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Celine Dion and Audio Crew Handpick Neumann and Sennheiser for

Global superstar Celine Dion's recent return to The Colosseum at Caesar's Palace Las Vegas has once again been a resounding success, marked by soldout shows and rave reviews. Her previous headliner show at Caesar's ran from 2003 - 2007 and was attended by over 3 million fans. This time around, Celine – who performs with 31 musicians including a full orchestra and backup band – personally selected the Neumann KK 104 S cardioid capsule coupled with a Sennheiser SKM 5200 II handheld transmitter to deliver her legendary vocals. In addition to her vocals, a full array of Sennheiser and Neumann microphones are used capture the complex performance, which is

produced by AEG/Live Concerts West and directed by Ken Ehrlich, renowned for his work on the Grammy Awards.

Celine is appreciated by her audio staff for her amazing ear and sense of sound, as well as her strong capability in participating in technical decisions. Before launching the show, she spent a full day reviewing gear and testing microphones with Denis Savage, her sound designer and FOH engineer; François “Frankie” Desjardins, her system designer; Charles Ethier, her monitor engineer and Marc Theriault, her RF engineer.

A Win for the Neumann KMS 104 S

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“We were using the A-B-C-D testing methodology,” explained Desjardins, who has been working with Celine for 18 years, and it always came back to the Neumann head. At the end of the day, Celine was convinced she had the best microphone in her hand – a Sennheiser SMK 5200 II transmitter outfitted with the Neumann KK 104 capsule.”

In addition to featuring over 31 musicians on stage, Celine's show also includes a spectacular light and video display as a backdrop. As she performs, moving stage pieces, video and lighting enhance the theme of each song. Still, there is an intimacy to the show that highlights Celine's stunning unique voice. The KK 104 S accurately captures every nuance and detail throughout each performance.

For Celine, performances all come down to emotion and self-expression. “I think she loves the KK 104 S because it allows her to express herself best,” comments Desjardins. “She creates this natural compression with the mic and her voice by pulling away when she pushes more, in order to keep the same dynamic.”

Desjardins says that the KK 104 S is remarkably consistent in its sound, regardless of how the mic is positioned to the singer: “When she sings off-axis, the sound is almost identical to the on-axis sound except that it is of course lower in François Desjardins, Jean-Charles Ethier, Marc Thériault and Denis Savage. For Celine, performances all come down to emotion and self-expression. “I think she loves the KK 104 S because it allows her to express herself best,” comments Desjardins. “She creates this natural compression with the mic and her voice by pulling away when she pushes more, in order to keep the same dynamic.”

Desjardins says that the KK 104 S is remarkably consistent in its sound, regardless of how the mic is positioned to the singer: “When she sings off-axis, the sound is almost identical to the on-axis sound except that it is of course lower in intensity,” he explains. “A lot of other mics would change tone, and possibly lose all the details when they reach 25 degrees off-axis. The KK 104 S can handle this – it’s one of its greatest characteristics.”

A Collaborative Relationship

Sennheiser was involved from the outset in helping Celine’s audio staff allocate a wide range of possible microphones for the show. “We have a great relationship with Sennheiser, and they have always been right behind us on

everything,” said Desjardins. “For this show they made every effort to source equipment for us – not only microphones, but wireless equipment. This really helped us identify our needs.”

“Sennheiser is pleased to have played a significant role in Celine’s most recent performances at the Colosseum at Caesar’s Palace Las Vegas,” commented Jean Langlais, president of Sennheiser Canada. “Celine is a very discriminating artist who is intimately aware of every aspect of her performances – especially the sound. It is clear that this has been a success not only from the perspective of Celine and the technical teams involved, but also the millions of fans who were lucky enough to attend.”

In addition to Celine’s use of the Neumann KK 104 S, the show is also outfitted with an array of other Sennheiser and Neumann mics. “We are using the Sennheiser SKM 2000 XP wireless series on the backup singers, coupled with a MME 865 capsule,” said Desjardins. “And we have Sennheiser and Neumann all over the drums – the Sennheiser evolution 900 series sound fantastic for this application.”

Drummer Dominique Messier was very involved in researching which microphones sounded best on drums, recording everything on multitracks and playing it back in order to determine what worked best. He ultimately chose Sennheiser e 902s for the toms; a Neumann KM 150 for the highhat; a Neumann KM 184 and MKH 800 TWIN on overheads. “He also put a Neumann TLM 102 on the vintage kick drum we’re using,” explains Desjardins, and it not only delivers the right sound, but also compliments the look.”

Sennheiser MKH 800 TWINS are used on the three conga drums. “We put the 800s in the middle of them, and by using this different pattern, I have to say, I’ve never heard balance like that.” said Desjardins.

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