

# Reinforcing the Sound of Compassion

By Tony Mah



Jim Yakabuski, FOH for Avril Lavigne, on a D5



Robin Billinton, FOH Engineer for Barenaked Ladies, on an InnovaSON Sy80



Greg Reely, FOH for Delerium, on a Midas H3000

## A Benefit Concert to Aid Tsunami Victims Requires Skill, Planning and a Bit of Luck

The South Asia Tsunami is the most devastating natural disaster most of us have ever known. After the shock of the hundreds of thousands of casualties and the enormous physical damage, we see millions of people who have had their lives destroyed, countless children who lost parents and families whose homes were broken. People's dreams, plans and hopes were swept away along with their loved ones. After the disaster, people questioned why or asked if it could have been prevented; but they came together to help those in need, combining their money, skills and resources.

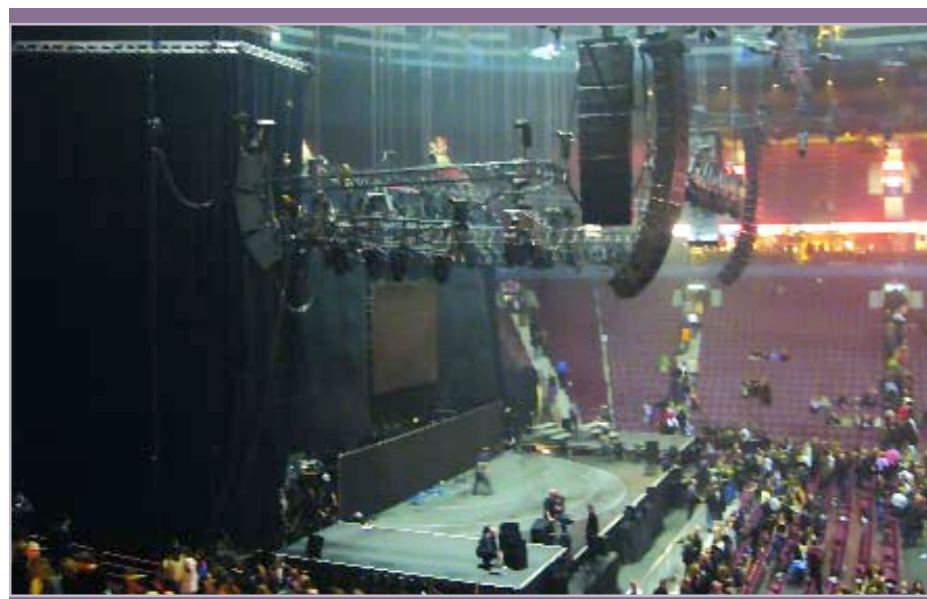
Terry McBride, CEO of Network Productions, a recording and artist management company, responded by mobilizing some of the biggest acts in Canadian music to host *The Concert for Tsunami Relief*. Presented in Vancouver, British Columbia and Calgary, Alberta, the event raised more than \$3 million to be split between four charities—Care Canada, Doctors Without Borders, OXFAM and War Child Canada. Artists for the Saturday, January 29 Vancouver Concert at General Motors Place included Avril Lavigne, Sarah McLachlan, Barenaked Ladies, Chantal Kreviazuk, SUM 41 and Delerium.

Veteran concert producers Paul and Catherine Runnals were entrusted with the task of managing this high-profile event. The task was challenging—what would have normally taken three months came together in three weeks. This was only possible because of their strong vendor relationships, cultivated over years of successful touring. Every vendor stepped up to the plate by either donating their services or giving substantial discounts.

More than 100 artists and crew members volunteered their time to put on an unforgettable four-hour show, not only for the 18,000 ticket-holders, but also for a nationwide television audience.

Audio services were provided by industry veteran Jon Erickson of Toronto's Jasonaudio

almost every piece of gear on the current A-list reverb and multi effects riders ranging from the classic Yamaha SPX990 to a Lexicon 960L for Avril Lavigne's band and squeezers from an eight-channel Presonus to boutique recording models like dbx 160s for Sarah McLachlan's band.



and his trusted crew chief, Gord Reddy. Recording services were provided by Livewire Remote Recording of Toronto.

### House System

To accommodate all the artists' requirements, four discrete mixing systems were set up, sharing only the house speakers. There were four house boards in the FOH area including a Midas XL4, H3000, InnovaSON Sy80 and DiGiCo D5. The effects racks had

For the quick turnaround required by television, a large turntable was used on stage to switch between different artists. To handle this, there were multiple sets of splitters for house, monitors and recording feeds. When one act finished, a technician would unplug the multi-pin disconnect from the first splitter to the recording equipment and reconnect it to the second splitter for the next act.

On the output side, the FOH mixes were merged through one of the consoles and fed

to the loudspeakers via a TC EQ Station, a set of Meyer LD-3 array controllers and a set of XTA DP-226 loudspeaker processors. Main loudspeaker clusters were four Meyer MILO line arrays. The arrays were divided vertically into zones that were EQ-shaded for maximum even coverage. The system also included a half-dozen Meyer MSL4s for rear-corner fill, a dozen Electro-Voice Xsub subwoofers and a number of small Meyer systems for near-fill. Final house tuning was done by ear, using a wireless tablet connected to the XTA control program by an 802.11 network.

### Monitor System

Residing in the cramped confines of monitor world were four boards: a Yamaha PM1D, DiGiCo D5 and a pair of Midas H3000s. The digital boards used by Avril Lavigne and Sarah McLachlan relied mostly on their built-in processing, except for a few "money-channel" outboards. In contrast, John Sulek, long time monitor engineer for Barenaked Ladies, used an H3000 with substantial outboard processing, including compression for every channel and Finalizers going out to each monitor mix. Almost every musician was using personal monitoring systems via Sennheiser or Shure wireless. I noticed a custom helical antenna that I later found out was for McLachlan's PMs.

### Recording and Broadcast System

LiveWire Recording had a rack of 64 MIDI remote controlled Protools pre-amps near the microphone splitter in monitor world that fed a Protools system in their truck. Between acts there was a four-minute break where the EQ and level settings were reset





Avril Lavigne



Deryck Whibley, SUM 41 lead singer



Sarah McLachlan


with the Protools software. The Protools outputs were routed into a Neotek Elite console, where Ed Cherney rode the faders live to a national television audience.

### Results

The Friday and Saturday afternoon soundchecks were opportunities for the bands to get in a final rehearsal before the concert. GM Place was busy with activity, with people putting up chairs, fine-tuning lights, cameras, video projectors, putting away cases and making final patches to the audio lines. Other than a few routine cabling and grounding issues, all was calm and relaxed in audio world, as Gord Reddy and his crew had everything under control. The three weeks of hard work and planning of all the volunteers before load-in paid off. The band engineers said that for a charity event put on in such short notice, they had

expected and were willing to compromise on their requirements to make the concert work. In the end there were no compromises—everyone got what he or she wanted, plus more. Their mental mindset for mixing this concert was to not think too much about what the money raised could do for the families hit hard by the South Asia Tsunami, but to focus on remaining professional and getting the best mix possible for the audience.

This concert turned out to be much more than a fundraiser for Tsunami Relief. The inner city teenagers who are part of the Sarah McLachlan Music Outreach program had the opportunity of a lifetime performing live on TV to help raise money. With the NHL hockey lockout, almost everyone who worked at GM Place has been laid off. This concert also allowed more than 300 people including security, concessions, ushers, housekeeping, and front office to have a few days of paid work.

The concert was a resounding success; everyone had a great time. There were none of the issues we sometimes hear about at some of the big televised awards shows. Hats off to the artists and crew at Netzwerk Productions and their business partners. This was a testimony to how people in the music industry were willing to work together and make personal sacrifices to give hope to people that need it the most. 

## CREW & GEAR

### Crew

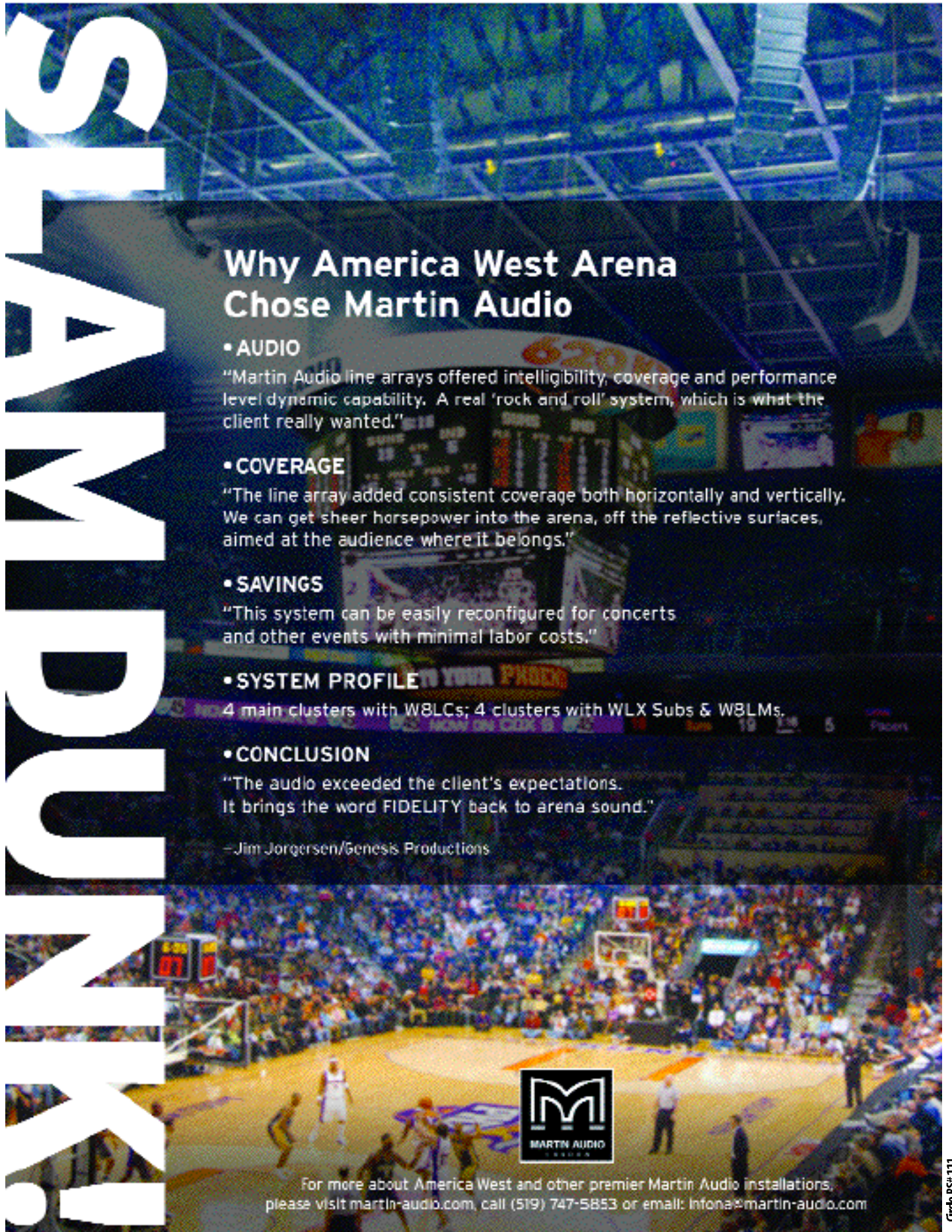
- Production Manager:** Paul Runnals
- Associate Producer:** Catherine Runnals
- Production Coordinators:** Barbara Nageli, Hugo Rempel
- Stage Manager:** Terry Mueller
- Production Assistants:** Tina Fell, Jamie Allen, Aurelio Marogna, Brandon Dong, Kenneth Sherman, Kevin Blin, Markem Boheim, Paul Merrifield, Tina Tyers
- Rigger:** Dave Heard
- Audio Chief:** Gord Reddy
- Audio Crew:** Bob McFee, John Scheffel, Jon Erickson, Korey Sherwin, Robert Dolinski
- Audio:** Michelle Morrisette, Nick Mandilaras, Paul Hugo, Vaino Gannaro
- Head Carpenter:** Isaac Kinakin
- Carpenter - Turntable:** John Prater
- Carpenters:** Ken Hollands, Doug Teather
- Truck Drivers:** Blake Pidgeon, Dave Donchey, David Sparrow, Deanna Miller, James Brown, Jason Plaggemeyer, Mark McIvenna, Mike Liss, Stuart Weber

### Gear

- FOH**
- Consoles:** DiGiCo D5, InnovaSON Sy80, Midas H3000, Midas XL4
- Speakers:** Meyer MILO, MILO 120, MSL4, UPA1p, M3d, E-V Xsub
- Processing:** Aphex AX622, Brooke Siren DPR944, dbx 160SL, Drawmer DL241, Eventide Eclipse, Lexicon 960, PCM91, TC Electronic D Two, Finalizer, M-4000, Yamaha SPX990
- Input Processing:** Focusrite ISA220, ISA430, True Systems Precision 8, P2A
- Mics:** Shure, Sennheiser, Neumann, Radial

### MON


- Consoles:** DiGiCo D5EX, Midas H3000, Yamaha PM1D
- Speakers:** EV XW, Jason J17
- Processing:** Brooke Siren DPR404, Focusrite ISA220, TC Electronic M-3000, Yamaha SPX990
- Personal Monitors:** Shure, Sennheiser



# STANDOUT!

## Why America West Arena Chose Martin Audio

- AUDIO**  
 "Martin Audio line arrays offered intelligibility, coverage and performance level dynamic capability. A real 'rock and roll' system, which is what the client really wanted."
- COVERAGE**  
 "The line array added consistent coverage both horizontally and vertically. We can get sheer horsepower into the arena, off the reflective surfaces, aimed at the audience where it belongs."
- SAVINGS**  
 "This system can be easily reconfigured for concerts and other events with minimal labor costs."
- SYSTEM PROFILE TO YOUR PROJECT**  
 4 main clusters with W8LCs; 4 clusters with WLX Subs & W8LMs.
- CONCLUSION**  
 "The audio exceeded the client's expectations. It brings the word FIDELITY back to arena sound."  
 —Jim Jorgensen/Genesis Productions



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