

Lawo helps Phoenix TV broadcast around the world

CHINA: Hong Kong-based news and entertainment broadcaster, Phoenix TV, has recently been supplied with Lawo mixing consoles for its brand-new Beijing building.

The facilities in the Chinese capital comprise a 600 sq-m



Phoenix TV's Beijing facility

studio that houses a Lawo mc² 56 console inside its control room.

Two further sapphire mixing consoles have been installed for the broadcaster's news channel.

The state-owned but privately run company serves one channel with recorded programmes and talk shows, whereas a secondary information channel provides news and reports on culture and religious issues.

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BOOSTING BROADCAST AUDIO AT THE CHINESE GRAMMY'S

CHINA: After suffering issues with the quality of broadcast audio production last year, organisers of The 25th Golden Melody Awards enlisted the expertise of director of Clear-Com's Global Rental Group, Larry Estrin with the goal of making the Chinese Grammy Awards every bit as engaging as its American equivalent.

The 2014 ceremony was held at the Taipei Arena to an audience of 12,500. After being absent for last year's show, Taiwan Television (TTV) returned as broadcaster and sponsor, with its assistant general manager, Iris Liu working alongside the chairman of Linfair Records, Denver Chang, as the event directors. Mr Chang's brother Duncan Chang is the owner of Linfair Engineering & Trading, the Clear-Com distributor in the region, and he enlisted Mr Estrin's help to identify past problems.

'Larry travelled to Taiwan twice to prepare for the show,' explained Denver Chang. 'During the first trip he familiarised himself with the facilities and the acoustic environment inside the arena. He also held meetings with the engineering team and gave them instructions for setting up.'

Despite being enthusiastic inside the arena, the sound of the audience hadn't made it to air, and from the broadcaster's point-of-view this was a major problem.

'When they took on the show last year, I think they just treated it in my opinion as a regular concert, rather than one designed for a television show,' said Mr Estrin.

'The other problems revolved around how best to install a sound system in a venue like the Taipei Arena,' he continued. 'The system built was a standard rock and roll setup, and I believe they hired in



The 25th Golden Melody Awards nominees



Jason Mraz on stage at the show



Larry Estrin overseeing FOH

engineers rather than using their own.'

Mr Estrin reconfigured the way the sound system was installed, as well as the audio mix to air, and also the way the audience mix was produced. Upon reaching the arena to help with setting up, he also discovered that the communications infrastructure was not up to the task.

'The lighting department brought in their own intercom system and only connected it up between their own staff,' he remarked. 'So if the producers wanted to give more light to the performer they'd have to call the lighting guy on a cell phone. When there are 12,500 people anywhere in one place, cell phones just don't work.'

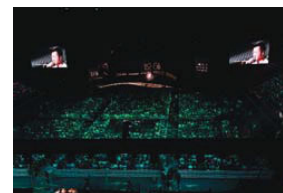
The audio department was also not able to communicate effectively between the FOH mixer and broadcast engineer, leading to some fairly novel solutions as a temporary fix.

'I got them to really back off on doing some things,' Mr Estrin continued, 'but I realised pretty quickly that it was all they could do. Afterwards they realised just how much better the show could've been if everybody could communicate and how much less time rehearsals would have taken.'

The communications at the live event included Tempest wireless products, Clear-Com legacy products and some newer Encore products. However, what was missing was

the method of connecting all the various intercom products into a cohesive system. 'Once I pointed this out to the management, they started to understand what the benefits of a Matrix could bring to them. I also introduced them to our IP products, which would allow better communications between the studio control rooms and the remote OB vans.'

'They have now started the process of budgeting and buying this equipment. Some of it



The Taipei Arena hosted the awards ceremony

is going to be bought by TTV, and my understanding is that Winly Corporation, who was the equipment provider, is also going to buy a considerable amount.'

With this event now over, did the audio match expectations set by the Grammy's? 'They came very, very close,' reported Mr Estrin. 'The show was great, they did a lot of things correctly and ultimately the audio was the best they've ever heard on their broadcast.'

'The sound, both for the live event and the live broadcast, was much better than previous ceremonies,' concluded Denver Chang. 'The seats from the front row to the back all had similar sound, which helped the sound engineers greatly.'

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