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Fast Forward Video Plays for Sting

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Diagonal Research LLC

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIF.

Diagonal Research, LLC has been developing new technologies for the field of live performance since 1998. We specialize in the relatively new area of lighting and video convergence, which is simply the use of lighting consoles to control onstage video. The Fast Forward Video Omega Deck has been a cornerstone of our systems, providing high quality content delivery in a lightweight, rugged frame that we have found to be very consistent for long-term projects.

The use of video technology in lighting products was not a practical reality until the turn of the millennium, despite significant R&D investments from industry players. The concept of integrating lighting and video didn't emerge in practical products until 2001, when Diagonal Research introduced the NEV6 DMX Video Controller, and High End Systems released the Catalyst Media Server.

Today, the NEV and the Catalyst are "old men" in a very new field. While there are dozens of similar products in the market today, all have taken a software approach, with products running on standard Apple or XP systems. The NEV remains a very effective solution.

The lighting industry's standard control protocol, DMX, is a derivative of RS-485. This is how the lighting console communicates with the lighting system. The NEV controller reads these DMX signals, and through specialized drivers, allows direct control of standard broad-



cast-quality video components, including the Fast Forward Video Omega Deck.

The NEV6 video controller and the FFV Omega first went on the road with the rock band Tool for their 2001 world tour. Since then, the system has developed into the NEV8.2 and has been featured on tours with artists such as Green Day, The Beastie Boys, Eminem and Sting.

For the Sting tour, Omega Decks were used to deliver content for four large arrays of LED video walls set up behind the performer. There were 13 Omega channels running online during the show, made up of five dual-deck and three single-deck systems. Each LED array had three Omega channels assigned to it, allowing three layers of video to be mixed. The Omega Decks and NEV controllers were installed in road racks, which were positioned behind the backdrop on stage. The rest of the NEV controlled system consisted of four SDI video mixers, an SDI router, and four small automated cameras. The entire NEV video system was operated by two networked GrandMA lighting consoles.

OMEGAS ARE SURVIVORS

The Omega Decks provide high quality digital video with nearly instantaneous random-access. The deck's removable drives allow for the rapid swapping of drives and easy loading of new media. The image quality is excellent—much better than DV, and the decks stand up to the rough treatment and heavy schedule that touring demands. At Diagonal, our business is pushing the envelope, and the FFV decks perform exceptionally well when pushed. The 13 drives used on Sting suffered every bump and bruise a world tour can deliver, and they performed reliably and consistently throughout. The Sting "Sacred Love" tour played in more than 150 cities worldwide through 2004 and 2005.

Breckinridge Haggerty has been a professional lighting director for theatrical, corporate and concert events since 1987 and is the owner of Diagonal Research LLC which was founded in 1998. He may be contacted at breckinridge@mac.com.

For more information, contact Fast Forward Video at 800-775-8463 or visit www.ffv.com.