



Astatic Mics Solve Problems On Kenny Rogers Holiday Tour

As the holiday season comes to a close, Kenny Rogers is wrapping up his annual “Christmas & Hits” tour that runs from Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve.

Frank Farrell, Kenny’s Technical Director and Monitor Engineer, says that the sold-out tour goes to every kind of venue from arenas and casinos to theaters and high school auditoriums.



Designed to be “as frugal as possible in this economy,” the tour includes an 8-piece band and a full complement of A/V equipment with multi-video servers and five projector screens, all of which fits into a semi behind two buses and two trailers.

An integral part of the show is Rogers’ popular Christmas repertoire, which requires choral support. Different choirs are chosen locally from colleges, churches or high schools, “which makes it challenging,” according to Farrell. “We usually try for college choirs because they’re older and more mature-sounding.

Asked how he and his crew balance the levels of the band and the choir, Frank responds, “Miking the choirs is a major challenge, which explains why we like the Astatic 1700VP

(Remote Control Variable Pattern) mics so much. We’ve tried all kinds of different ways of miking the choirs and so far, the Astatic 1700VP offer the best solution in terms of pattern control and sound quality.



“The choir is on a riser in an opening center stage between the drummer and keyboard player. We’re using two of the 1700VPs for choirs that vary from 18

to 30 members. The mics are in front of the choir on stands positioned at the corners of the riser, and it’s really cool being able to dial the pattern in tight and experiment to get the best sounds for different situations.”

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Describing the overall advantages provided by the 1700VPs, Frank explains, “We get a really good sound and it’s quite amazing how loud we can actually get the mics for tunes like ‘O Holy Night.’

“The 1700VP has such a small cable it really blends into the stand itself even with the extension booms you don’t notice the stands so much from the audience even up to 40 ft. out. And the people in front look through those stands to the video, so the mics don’t intrude at all. It’s been a blessing.”

Other equipment for the Rogers tour includes two Digidesign D-Show consoles for FOH and Monitors, Clair Brothers 12 AM wedge monitors and Sennheiser 5200 wireless mics.

According to Frank, “everyone has in-ear monitors except for Kenny who’s on the wedges, so that presents challenges. Even though the Astatic mics are off axis and 25 feet upstage of the monitors, you still get reflections from the stage but the mics are very good at picking up from the direction you aim them because of the different patterns you can dial in, which I like a lot.

“The producer of the show is Kelly Junkerman who’s directed three of Kenny’s movies and this is the happiest he’s been sound-wise. Our FOH Engineer Keith Bugos who’s been with Kenny for over 30 years has never been able to get the choir with this kind of fidelity.



Left to Right: Frank V. Farrell , Keith Bugos, Brian Parkos

“Brian Parkos, our system tech who sets up the Astatic mics and dials in the patterns every day, has been very happy about how easy they are to take care of, set up and maintain.

“So in summing up, I’d have to say from the guy who sets them up, to the two engineers, the producer of the show and Kenny, everyone’s been very happy with the Astatic mics and what we’ve achieved here.”

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