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Press Release - For Immediate Release

EZpro International Provides the Audio for Wuhan's New World-Class Attraction

Zhi Yin Hao is an outstanding multi-dimensional live theatrical performance, created by the famous director and artist Mr. Fan Yue.

The drift-style experience show is held on a steam ship that cruises the Yangtze River from its base in Wuhan City, China. A 1920s styled steam ship and two piers have been built to recreate Wuhan during an era when it was China's second largest city after Shanghai. Wuhan was often called 'Eastern Chicago,' due to its cosmopolitan atmosphere.



EZpro International was responsible for the highly creative design, installation and commissioning of the audio and video systems, which deliver an immersive experience for the performers and the participating audience.

The two-year, RMB 400 million project was developed by the Wuhan Tourism Development Investment Group, together with Fan Yue. Determined to find the best audio system for the production, the director's team initially approached several different companies. The EZpro International team was led by Vice-President Tao Zhang, who took on the role of chief designer. EZpro designed the first version of the system and rented a warehouse in which they built a 1:1 steel structure to simulate a section of the ship for proving and demonstrating the system. The director, composer and sound engineers were so impressed that EZpro was appointed and the project commenced.

As the show runs every day, reliability is crucial and EZpro designed a system combining Community, Powersoft, Symetrix, Allen & Heath, Apart Audio and Furman equipment, running on a Dante network with fibre optic transmission and full redundancy.

The show has three separate performance areas. Audience members enter the world as it was in Wuhan 100 years ago when they walk down a pier and onto a pontoon. From here they board the ship and become a part of the performance.

The pier and pontoon both have independent control rooms, housing Allen & Heath Qu Chrome consoles, Symetrix processors and Powersoft amplifiers. Thirty-nine Community IP55-rated R.15COAX loudspeakers are installed along the left and right sides of the 220m-long pier. The 140m-long by 20m-wide pontoon is equipped with twelve Community R.5COAX99 loudspeakers and four WX-218SDF subwoofers.

Based on the early 19th-century boat, Jianghua, the ship is 120m long, 22m wide and 15m high. It has four decks with ninety-eight cabins, a bar, entertainment area and a dance hall. The nightly shows involve different stories taking place on each deck. The design team used EASE to simulate sound leakage of the different zones and calculate the acoustic curtains required to achieve isolation between them.

Over four-hundred and seventy loudspeakers are installed around the ship, all powered by Powersoft amplifiers. To create an immersive effect without comb filtering, EZpro opted for stereo configuration throughout, even though this required more complex cabling and high amplification. Four Community D10 loudspeakers are installed on the first deck to cover the dance floor, while two levels of audience seating on the main and first decks are covered by sixteen Community D6 and fourteen C6 loudspeakers respectively. The bar area uses sixteen D6 ceiling loudspeakers, with sixteen V2-28 loudspeakers around the main deck for surround effects.

The ninety-eight cabins on the first and second decks each have a 'window,' created by using a Samsung LED TV displaying period scenes. Each cabin is also installed with a 2.1 audio system comprising two Community C6 loudspeakers and an Apart Audio CMSUB8.

The heart of the system is the main control room in the middle of the first deck. This houses an Allen & Heath dLive S5000 console, together with a dLive DM64 Mixrack of 65 mic/ line inputs. Two Mac Pro computers play multi-channel music and audio can be sent to any of the 114 channels using the Dante controller. Symetrix Edge modular processors are installed in equipment rooms on each deck.

With 108 actors performing the story of Wuhan, audience members can either watch or interact with the players in the dance hall, bar or between the aisles. The actors use Shure ULX-D wireless systems, with Countryman miniature capsules. Wireless antenna points have been set up to ensure the frequency isn't lost as the actors move around the different performance areas of the steel ship.

The director required the sound of the pier and the pontoon to be consistent as the ship moves close to the pier. A wireless system is installed on the pontoon to receive the signal from the ship and connect to the Allen & Heath Qu Chrome console in the pier control room, synchronising the sound on the pontoon and ship. Two Community R2-77Z and two R2-94Z loudspeakers, together with four Community R2SUBDF subwoofers, are installed on the ship's navigation deck to provide reinforcement for the pier as the ship gets close.

The director's team and main investor continually sought perfection during the show's creation. While the ship was under construction, the investor rented a warehouse in Wuhan and built a 1:1 steel model of the first two decks of the ship so that rehearsals could proceed.

Fully justifying its investment, its resolute attention to detail and the sheer hard work of all involved, Zhi Yin Hao is proving a world-class attraction that has played to a full house at every performance since its debut.

Tao Zhang, the designer of the system, commented, "Participating in this project has been exciting, but we also faced a lot of difficulties. The complexity of the entire sound system, the limitations of the construction environment and the uncontrollability of the acoustic environment were all enormous challenges. At the same time, it was a very creative project; in the process of continuous creation, the director's team constantly comes up with new ideas and we needed to temporarily adjust the configuration accordingly, which demanded high flexibility from the system."

Mr. Zhang continued, "Another challenge lay in the system stability, because Zhi Yin Hao performs every day. In order to ensure smooth performance, there could be no problems with the audio system. We achieved all signal channel distribution by multi-track playback and fixed microphone signal routing. Ultimately, with every effort by our entire team and the strong support of the director's group, we have provided an excellent solution."

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Community Professional Loudspeakers is a developer and manufacturer of innovative loudspeaker systems for installed sound applications. Based in Chester, Pennsylvania, Community is an American original whose innovative products have shaped the professional sound industry since the company was founded in 1968.

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