



A shot of the Cellular South Stage with the Aero 48 line arrays and the LX-218 subs.

Beale Street

MUSIC FESTIVAL

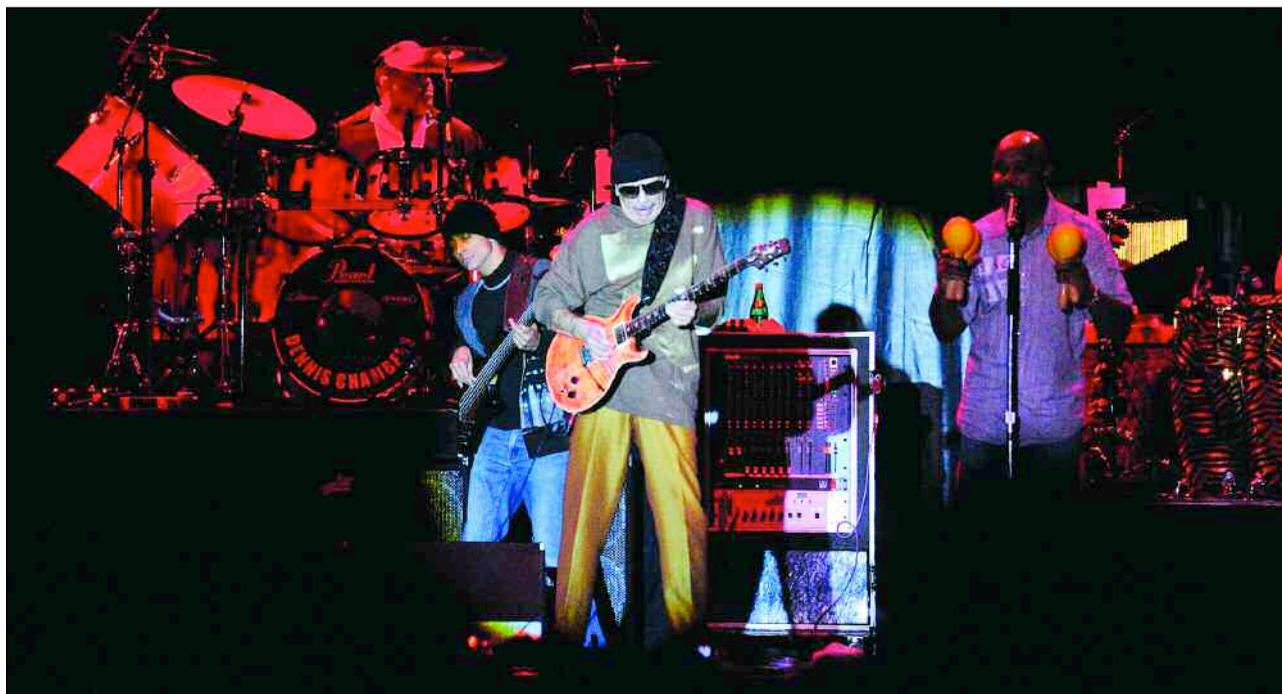
Capacity crowds gather at Memphis festival

By R. Maxwell

Each year, the city of Memphis hosts its annual Memphis in May International Festival, which consists of the Beale Street Music Festival, the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest, and the Sunset Symphony. The Beale Street Music Festival 2008 featured over 60 acts on four stages in scenic Tom Lee Park where Beale Street meets the Mississippi. This year's festival, which took place on May 2-4, drew close to

capacity crowds – hampered only by a Friday evening torrential downpour that brought the day's festivities to an early close. Featuring a wide range of artists spanning every musical style from Colbie Caillat to Jerry Lee Lewis, there was music for every imaginable preference.

As was the case for all but two of the past 19 years, Smyrna, TN-based Allstar Audio Systems, Inc. served as the audio contractor for this year's



Carlos Santana performs during the Beale Street Festival.



Michael McDonald performs during the Beale Street Festival.



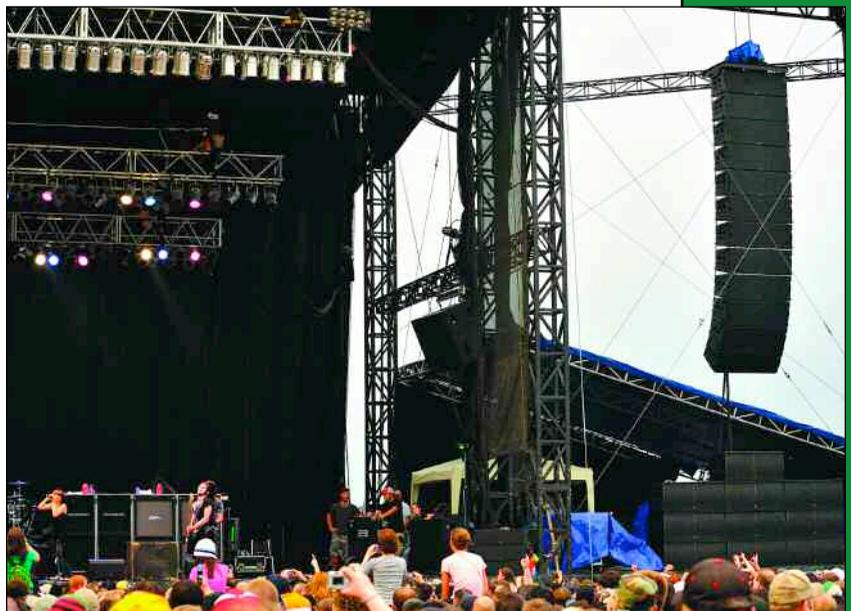
Allstar Audio's Bryan Madaris and Brad "The Devil" Bryan of H.A.S. Productions prepare to fly a line array.

festival. Of the four stages, Allstar Audio provided sound reinforcement for the three primary stages – two of which consisted of sizeable deployments of loudspeaker enclosures from the D.A.S. Audio Aero catalog.

For the Cellular South Stage, Allstar Audio – with technical and logistical support from Las Vegas-based H.A.S. Productions Inc. and CEO Larry Hall – erected a massive sound system consisting of 24 D.A.S. Audio Aero 48 line array elements, 6 Aero 28A line array elements, and 16 of D.A.S. Audio's new LX-218 subwoofers. The system was assembled with 12 Aero 48 enclosures flown for the left and right mains, with 8 D.A.S. LX-218



A shot of the Crown amps powering the LX-218 subwoofers.



Alternative rock band Flyleaf performs on the Cellular South Stage with the D.A.S. Aero 48's and LX-218 subwoofers.

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subwoofers per side, vertically aligned with and ground-stacked directly beneath the Aero 48's. According to Mike Borne, President of Allstar Audio Systems, "The stage was exceptionally wide, so in order to ensure adequate coverage for the front center area, we chose to ground-stack the Aero 28A's on the stage and faced them slightly inward."

While the Allstar Audio team has extensive experience with the D.A.S. Audio Aero 38A and 28A self-powered line array modules, the Aero 48's (being passive enclosures and the

largest in the Aero series) were somewhat of a new experience. In order to help ensure optimum performance, H.A.S. Productions was subcontracted to cable, power, and process the Aero 48's for the Allstar Audio crew. Power for the Aero 48's was provided by Crown I-Tech 8000 amplifiers, while the LX-218 subs were powered by Crest 8002's, and loudspeaker management was handled by a dbx DriveRack 4800 system.

Allstar Audio systems engineer Bryan Madaris mixed Front of House for the Cellular South Stage using a

DiGiCo D1 Live Digital Mixing System, though several acts that performed elected to use their own mixer and engineer. At monitor world, Allstar Audio system technician Tommy Webb held the fort with a Midas Heritage 3000 console. Del Allgood handled the patching of microphones – both wired and wireless – which were from Allstar's Shure inventory and included SM58, SM91, SM98, VP88, and Beta 58 with UA UHF Series receivers.

"The Cellular South Stage was a massive undertaking," explains Borne, "and it turned out really well. We had approximately 25,000 music enthusiasts here and there was a lot of high power entertainment on this stage – including performances by Santana, Buddy Guy, Fergie, and Gavin DeGraw, among others, so it was critically important that everything be just right. On both the Cellular South and Sam's Town Stage (also known as the Center stage), we made extensive use of D.A.S. Audio's version of the EASE Focus loudspeaker aiming and acoustic modeling software. Proper alignment of loudspeakers is always a challenge, but with EASE Focus, you specify your trim height and audience area parameters and the software takes the guesswork out of how you're going to make your pin adjustments as you fly the system. By using an upstage and downstage motor, slight shifting of the entire array was achievable for fine-tuning. This application is a tremendous help for obtaining the broad, even coverage we needed."

Nearby on the Sam's Town Stage, the Allstar Audio crew erected a sound system consisting of 28 D.A.S. Audio Aero 38A self-powered line array elements, flown 14 per side. These were augmented by 8 Aero 28A self-powered modules – ground-stacked on stage 4 per side for center fill – with 20 D.A.S. Audio Compact 218 2K subwoofers, ground stacked 10 per side beneath the Aero 38A clusters. Loudspeaker management was handled internally via the D.A.S. Audio system.

Allstar Audio's Brian Westrope mixed FOH at the Sam's Town Stage using a Yamaha PM4K mixing



Erick "Otto" Celeiro mixes FOH for artist Gavin DeGraw.



H.A.S. Productions' Larry Hall inspects the amp rack

console. Monitor world for this stage was handled by audio engineer Dave Whitney using a Yamaha PM4Km. As was the case at the Cellular South Stage, Allstar Audio provided a sizeable selection of microphones from their arsenal of Shure products – with Ben Williams in charge of patching.

“Just like the Cellular South Stage, the Sam’s Town Stage had an impressive roster of artists,” said Borne. “This is where Sheryl Crow, the rock band Disturbed, Michael McDonald, Aretha Franklin, and Jerry Lee Lewis performed. Everyone was very impressed with the sound quality of the D.A.S. system, including several acts that had never used D.A.S. equipment before. The Disturbed is a particularly loud band and they made it a special point of singling out the D.A.S. system as one of the best sounding and loudest systems they had ever worked with.”

Reflecting on this year’s festival, Borne was clearly pleased. “The Beale Street Music Festival is a terrific event and I’m honored to have Allstar Audio Systems chosen to provide sound reinforcement,” said Borne. “Thanks to the efforts of a wonderful crew of hard working, enthusiastic guys, including Tony Cooper, Dan Taylor, Don Muzquiz, and Josh Bergstrom, as well as the solid performance of the D.A.S. Audio sound equipment; this year’s festival was better than ever. Already, we’ve been contracted to provide sound for next year’s festival.”

“I have an easy means of judging the success of these events,” Borne continued. “It begins and ends with my cell phone! In years past when we’ve done this festival, my phone would ring from time to time. This past year, however, my phone didn’t ring at all—telling me that everything was running smoothly and was under control. This is my barometer for a show’s success. For the first time in years, I actually got to sit out front and enjoy some of the performances. In large part, I attribute this level of success to the capabilities of the D.A.S. equipment. The system’s fidelity is so good that it makes it a pleasure to listen again!” ■

R. Maxwell is a freelance audio writer.

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