

Palm Expo Expands, To 'Deliver Business'

by Ram Bhavanashi



PALM EXPO 2016 – the 16th edition of India's premiere tradeshow on Pro Audio, Live and Install Sound, and Light – sought to scale up by further remodelling from its previous editions, through some very specific initiatives on both quality and quantity. The result was visible across the show floor and booths that looked far more serious in business, with experientially less noise distraction, albeit a discordant note or two!

The latest edition of the popular PALM EXPO, held from May 26-28 at the Bombay Exhibition Ground in Mumbai, was a sort of pack of surprises. Pleasant for most, and wonderment for some though. For, it had some countable measures:



- The event had a separate hall - Hall 5 connected to Hall 1, that featured booths/exhibits focused on lighting effects, lasers, stage lighting, install lighting, LED displays, video projection. Hall 5 due to the nature of the exhibits did have audio playing out loudly though intermittently as after all how can you do a light show without music. In contrast Hall 1 that was dedicated for Audio, featured low, or NO sound ambience.
- It differentiated the MUSIC EXPO that had been an integral part of the event for long; henceforth, the MUSIC EXPO will no longer be part of the PALM EXPO.
- It introduced 'paid' entrance for all those who were not invited by the exhibitors and organizers. This straightaway meant filtration of non-serious crowds that had been a sort of pain for the event since beginning.
- The PALM Soundscape, and DJ Championship, as well as the IRAA Awards were organized, in a stand-alone structure – Hall 4 – at the VIP parking area.
- It had what is claimed as the largest LED display wall for an exhibition in the country, welcoming the visitors; displaying every day the programme highlights of the event and showcasing video promos of exhibitors

'For the first time at PALM, we are seeing it so quiet, despite with visitors, with no noise chaos, that's very heartening,' was a sort of common expression from most

exhibitors. "We are now able to talk to our potential buyers with more focus, and even our visitors are happy about that," said an exhibitor who had been regular at the event. "As an exhibitor that's the least we expect, and we got it. That's great."

The twin-factors of strict enforcement of 'NO-Sound' regulation on exhibitors, and 'paid entrance only' had a very reassuring impact on the event, according to most. The glare of criss-crossing lighting and laser beams having moved to a different hall also helped the business to a good extent, since it also took away the milling crowds that normally get in for the sheer fancy of colour hazes.

Davinder Wadhwa, Chairman-Managing Director of the newly-carved out Modern Stage Services Pvt Ltd (Projects) – which as usual, had the largest booth space on the show floor – endorsed: "We didn't want 'jantha' (commoners/ non-serious visitors). We want people with whom we can talk and do business. That's happening. What else!" Perhaps, that's the best endorsement the 2016 edition of PALM could have. "Our strict enforcement of 'NO-Sound Contract' signed with the exhibitors, besides other big initiatives have paid off exceedingly well; exhibitors understood the importance of such a consensus and accepted it all so well. That itself marks a big stride for PALM," explains Exhibition Director Ramesh Chetwani. "The show scored on many other fronts as well."

That the show recorded 23,732 unique visitors compared to 18,607 visitors for the 2015 edition, despite the paid entry, showing an increase of over 20 per cent footfall, the growth indicator is taken to be very positive.

Anil Chopra, the event's Director says about the event's directions "we made a wise move by segregating the audio and light shows- thereby creating exclusivity for the domains and respective audiences. We are now rearing for further growth."

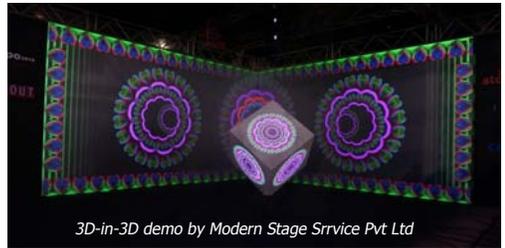
Affirms Ramesh: "Our motto of 'Delivering Business' remains strongly focused. We are happy that the industry has supported us well, and we see growing together to achieve higher laurels as we move together."

The New Attractions...

The PALM 2016 show floor, as usual, had its own attractions of 'newcomers' as well as new launches, besides

the biggies and regulars. Some of the most new attractions included:

- A 3D-in-3D projection mapping display by the newly carved Modern Stage Services Private Limited.
- Direct presence of two German audio majors, Adam Hall and beyerdynamic.
- 'Made-in-India' speakers from first timer Micro Electronics.
- Coming in of DPA microphones to Indian market.
- New musical bands and products taking centre stage at the Arenas.



Modern Stage Service Pvt Ltd created a stunning visual setting of 3D display on their spacious booth, with what they called 'the world's first of its kind 3D-in-3D' demo of projection mapping. Bringing together the competence of three distinct visual solution players – Christie, Dataton and Infitec – the Delhi-headquartered entertainment conglomerate, in association with its visual solutions concern Video Designs, created truly mesmerizing visuals of 3D imaging within a matrix of yet another, larger 3D projection mapping setting.

"We wanted to bring something very unique to market this time; we found there is a great demand for such kind of solution," said Davinder Wadhwa. According to him, no one in the world ever attempted something like what they did at PALM. "It's a very unique solution that creates immense value at the place of its install," Wadhwa explains. "Malls, Amusement and Theme Parks, Fashion pageants, Museums, Experience Centres etc. will look and feel differently with this solution."

Using six units of Christie's 14,000 lumen DLP projectors, aligned in with Infitec's 3D solution, and Dataton's latest Media Servers, the MSS Pvt Ltd team weaved magical designs on the show floor.

Adam Hall, the German manufacturing and distribution conglomerate, having been at the event for many years through its local partners, chose to have its direct presence this year. The company marked its coming by highlighting its brand ranges that included Gravity microphone stands; analogue VIBZ mixer; Maui5, and Curv 500 LD systems. The company also displayed a range of stage systems and hardware solutions.



The beyerdynamic local and German team

Another German audio major beyerdynamic, which had also been showing its solutions through its local partners all these years, made an independent presence this time, indicating the audio major's faith in the PALM platform, as well as its growing business in the country. "We have made some impressive business growth over the past years in this region," said Robert Winterhoff, beyerdynamic's Managing Director, Global Sales & Marketing. "It's been our strong commitment to India, and the market has been quite promising.. It's like demonstrating our commitment to the market through our direct presence here."

The company exhibited TG1000 wireless microphone system that brings the huge advantage of big bandwidth of 319 mhz, and charging contacts and the new measurement capsule TG mm1W to calibrate ELA and PA systems. However, brand new on their booth was the drum microphone TG D71C. The boundary microphone complements beyer's legendary drum microphone Series with a high impulse fidelity, quick-responding attack and maximum sound pressure Level. The company also showed microphones in the real application: the legendary M88

touring gear Series. Also new was the DT1770 coming with Tesla 2.0 technology.

Micro Electronics, coming for the first time to the PALM Expo, launched a sizable range of new speakers under 'Made in India' tag. Some of them included the 15FH510, 15FW76, and 15MT76 mid-range woofers, besides a few more high-end woofer models.

PALM Expo 2016 also became a platform for introduction of DPA microphone systems to Indian market through Bengaluru-based audio-distributor Ansata. The company demonstrated a range of DPA solutions on its booth, as a highlight of its show.

A very important aspect of Indian Pro Audio entrepreneurship that came out on the floor of the PALM Expo, but not highlighted though, was the Vardhaman Megatech (VMT) of the Vardhaman Group's major initiative of acquiring majority ownership stake in the British audio brand OHM. While the audio major exhibited on the floor, its latest ranges under its BRT installation series, and GL-15 Line Array series, beside others, the top ranks of the companies disclosed that VMT will re-orientate the British brand, with more custom developed product ranges and marketing. (*Read more about it here (link to E-newsletter).*)

Other audio manufacturing majors such as Bose, Electro-Voice, Harman, Music Group, Neutrik, Sennheiser, and Yamaha directly showcased their latest ranges, followed by the distribution majors such as Ansata, Dev Electronics, GM Audio, Hi-Tech Audio, Narain, Pro Musicals, Sound Team, and SunInfoNet - all brought to the show floor their latest ranges. Some of the products appeared really incredible, and more they attracted quite a good amount of attention and appreciation from visitors.

Bose Professional demonstrated its F1 Flexible Line Array systems, and L1 Portable PA systems as highlights of its show. F1, said to be the first powered portable loudspeaker that lets the users control its vertical coverage pattern, can be adapted to the PA of the space, irrespective of playing at floor level, on a stage or facing raked seats or bleachers.

The L1 system, said to be Bose's smallest, lightest and easiest-to-set-up system weighing just 29 pounds, combines conventional PA and monitors into one sleek unit. Positioned behind or to the side of a performer, DJ or presenter, it promises to deliver wide, even sound coverage

throughout the stage area and audience—even off to the extreme sides.



Electro-Voice brought to PALM their recent, and popular ND Series microphones and the X-line Line Array systems. Launched initially at the NAMM 2016 in Anaheim early this year, the ND Series, coming as it did as successors to the N/Dym Series is designed for live performances and studio applications. At the heart of the new dynamic models is a new large-diaphragm capsule design which takes the technology of the original

N/Dym capsule to new levels of sonic performance. The series features dent-resistant Memraflex grilles, humbucking coils to guard against EMF noise and shock-mounted capsules to minimize handling noise.

HARMAN, as usual, brought to show a wide basket of solutions, and sought to hog the limelight with a slew of product and programming offerings. On product front, it had a unit or two from all its group concerns that were highlighted by some incredible products. The most notable, among the many included the Soundcraft Ui16 digital mixing system that comes in a compact, road-rugged stagebox format, with built-in Wi-Fi and ability to be controlled by any connected device via a standard web browser- no Apps, no OS limitations, no constraints on how or where one mixes from. The platform-agnostic device – compatible with iOS, Android, Windows, Mac, and Linux – can use up to 10 control devices simultaneously. Besides, it features built-in HARMAN signal processing from dbx, DigiTech and Lexicon, including dbx AFS2, DigiTech Amp. While this unit is characterized by its sheer portability, Soundcraft's largest and latest offering, that actually took the centrestage on HARMAN's booth was the Vi7000 digital mixing console that promises to deliver the best ever Vi sound ever. Displayed for the first time for Indian market,

the Vi7000 packages ultra-low noise mic amp designs and enhanced 96kHz 40-bit floating point digital audio processing, while FX comes courtesy of 8 independent Lexicon multi-FX units, BSS DPR901ii integration and a BSS graphic EQ on every bus output.

Music Group exhibited a whole big range from across its brands, that were highlighted with their 'technology innovation' award winning iQ-15 portable loudspeaker, that comes with 2500 Watt power, Klark Teknik DSP technology, and Ultranet networking. Music Group demonstrated, besides the iQ Series, the iP Series from Turbosound, and those from its constituent brands.

Sennheiser brought to show its latest HD headphones. The audio major also highlighted its popular Evolution Wireless D1 digital transmission system; the KH 805 active studio subwoofer, and the TLM 107 microphone, among others. Yamaha Music India, continuing its last year's initiative of separate, and large show, outside the main hall, exhibited its ranges of mixing consoles, MI and PA systems. The highlights of the show included the MA2120 and PA2120 switchable Class-D mixer amplifiers, the PX series power amplifiers, and the Tio1608-D Dante-equipped I/O rack.

Distribution Majors...

Hi-Tech Audio systems, brought to show its ranges from its principals- Bose, DiGiCo, Koltz, L-Acoustics, RCF and Sennheiser.

Sun Infonet, another Delhi-based major, highlighted its show with solutions from its principals - Allen & Heath, Nexo, Quest and Shure. The products demoed included the GLD Chrome Edition digital mixing systems, and the ZED series analog mixers from Allen & Heath; the new plug-n-play Motive microphone series, and the industry's first ever dual-diaphragm hand-held microphone KSM8 Dualdyne from Shure; and the QM-Series and MX Series monitors from Quest Engineering.

Hall 5, on the other hand, had industry majors such as Osram, and Canara Lighting, besides a slew of distribution entities that have been regular with the PALM event.

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HARMAN Continues To Rock Live Arena With New Endorseees



Ras Yatra band comprising of Kaushal S Inamdar and Hamsika Iyer

Continuing its tradition of encouraging new, emerging, and young talents from the musical industry, HARMAN introduced singers Hamsika Iyer, Shibani Kashyap and Shweta Pandit as its new brand ambassadors. Hamsika Iyer is a well-known playback singer and performing artist with popular songs like *Chamma Challo* and *Chanda Re* to her credit. Shibani is a singer-composer, who earned her fame anchoring the singer hunt show – *The Bathroom Singer*. And Shweta Pandit is a renowned Bollywood playback artist and popular for singing tracks from movies including *Mohabbatein*, *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* and *Highway*.

Hamsika, in her mesmerizing best voice, enthralled the crowds with her renderings, independently, as well as, in the company of Kaushal S Inamdar – her partner in the now fancied Ras Yatra band. Crooning in different genres, and with variety of timbre, the Kashi girl who made waves with *Chamma Challo* and *Chanda Re* in Bollywood, took the audiences with rapturous applause. Popular singer Mihir Joshi did the honours of introducing the Ras Yatra duo, and band to the Live Arena audiences.

While the day one of the Live Arena began with Hamsika and Kaushal, rest of the programming included Sivamani, Ranjit Barot, Mihir Joshi, Clinton Cerejo, Kabir's Cafe and Sunitha Sarathy.

"HARMAN is excited to introduce the next generation of professional solutions to the Indian market with industry-defining innovations that elevate the experience of recorded and live performances," said Prashant Govindan, Senior Director-Professional Solutions, HARMAN India and Sri Lanka. "At HARMAN, our success is defined by how well we serve both the artists who make the music and their fans who want to enjoy their favourite songs, no matter where they are or how they are listening,"

he explained. "We are extremely proud to add Hamsika Iyer, Shibani Kashyap and Shweta Pandit as HARMAN brand ambassadors who will help us further perfect our technologies and inspire music lovers everywhere to choose the best in sound– HARMAN," he added.

Says Shweta Pandit: "from studio to the stage, HARMAN's innovative technologies and products help artists sound their best. I look forward to a great musical partnership with HARMAN."

"I'm delighted to partner with a company like HARMAN on my musical journey," adds Shibani. "Products like the JBL EON One and the DigiTech TRIO+ are ideal companions for solo performing artists like me."

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