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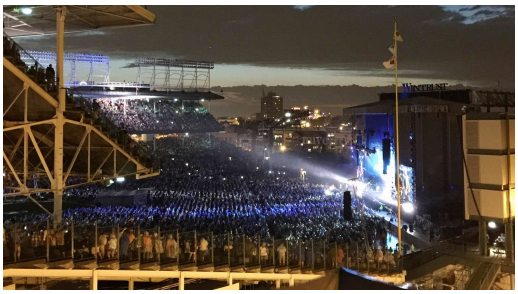

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TOM PETTY AND EAW ADAPTIVE REUNITE FOR 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

For the second major tour in a row and the band's 40th Anniversary, FOH Engineer Robert Scovill has specified an Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW) ADAPTive sound reinforcement system to support Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. Escondido, California-based Sound Image is providing the crew as well as the system, which is comprised of Anya array and Otto subwoofer modules, supplemented with Anna delay towers for stadium shows.

The 270-degree arena rig consists of 56 Anya for the main left/right arrays, hung in a 12-8-8 column configuration per side, a center cluster of 6 Anya and 14 Otto subs spaced across the front of the stage. The majority of the tour will utilize this system although for stadium shows, like Wrigley Field in Chicago, Scovill has specified a delay ring made up of four towers of 12 Anna enclosures to supplement the main rig.

"As we modeled a couple of stadiums, it was clear that improvements in coverage could be obtained through judicial use of delay towers," adds Scovill. "They are used primarily to reach up under seating levels blocked by overhanging structures. The center cluster of Anya provides imaging for the audience on the main floor. I do not use any toe-in on the main arrays. This opens the center up reducing overlap of the main arrays into the rear corners of the venue while also providing a defined area for me to work the center cluster. Coverage for the center starts with a blending of the front fills but ends behind me at FOH. Where the coverage ends is critical as it has to stop right where the main left/ right arrays begin to converge. ADAPTive makes this very simple to adjust as no physical movement of the arrays or array angles is required."

The ADAPTive system is designed to be a fixed variable, which means that no matter what the actual coverage requirements are for any venue, the system is deployed "physically" in same fashion in every venue. This provides great consistency not only for the audio team but also for the promoter, who deals with seats and sightlines, as well as the rigging, lighting and video crews. Nothing changes in the physical setup; Resolution software calculates new coverage requirements day-to-day – even when the venue is asymmetrical.

"Most of our shows will be in

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arenas but for the smaller setups like sheds, the system is designed to easily scale down. Long, narrow venues like Red Rocks use one Anya column per side, sheds use two columns and the arena shows are three columns – all plus the center column. The well thought out horizontal arc-segment of Anya makes this incredibly easy. It's almost as if they designed it that way," jokes Scovill.

This is Scovill's first outing with the Otto subwoofers, which he utilizes to help anchor the sound to the stage, especially for the people sitting in the close VIP area.

"I have used subs with previous tours to supplement the mains but the 2014 tour with ADAPTive was the first time I felt the subs weren't necessary. Going into this tour, I knew the mains were going to be fine, so I focused on improvements I could make for the front-fill setup covering the VIP seats," Scovill explains. "The Otto subwoofer had not been developed for the first tour so I was excited to test it for this one – it did not disappoint. Not only was the Resolution software able to deal with my spaced arrangement of enclosures required for the front-fill deployment, but the subs' compact size and exceptional rear-rejection allowed me to use it without disturbing Tom on stage, who is very sensitive to sub-bass."

Scovill notes that no special stacking or configurations of Otto are necessary. Once they are set up and the amount of rear-rejection designated in Resolution, they are ready to go. Like the main hangs, the subwoofer arrangement is physically consistent throughout the tour. If different venues required different horizontal coverage angles, that is also handled through the Resolution software.

"This system has surpassed anything I have used in the past – including my 2014 rig, which was outstanding. The recent Resolution software upgrade is excellent. The effectiveness of Spatial EQ and the new Airloss control features are more than impressive. To be able to pinpoint a physical area in a venue and only EQ that area is a tool that we, as an industry, have never seen before," he adds. "Before this, the best we could do with traditional PAs was to zone enclosures into groups of 2 or 3 and apply EQ to a zone. Hardly a predictable way of doing it, but it was our only option. Not anymore. It's incredible to have a measurement mic in some remote location of the venue, apply a filter, hear nothing at FOH yet see the transfer trace adjust on the computer to that filter."

Scovill concludes, "I chose ADAPTive when it was brand new for the 2014 tour and I'm still impressed with what the system can do and the improvements and upgrades the company continues to provide. My choice to use it this time was an easy one. It does exactly what they say it does and we have heard nothing but rave reviews from the band and fans."

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