



RIHANNA

Our take on the latest album from the music industry's favourite Barbadian

WICKED

Behind the scenes in Oz with two of the finest West End witches

FERRY CORSTEN

World-renowned
trance DJ predicts
EDM shake-up

SCOTT LIPPS

Model agency CEO
by day, rock star
drummer by night

SIR TOM

50 YEARS IN THE BIZ, AND HIS FIRST OFFICIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

JONES



The Oscars

The 2016 Oscars was eventful: full of controversy, surprises, and a certain gentleman finally winning the coveted Best Actor statuette. It was also a big year for unsung heroes, ATK Audiotek, who stepped up once again to provide sound for the biggest day on the movie industry calendar.

As soon as the very white ensemble of nominees was announced this year, the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite began trending like there's no tomorrow. For the second year running, every single actor or actress nominated was white. Unsurprisingly, the furore led to a boycott from several high profile black actors and filmmakers, most notably Will Smith (his performance in *Concussion* snubbed by the awards), and director, Spike Lee. With all this in mind, the task of hosting what seemed to be the most controversial Oscars ever was an unenviable one for comedian Chris Rock. Thankfully, he did a magnificent job, and if they ever create

a 'best previous host' category in the future, Chris Rock would be a worthy winner. Rock courageously tackled the topic in his opening monologue, admitting he almost listened to people telling him he should boycott the show himself: "why is it only ever unemployed people that tell you to quit?"

He did what all great comedians do best by removing the stigma of a situation with some excellent jokes. The most insightful point Rock made was that people in Hollywood are some of the nicest, most liberal people on Earth, and yet they rarely hire people of colour for their films. The takeaway is that eradicating racism is much more complex than taking on far-right extremist groups. It's about challenging the en-



“If they ever create a Best Previous Host category in the future, Chris Rock would be a worthy winner.”

grained racism in the subconscious of us all. So with that out the way, let's find out how ATK Audiotek got on, who also had a challenging task. With such big guns as *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, and *Mad Max: Fury Road* nominated in the sound categories, the pressure was on to deliver audio on a par with those movies for ATK, who've been the ceremonies' chosen sound partner for a very long time.

ATK's Jeff Peterson tells us that, “the venue hasn't changed in a dozen years, so the PA system hasn't really changed much either”. The Oscars still utilises a L/R hang of JBL Vertec 4889, and ATK recently added three smaller JBL delay clusters to better cover the highest mezzanine. Sounds like a case of, ‘if it ain't broke, don't fix it’? So what does ATK use to power the system?

“Well, ATK has been using Powersoft for quite a few years,” Peterson explains. “We have every [Powersoft] K10 amp outfitted with the KAES+DSP card, and tend to run digital signal drive to the amplifiers, either directly from the digital console, or in the case of the Oscars, we used an Optocore digital audio network to take a MADi stream from the console and distribute it as AES signals to each amplifier. All system tuning and EQ is done in the DSP using Armonia.”

Consoles are by DiGiCo: an SD5 sits at front

of house; and a second SD5 is deployed for performance monitors, along with an SD10 for orchestra monitors (a combination of personal mixers, hardwire in-ears, and ATK's own orchestra headset system.

“What's nice about using the K10s is their fantastic reliability,” Peterson insists. “We rarely have a failure or any issue with them, and I use the KAESOP input system with its automatic switchover as a way of backing up the drive signals. I feed the first amp in a signal chain from the primary AES Optocore drive unit, and the last amp in the chain from the secondary AES unit. I deliver identical signals to each end of the chain, and it will switch to take the secondary if it loses AES signal from the primary source.”

It's also particularly compact and efficient kit to work with, Peterson reveals:

“The K10 is half the rack space of any other comparable product; and when you have over 100 amplifiers on a show, half the footprint starts to really mean something! One thing not so obvious about the Powersoft amps is their extremely low power draw: the power providers on the big shows we do noticed immediately that the load swings during loud music were much less extreme than they were with our previous amplifiers. That was a major advantage in using them at the Oscars.”

So with the elephant in the room addressed, and audio in the bag, all that was left was for some fine acting, directing, and editing to be recognised. Of course, the main talking point centred around one man, who seemed to have the entire world rooting for him after five best actor nominations, and five disappointments. Yes, Leonardo DiCaprio finally broke his duck and went home happy, winning Best Actor for his truly visceral performance in *The Revenant*. *The Conspiracy* producer also commendably took his opportunity on the world stage to talk about his great passion of climate change: “let us not take this planet for granted, I do not take tonight for granted.”

The Best Picture winner was something of a surprise, due to its subject matter of child abuse in the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, *Spotlight* was a more than worthy winner of arguably the top prize. The excellent *Mad Max: Fury Road* was the evening's prolific story, winning six of its ten nominations, and dominating the design and editing categories. The Best Original Score award was a wonderful tale of two vintage composers somehow still at the top of their game in John Williams and Ennio Morricone, the latter seeing gold for his *The Hateful Eight* original music. Meanwhile, Sam Smith had the last laugh with his Best Original Song victory for *Writing's On the Wall*, despite naysayers claiming it wasn't good enough to be a Bond song. *Headliner* extends its congratulations to all the winners and nominees, and to ATK Audiotek for smashing it once more. Roll on next year, and here's hoping for a more diverse and convivial Oscars in 2017. ⚡

www.powersoft-audio.com

www.digico.biz

www.optocore.com