

RSC meeting #37 – 5 October 2011

A viewpoint of an end user within the PMSE – the case of live performance¹

Good afternoon,

My name is Anita Debaere. I'm the director of Pearle the European trade federation representing the live performance and music sector.

It is for me a great pleasure to talk to you on behalf of this wonderful and exciting business. Day in day out we create wonderful moments of happiness, laughter and emotions. Yes indeed, the business of live performance is a unique and curious product.

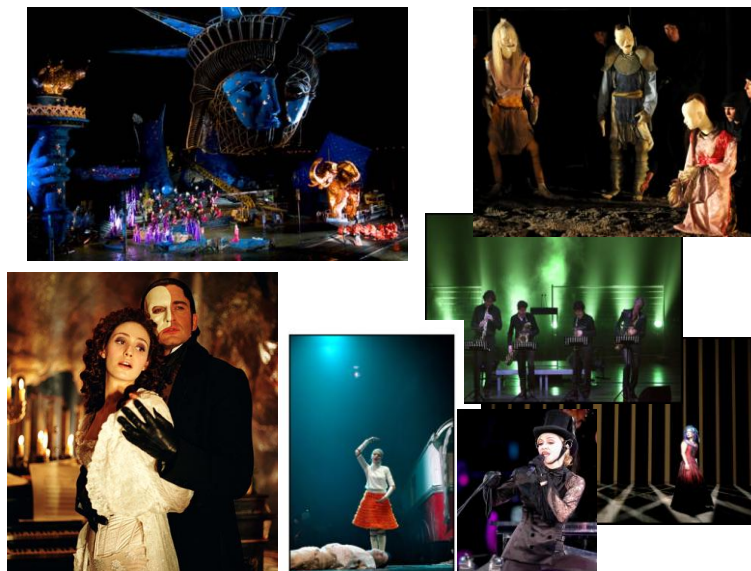


The live performance sector is just one of the many other end users on which you will hear more in the next presentation. Nevertheless we may claim a position of one of the most intense

¹ Slides included were shown to the participants by way of illustration

users of wireless microphone technology, which explains why we are very concerned about our future.

European trade federations such as Pearle, the organisation that I represent, usually tend to start with quoting data. Yet, our biggest achievement is that our business creates an added value which cannot be measured: it is about people's wellbeing ! do you remember the last performance you went to? It doesn't matter which one in particular...but I'm sure it is in your memory forever as one of the best experiences you ever had. So how do you measure that infinitive degree of human well being?



Anyway, here are some figures:

- We estimate that the sector generates at least a turnover of 38 billion euros a year, which is very probably a conservative figure if we know that box office receipts for London theatre² alone in 2010 achieved a record level of nearly 600 million euros and that in Germany all theatres³ together sold for 2.664 billion euros in the playing season 2008-2009. Another figure from the commercial music sector⁴ from France: the

² <http://www.solt.co.uk/about/data.html>

³ Theatre statistik 2008/2009 Deutscher Bühnenverein

⁴ <http://www.prodiss.org/public/espace-media/brochures-pdf-du-prodiss>

somewhat 300 venues spread over France sold some 450 million € worth of tickets for pop concerts and comedy.

- Today -5 October- in London alone there will be 134 theatre performances and 140 music performances
- The most famous musical CATS which run for 21 years was seen by 65 million spectators worldwide



- Other interesting information:
 - o The live performance is first and foremost a sector of SMEs – it is quite a challenge to bring forward a correct size, but the number is surely more than 10 000 SMEs
 - o Our sector is extremely labour intense and we are therefore an interesting sector for employment: besides the artists themselves there is a huge workforce doing the work behind the curtain and figures talk of 3 million people employed in the sector
- The downside of our sector, if I may put it that way, is that it is not a rich sector: even a London west-end theatre production may need 50 weeks of turnover before generating profits , mainly because production costs are very high. BUT the spinoff effect of our sector is important as it generates important turnover for other industries such as tourism, restaurants, bars, transport, etcetera.

So since several decades now we rely in our productions on wireless microphone technology as it has the tremendous advantage that artists can move around, dance, sing, etc without stumbling over cords and thus bring the most exciting and daring productions to their audiences. Moreover, and as an employers organisations I also need to mention this, we have a responsibility towards the safety of the staf and as organisers over our audiences.

For the technicians working behind the curtain they very much rely on this technology to communicate with each other and this should happen in the most safe circumstances.

For several decades we could use wireless microphone technology without too many difficulties or worries. There was the spectrum available and the 800 MHz band offered the best quality for our high demands. Many of the smaller production companies, out of ignorance, never thought of asking for a license to use the spectrum, but neither did many theatres across Europe ask for a license, as that seemed not necessary.

We were unpleasantly woken up some 10-15 years ago, as some other industries such as the mobile phone industry, had put their interest in the use of the same band.

So our organisations are worried:

- Worried not to be able to produce in future the shows and performances that people like to see
- Worried not to be able to have the certainty and guarantee to access the spectrum when needed
- Worried not to be able to deliver the audio quality that our audiences are used to (because the alternative bands on which we could rely offer less certainty of quality, or because of interference by other users)
- Worried not to be able to afford the costs involved, which create extra burdens and upset also because of the costs for replacement of equipment which is not even 10 years old and for which compensation is, in the view of my members, only a fair gesture
- Worried not to be able to compete with large industries and multinationals whose business models are very different from ours
- Worried that there is not enough objective information available on the actual use of spectrum by a sector as ours

So what do our organisations in the live performance sector see as a way forward ?

We think there are three main initiatives to be taken as soon as possible to respond to the needs of three types of uses in our sector:

- Daily use
- Event use
- touring

Daily use: we think that it is important to collect data and to inventorize the daily use (licensed and unlicensed) – which we believe is crucial to evaluate correctly the actual use, the variations in use and needs of the sector. This shall allow to estimate and plan ahead and my members which are trade federations in your respective countries are happy to work together and this in order to identify those needs months ahead.

Daily use



The second type of use relates to the bigger events or to periods of intense use such as during the summer when there are festivals taking place. For such use mapping and planning ahead together with the sector would already provide information on the needs for such productions.

Big events



And for the third type of use we are of the opinion that touring companies, especially for smaller productions that need only a few wireless microphones to have an EC decision for a minimum harmonisation of bandwidth for such use.

touring



I thank you for your attention, let the show go on! and I now give the floor to Dre Klaassen

Let the show go on!

