But it's not only rock 'n roll: freight was also despatched by Sound Moves for the last two Olympics in London and Rio, the Rugby World Cup in 2015 and extreme sports events in South America.

Theatrical and orchestral touring groups and major film and TV production companies also serve as Sound Moves clients and in 2011, the company delivered three generators to assist with temporary power after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

It is easy to see why Corr thinks Sound Moves will continue making tremors in the industry for many years to come.