



Shure Axient Raises The Calgary Stampede To New Levels

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Sound Art provided four channels of Shure Axient wireless for Paul Brandt, the headliner of the Grandstand show.

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Celebrating its 100th year in 2012, the Calgary Stampede is a 10-day event that includes everything from a major rodeo and chuck wagon races to stage shows, concerts, and carnival activities.

Audio for the event was handled by the Calgary office of Sound Art, one of Canada's leading production and sound rental companies. It chose to use the new [Shure Axient](#) wireless system to better manage the complex RF environment at the Stampede.

One of the event's longstanding traditions and biggest attractions is the TransAlta Grandstand Show, a fast-paced theatrical variety show with music, comedy, dancing, and acrobatics, which concludes each day's festivities.

As he has for the past 16 years, Sound Art general manager Dan Frerichs took responsibility for coordinating wireless frequencies.

"It's not Broadway or Las Vegas, but the Stampede's Grandstand show is a pretty big deal," he says. "It's an outdoor show that occurs while other stages are still running nearby, like the Nashville North area."

To celebrate the Stampede Centennial, the 2012 Grandstand show featured country music

star Paul Brandt along with perennial cast members The Young Canadians. "

To make sure nothing went wrong, we decided to use four channels of Shure Axient wireless for Paul Brandt – three for his various vocal positions and one for his guitar. And they were flawless for all 10 show days," states Frerichs.

Shure Axient is designed to ensure uninterrupted wireless transmission through a suite of technologies, most notably its ability to detect and avoid interference. It also handles frequency coordination through its Wireless Workbench software and the AXT600 Spectrum Manager.

In addition to the four channels of Axient, Sound Art also supplied 16 channels of Shure UHF-R wireless for the Grandstand show, along with various in-ear and intercom systems.

"Between mics, in-ears, and comms, I was coordinating over 100 frequencies," reports

Frerichs. "In the past, I've always relied on my own scanner and third-party software. This year, I used the Axient Spectrum Manager and Wireless Workbench 6 software.

"The new version is really well integrated. It's compatible with the UHF-R, and allows you to enter the information on devices from other manufacturers and still get an accurate list of available frequencies. It's pretty impressive."

That capability is critical when dealing with an ever-changing wireless spectrum over the

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That capability is critical when dealing with an ever-changing wireless spectrum over the course of a 10-day event like the Calgary Stampede.

"With video crews from the CBC and bands showing up at the other stages with their own wireless systems, you never know when one of your frequencies is going to be stepped on," notes Frerichs. "During the Stampede, we had two instances where Axient detected a conflict on Paul's microphone, and the system changed frequencies automatically. With any other system, those incidents could have been disasters. With Axient, you didn't hear a thing."

With transmission distances of up to 300 feet involved, Frerichs set up Paul Brandt's main vocal mic in high power mode.

"Paul makes his entrance on a platform that flies over the back of the stage, so there's a lot of trussing and plywood sets between him and the antennas, which are mounted to the grandstand. But I was picking him up with full RF bars on the receiver. It never wavered."

In addition to Axient systems for his mics and guitar, Brandt also used the new Shure PSM 1000 personal monitor system. "Paul was very happy with everything – his vocals, his guitar sound, and his in-ears," says Frerichs. "And for me, it was very nice to be able network it all, including all the UHF-R systems, and monitor everything through Wireless Workbench."

Another Axient feature that Frerichs appreciates is the rechargeable batteries.

"First, there's no sacrifice in system performance with the Shure rechargeables," he reports. "Battery life and headroom are both excellent. When you consider that my battery order for the Stampede Grandstand show is roughly 3,000 AAs, you're talking about a significant cost. It's great to see a system that addresses that."

The 2012 Calgary Stampede was a major test of Axient's abilities for Sound Art. "With two weeks of setup and 10 days of shows, we really got to see how well the system works. This business is all about results, and I must say, Axient delivered exactly as advertised. I really think it's a game-changing product," concluded Frerichs.

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