

prosound

NEWS
August 2008

volume 30
no. 8

Ocean Notion



Phil Vasser (pictured) is one of the many artists who've recorded in Ocean Way Nashville's Studio A, formerly a church sanctuary. —page 22

Pumpin' It Up



Steve Ellis, Pump Audio's founder/CEO, discusses his company's ever-widening market and global reach. —page 66

Gas Prices Pinch SR Biz

by Clive Young

NEW YORK, NY—While the price of oil has dropped from all-time highs reached earlier this summer, businesses across the country have been hit hard by gas prices, and the sound reinforcement industry is no exception. From the major, cross-country tours to regional and local audio providers, the cost of gas has become a major obstacle that must be dealt with on a daily basis. Many audio companies are finding new ways to reduce costs, but talking with SR pros across the country, the cliché that things are tough all over seems to be a common story.

Vince Emondi, owner of Liquid Audio Productions in Honey Brook, PA, explained, "The gas crunch is huge for us because we're based about 100 miles from our main core of work; what that means is local

people from that area don't have to charge more for their services, but we do. It costs me \$100 per gig in gas, plain and simple, and for a small, regional company, that is a big issue. We can't scale our loads down and we also can't expect freelancers to drive that far to help out. We have a good core business and our reputation is enough to keep them spending a little more, so we've raised our prices about 10 percent; it's not enough to cover the gas, but it helps. I can't fathom what the bigger companies are doing."

Certainly, the big tours are taking a hit. "It's very serious," said the monitor engineer for a popular '70s act on a summer theater/casino tour. "We lost a truck and two crew members, very specifically because of the cost of gas,

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QUEBEC TO WHERE YOU ONCE BELONGED: Paul McCartney rocked the historic Plains of Abraham at a special concert to celebrate Quebec City's 400th anniversary. Ensuring that the audience heard all 36 songs of the 2 1/2-hour show, Quebec City-based sound provider Le Groupe SPL fielded a sizable system built around a foundation of Electro-Voice X Line Array speakers. For more on the event, see page 12.

YouTube Misstep Raises Audio Quality Concerns

by Steve Harvey

There has been much discussion about the increasing reliance on the home computer as a source for entertainment. But a recent misstep by YouTube serves as a cautionary tale for those expecting online sites to perform to the same quality standards as traditional broadcasting.

The problem first reared its head on the community help forums for YouTube, a Google subsidiary, at the end of July, when users began noticing an obvious deterioration in the audio

quality of newly posted video content compared to previous uploads. Some of the initial comments to the discussion thread—which has since grown to 135 postings—suggested that the problem, presumed to be due to a change in the processing that YouTube applies to uploaded content, actually began in June, perhaps even earlier.

Wired magazine's Eliot Van Buskirk soon picked up on the online furor, writing in an online article, "Some YouTube users are mounting a

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tech@psn fieldreport

ROLAND RSS M-400 V-MIXER
Roland is rapidly collecting awards and accolades for its V-Mixer small-format digital desk. **Page 40**



The End of Digiphobia

UMX.96 Digital Console

Digiphobia can be a terrifying experience for even the most veteran audio professional. Fortunately, EAW has the cure: the new UMX.96 digital mixing console.

While nothing less than a completely integrated live sound environment, the UMX.96 retains the ergonomics and natural interface of the most comfortable analog boards, highlighted by a surface that includes all 48 input channel faders. Furthermore, the master section provides a sizeable 15-inch touch-sensitive color LCD and a dynamic rotary encoder (a.k.a. "Big Knob") that changes its "feel" depending on the parameter selected.

With a comprehensive feature set that also includes a 3 x 12 system processor, a huge 16 x 8 matrix, the first console integration of the Smaart tuning/analysis platform, and much more, the UMX.96 brings together mixing, processing, measurement and control within a single seamless interface that even those afflicted with Digiphobia will love.



Digiphobia

[DIJ-I-FOH-BEE-UH]:

THE FEAR OF "WHERE'S THAT KNOB GONE?"



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AES Oral History Project Debuts on DVD

NEW YORK, NY—AES executive director Roger Furness has announced the culmination of the first phase of the Audio Engineering Society Oral History Project. Initiated in 1997 by longtime AES member Irv Joel, the project was envisioned as an opportunity to provide insights into the creative and technical mindsets of the founding fathers of professional audio for future generations.

"Irv Joel's stature in the industry provided him with unique personal access to each of the brilliant innovators featured in these DVDs," says Furness. "Working single-handedly to coordinate and videotape over 100 one-on-one interviews, he has created an anthology of conversations with the pioneers who shaped our industry."

Early in 2007, Joel enlisted pro audio veteran Harry Hirsch to edit the voluminous material into a series of DVDs. Working

with Final Cut Pro, Hirsch, a well-known studio owner, designer, musician and recording engineer, devoted himself to gleaming the most salient and informative material from the original material, and to shaping them into compelling narratives.

Premiered at the AES 60th Anniversary Celebration sponsored by the New York Section on March 11, excerpts from the AES Oral History Project provided tantalizing anecdotes by legendary Columbia Records engineer Frank Laico (Dylan, Miles Davis, Streisand, Sinatra); Louis Goodfriend, first editor of the AES Journal; Norman Pickering, pioneer in phonograph cartridge design; and Les Paul, the godfather of multitrack recording.

In addition to Goodfriend, Laico, Pickering and Paul, the initial group of DVDs includes Michael Dorrough, John M. Eargle, Robin C. Caine, Kees A.S. Immink, Neville



Les Paul

Thiele, and others.

"Collectively, the 20 men and women profiled in this collection of AES Oral History DVDs have been responsible for some of the most meaningful and lasting innovations in the field," remarks Bill Wray, co-chair of the AES Historical Committee. "Sadly, a number of these pioneers are no longer with us, but Irv Joel and Harry

Hirsch have performed an invaluable service by creating this permanent record of their insights and experience."

The initial 20 AES Oral History Project DVDs are available now at www.aes.org. The price is \$15 each for AES members, \$20 for non-members.

Audio Engineering Society
www.aes.org

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McCartney Rocks Quebec

by Clive Young

QUEBEC, CANADA—Quebec City, celebrating its 400th anniversary this year, kicked things off on Sunday, July 20 with a free concert by Paul McCartney, performed before 260,000 people on the Plains of Abraham.

The choice of concert venue—the site of an hour-long battle in 1759 that saw France fail to retake the city from British rule—caused some controversy in the days leading up to the event, but proved to be ideally suited to hold the massive crowd. Ensuring that the audience heard all 36 songs of the 2 1/2-hour show, Quebec City-based sound provider Le Groupe SPL fielded a sizable system built around a foundation of Electro-Voice X line-array speakers.

Speaking through a translator, Patrick "Pat" Gagnon, PA tech/designer for the event, remarked that initial estimates were for a crowd up to 250,000, but the system was designed to handle a larger gathering—a move that proved necessary. The stage PA consisted of EV XVLT and XVLS line-array speakers, backed by XSUBS speakers, while XLC127DVX line-array boxes made up the side PA, side fills were Xi-2183 speakers, and front fills were handled by PX1152s and XLE181 line-array speakers. Delay towers were built around more XLC127DVX line-array speakers, along with XLE181 and XLC215 line-array boxes and more XSUBS.

Powering all that were EV P3000

remote intelligent amps, along with P1200s and CP4000s. Gagnon explained he used the remote capability monitoring of the P-3000-RLs on the front PA to ensure he had enough headroom to supply power; meanwhile, delay towers were powered with regular P-3000s, which were controlled through EV's NetMax.

On stage, two-dozen XW15A monitor speakers ensured the band could hear itself over the roar of the crowd. In all, the audio and video systems took 16 hours to load in and eight hours to tear down.

Mixing the event was longtime McCartney engineer Paul "Pab" Boothroyd, who'd recently been on the road in Europe with Paul Simon, while monitor mixes were tackled by John Callis, overseeing a pair of Midas Heritage 3000 consoles and a dozen Klark Teknik DN360 equalizers. Gagnon was assisted by Marc Tardif, while the system tech was Luc Bédard.

It was a whirlwind weekend for McCartney, who, two days earlier, made a surprise appearance at Billy Joel's "Last Play At Shea" concert at New York's Shea Stadium. That event was the last concert to be held at the venue, site of the first stadium show ever, when the Beatles played there in 1965; full coverage of the Shea shindig will appear in the September issue of *Pro Sound News*.

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