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XTA Readies Dante Breakout Box

09.11.2009

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New York (September 11, 2009)--Audinate's Dante plug-and-play protocol for transporting digital multimedia has been licenced to the likes of Yamaha, Lake and Peavey. Next up will be XTA, which will intro its new breakout boxes, NXBoB8 and NXBoB16 at PLASA09.

Prototypes have already been out and about with Britannia Row Productions. Its head of digital and RF, Kieran Walsh, has been putting it through its paces during the company's summer season.

XTA's Richard Fleming explains how the new product, and Brit Row's involvement, came about: "I'd been working on network breakout boxes for a while and knew that we would be able to put Dante breakout cards into them. Kieran at Brit Row was aware of that and had phoned me at the beginning of the year to see if we had anything he could use, but development wasn't far enough advanced at that point.

"However, in April this year, new Dante cards were available and just after Pro Light & Sound, I said, 'I've got something for you now.' So I travelled down to Brit Row, hooked up the breakout boxes, linked them and some Dolby Lakes into a switch, configured it with a laptop that I'd taken down and they worked very well."

Richard continues, "I could also show that the box will behave as an amp manager for our MC2 Ti amplifier range, too. You can put it in a rack, it will learn the network setup and then interrogate amps to see if they're OK. If they're not, it has the general purpose I/O on the back to report that."

Discussions between XTA and Brit Row ensued, with the result that the following week, the Brit Row team had decided that they'd like to do the Oasis stadium tour dates with the product and, because of scheduling, it could also be used on Hard Rock Calling, Blur and O2 Wireless in London's Hyde Park and Sonisphere at Knebworth.

Brit Row had a range of consoles on the shows, including DiGiCo, Yamaha, Digidesign and Midas. A variety of loudspeaker systems were also employed, including L-Acoustics K1, Kudo, V- and dV-Dosc systems in Hyde Park. For the Oasis shows, Brit Row's Outline Butterfly delays were all driven using the XTA breakout boxes, Dante was also used to send signal to the stage and main PA. Optic connections were used between network switches in each delay tower. Each delay tower amp rack had an XTA breakout box doing the conversion from Dante to analogue. For the Hyde Park shows, Brit Row had a breakout box on either side of the stage, controlled from FOH.

"We were running internet up there and amplifier control back down, all on the same fibre optic and it worked great," says Kieran.

"Brit Row chose to use fibre optic because you can go for literally kilometres with no signal degradation," adds Richard. "One of the big things that Kieran noticed was how much better some of the loudspeakers sounded with the audio delivered over a digital network, because you haven't got the degradation of a copper multicore."

"We found that using Dante sounded significantly better than other formats and definitely sounded better than long runs of analogue cable," Kieran confirms.

"The Dante format is great because you can use standard computer network management techniques to make it work with everything else. After all, what we're after is the holy grail of fully integrated networks, rather than separate wires to do things.

"The system also had that 'XTA sound' on it. It sounded very like the 4 Series crossovers, which people like. Overall it was accepted well by the people who used it."

"Dante, with its low latency and built-in device discovery capability, is well suited for professional live sound applications. The breakout box from XTA extends this capability and packages it in a powerful yet easy-to-use box," adds Lee Ellison, CEO, Audinate. "Brit Row is known for organizing some of the best shows in Europe. We are very pleased to hear that Dante based products like the XTA's breakout box are part of these exciting shows."

XTA
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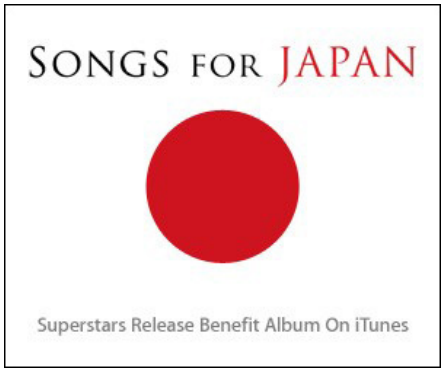
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