

The 8th Annual Parnelli Awards

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Alice Cooper served as master of ceremonies.

Parnelli Awards Pay Tribute to the Stars of Live Audio

The 8th Annual Parnelli Awards brought together the legends and up-and-coming talent of the live event industry to honor the companies and people nominated for their outstanding work this year. Held at the Rio Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, the show featured state-of-the-art audio, lighting and video, master of ceremonies Alice Cooper, and in keeping with the Vegas theme, showgirls decked out in flashy costumes to greet the attendees. The attendees paid tribute to audio innovators Roy and Gene Clair, founders of the Clair Bros. (now known as CLAIR) of Lititz, Pa., one of the largest and most successful sound companies in the world; and Dennis Sheehan, longtime tour manager for U2.

Luminaries of the Night

Roy and Gene Clair won the Parnelli Audio Innovator Award for their contribution to the industry — from pioneering many gear innovations to building an audio empire. As their reputation for quality service and products grew, so did their list of clients — Elton John, the Rolling Stones, Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, James Brown and the Beach Boys to name a few. And despite the company's success, the brothers have kept the business in Lititz, Pa., the same small town where they grew up.



Roy Clair accepting the Parnelli Audio Innovator Award

“We grew slowly and weren't in a hurry,” Roy Clair said while accepting the award. “We always thought it would be better to be the best, not the biggest. If you want to be successful, take a hobby and turn it into a business — that's what I did.”



Gene Clair accepting the Parnelli Audio Innovator Award for many gear innovations and building an audio empire.

U2 gave their kudos via video to their longtime tour manager Dennis Sheehan who won the Parnelli Lifetime Achievement Award. Sheehan began his career working with Jimmy James and the Vagabonds during their European tour and later assisted on some of Led Zeppelin's biggest tours. He has worked with the likes of Lou Reed, Patti Smith, The Damned, Siouxsie and the Banshees and Soft Cell. Sheehan is currently working with U2 in the studio as they record a new album and will go on tour with the band once again next spring.



Hey Dennis. Who's the babe?

“I am deeply honored to receive this award,” Sheehan said. “I never thought it would be my lifelong career. I am honored to receive this award along with the Clair Bros. and Michael Tait who have been a part of the success of U2 throughout the years. I also want to thank Bono, The Edge and all those I've worked with who have helped me grow in this business.”



Hometown Hero Sound Company

The winner for the Parnelli Award for Hometown Hero Sound Company of the Year was Tour Tech East of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. “We’ve been nominated before in the category, and we were the only Canadian company,” said Tour Tech East President Peter Hendrickson. “It’s a pretty big deal for a Canadian company to

win on an American court.” Ten staff members from the company attended the award show, and Hendrickson dedicated the award to them. “It’s all about people and service,” he said. “At the end of the day anyone can buy gear. There is an old saying in the music business that says, ‘if you want to end up with a small fortune in the music business, start with a large one.’”

Sound Image won the Parnelli Award for Sound Company of the Year for the Rascal Flatts tour. “I would like to thank FOH and all its readers for nominating and voting us Sound Company of the Year,” said Sound Image President Dave Shadoan. “We dedicate this award to our longtime friend and Sound Image family member Jim Douglas.”

Russell Fischer won the Parnelli Award for System Tech of the Year for the Toby Keith tour. “I’m very grateful for being recognized for just being me and wanting the audience to have the best experience possible,” he said. “Being a system tech can sometimes be a thankless task, filled with long, frustrating hours. Thank you for noticing.” Ironically, Fischer was not at the show because he is now FOH mixer for Taylor Swift.

Kevin “Tater” McCarthy won for Monitor Mixer of the Year for Linkin Park. “I was very surprised I won,” McCarthy said. “This is going on my 23rd year and to be recognized like this from your peers is great. I want to thank my wife and children for their endless support and my assistant Paul White for all his great help.”

Ken “Pooch” Van Druten — nicknamed the Susan “Poochi” (in reference to soap opera star Susan Lucci) of the industry for his years of being nominated yet never winning a Parnelli — finally ended his losing streak, winning FOH Mixer of the Year for Linkin Park. “I love what I do and I appreciated all your votes,” he said.

The night also honored the transportation companies that have a direct effect on the live audio industry. The Parnelli Award for Coach Company of the Year went to Diamond Coach, Upstaging Inc. was named Trucking Company of the Year, and the Parnelli Award for Freight Forwarding Company of the Year went to Rock-It Cargo.



Tour Tech East President Peter Hendrickson is proud that his Canadian company won the Parnelli Award for Hometown Hero Sound Company of the Year.



Dave Shadoan, president of Sound Image, accept his Parnelli Award for Sound Company of the Year, dedicating it to Jim Douglas.

The Parnelli for Tour Manager of the Year went to Mike Amato for the Linkin Park tour. Ed Wannebo won the Parnelli for Production Manager of the Year for the Kenny Chesney tour. “Despite the craziness of this biz, I want to give a shout out to all those who kick ass and get it done, keeping the fun meter always in the red,” he said.

And the Parnelli Goes to...

Parnelli Audio Innovator Award
Roy & Gene Clair

Parnelli Lifetime Achievement Award
Dennis Sheehan

Hometown Hero Sound Company of the Year
Tour Tech East — Canada — Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Sound Company of the Year
Sound Image — Rascal Flatts

System Tech of the Year
Russell Fischer — Toby Keith

Monitor Mixer of the Year
Kevin “Tater” McCarthy — Linkin Park

FOH Mixer of the Year
Ken “Pooch” Van Druten — Linkin Park

Coach Company of the Year
Diamond Coach

Trucking Company of the Year
Upstaging, Inc.

Freight Forwarding Company of the Year
Rock-It Cargo

Tour Manager of the Year
Mike Amato — Linkin Park

Production Manager of the Year
Ed Wannebo — Kenny Chesney



Ed Wannebo accepting his Parnelli Award for Production Manager of the Year for the Kenny Chesney tour.

The 2008 Parnellis were made possible by Timeless Communications and its sponsors.

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PLSN/FOH Parnelli Celebrity Classic

The live event industry spent a day on the links for the PLSN/FOH Parnelli Celebrity Classic Golf Tournament at Siena Golf Club in Las Vegas, an event that also served as a benefit for Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Foundation. Proceeds from the event went directly to the foundation, which helps to serve disadvantaged youth in Phoenix by providing them with a social outlet — a community center known as The Rock — centered around music.



FOH/PLSN Publisher Terry Lowe gives Alice Cooper the proceeds from the PLSN/FOH Celebrity Classic golf tournament for the Solid Rock Foundation.

Alice Cooper, who was honorary chairman and celebrity host at the event, also played in a tournament, handed out awards and personally signed several prizes that had been raffled off. About 120 people from the live event industry attended. Audio manufacturers Meyer Sound and L-ACOUSTICS sponsored holes in the tournament. *FOH/PLSN* Publisher Terry Lowe presented a check from the proceeds of the Celebrity Golf Classic to the Solid Rock Foundation the next evening, during the Parnelli Awards ceremony.

Sponsors of the 2008 PLSN/FOH Parnelli Celebrity Classic Golf Tournament:

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