

A show full of superlatives: Sennheiser at the Eurovision Song Contest 2006 in Athens

Wedemark/Athens, May 2006. – Greece has every reason to be proud of itself. First, the Greek soccer team fought off tough competition to become European Champions in 2004, followed in the same year by the highly successful return of the Olympic Games to their Greek birthplace. And the success story continued last year, when Helena Paparizou won the Eurovision Song Contest for the very first time for Greece with her song “My Number One”, which meant that Europe’s biggest live TV show is being held in Athens this year. When 37 countries line up to compete for the new title on May 20, audio specialist Sennheiser will be there to guarantee perfect microphone and monitoring technology. This is the 21st time that Sennheiser has been the official equipment supplier for this mega-event. And this time round, it even has three new products to offer.

The dimensions are nothing short of mind-boggling: within just 10 days, Greece’s public TV channel ERT will be broadcasting two live shows full of superlatives, the Eurovision semi-final with 23 participating countries on May 18 and the Grand Final with 24 performances on May 20. Getting everything just right means organizing no less than 80 rehearsals with the artists and the entire stage equipment, as well as carrying out numerous soundchecks and fine-tuning the complete show. Not to mention the international coordination involved in such an event. Simply providing the TV pictures for 38 countries requires the installation of 20 cameras, 250 square meters of high-definition LED screens, almost 3,000 lamps and spotlights and 180 kilometers of cables. Perfect sound is provided by audio specialist Sennheiser from Wedemark, Germany, who was also the Greek TV channel’s first choice as a partner. After all, Sennheiser has already been responsible for twenty Eurovision Song Contests before this one, guaranteeing an unprecedented wealth of experience.

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More than 100 million viewers will be watching the show at home when the Swiss band *six4one* opens the Grand Final with “If We All Give a Little”. Added to this will be the 18,500 guests at the Olympia Indoor Hall in Athens, including around 2,000 media representatives. Just like the Swiss performers, all the vocalists from the 24 nations will be relying on microphones and wireless technology from audio specialist Sennheiser. With its 13-meter semicircle, the stage at the Olympic Indoor Hall may well be reminiscent of an ancient Greek theater, but technically speaking everything is state-of-the-art.

“This time, we brought no less than three new products with us,” said Klaus Willemsen, Sennheiser’s specialist for wireless technology, “including the new SKM 5200 wireless microphone for the vocalists and the super-compact new SK 5212 bodypack transmitter, which is so small that the performers hardly even notice that they’re wearing it. We’re working with 54 microphone channels and 16 channels for wireless monitoring at the venue, this time with the newly developed 3250 monitoring system. Interference-free monitoring is vitally important for the performers, as they wouldn’t be able to hear themselves at all without monitoring.”

The tension is bound to rise as soon as the rehearsals begin – and not only for the artists. “The stage technology here in Athens is more complex than ever before,” said Klaus Willemsen. “That makes frequency management a real challenge. But so far we’ve survived our ‘baptism of fire’, and that will make everyone feel more secure on the night.”

Sennheiser is also providing the equipment for the so-called “green room” where the performers can be seen waiting nervously for the votes to come in from 38 countries. Back in 2004, one of them was the singer Sakis Rouvas, who achieved a respectable third place for Greece. This time, he will be hosting



the show together with Maria Menounos, and both, of course, will be using microphones and wireless monitoring from Sennheiser.

An event of such dimensions presents huge challenges not only in terms of logistics. Expert support is also welcome when it comes to dealing with such a wide range of cultures and languages. “We have enjoyed outstanding cooperation here with our Greek Sennheiser partner Nakas,” said Klaus Willemsen. “Getting that kind of support from our colleagues in Athens made so many things much easier.”

This year, the show will even feature fireworks on stage – as well as faster voting by the 38 participating countries. The organizers in Athens, who already demonstrated their considerable talent for staging impressive shows during the 2004 Olympic Games, are looking forward to a fantastic music party with guests from 38 countries – in keeping with the motto: “Feel the Rhythm”.

Als einer der weltweit führenden Hersteller von Mikrofonen, Kopfhörern und drahtlosen Übertragungssystemen erzielte die Sennheiser-Gruppe mit Sitz in der Wedemark im Jahr 2005 einen Umsatz von rund 300 Millionen Euro. Der Exportanteil liegt bei 83%. Insgesamt beschäftigt Sennheiser über 1650 Mitarbeiter, davon rund 60% in Deutschland. Sennheiser operiert weltweit mit eigenen Tochtergesellschaften in Frankreich, UK, Belgien, den Niederlanden, Dänemark, China, Singapur, Kanada, Mexiko und den USA.

Weitere aktuelle Informationen über Sennheiser finden Sie im Internet unter www.sennheiser.com oder kontaktieren Sie:

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