

Sennheiser – The Standout Mic at the 53rd Annual Grammy Awards

Los Angeles, February 2011 – “Music’s Biggest Night” was a triumph for users of Sennheiser microphones and personal monitors, who went into the 53rd annual Grammy Awards presentation at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on February 13, 2011 with a combined total of nearly sixty nominations. Sennheiser endorsee Lady Antebellum was the big winner, with the trio of country-pop musicians picking up five awards on a night that also featured vocal performances by over one dozen Sennheiser users and saw a variety of Sennheiser and Neumann microphones, including four new MK 4 large-diaphragm condensers, put to use capturing backline, orchestra and audience.



Lady Antebellum, moving through several stage positions, used three SKM 2000 handheld transmitters, outfitted with MMD 935-1 capsules, as they performed a medley that included “Need You Now,” the song that helped them win two of the night’s biggest awards, “Record of the Year” and “Song of the Year,” as well as “Best Country Song,” “Best Country Album” and “Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals.”

“The 935 is very well suited for all three vocalists,” according to the band’s FOH engineer, Brett “Scoop” Blanden. “That’s probably the best microphone – and I tested a lot of them – for Hillary, for her dynamic range and for its attentiveness to the female vocal environment, to 2.5 and 3 kHz. It’s also a really great mic on Dave. The 935 appeals to the dynamics not only in his amplitude but also his timbre. As for Charles, he’s got to have a capsule that can take a lot of juice and the 935 does that as well.” Plus, adds Blanden, “It’s a good, solid, well-built microphone. That capsule is so road worthy – you can drop it on the stage, pick it up and start singing without a hitch.”

Another of the night’s big winners was Sennheiser user Lady Gaga, who stole the limelight on the red carpet as well as onstage, where she emerged from an egg to

showcase her new song, "Born This Way," with the aid of a custom chrome SKM 5200 transmitter topped with an MD 5235 capsule. In addition to picking up "Best Pop Vocal Album" for *The Fame Monster* she also won awards for "Best Pop Female Vocal" and "Best Short Form Video" during the pre-telecast awards presentation.

Eminem, who won two awards during the evening, took to the stage to perform "Love the Way You Lie" accompanied by Rihanna, with her nickel finish SKM 2000-XP, with MMK 965-1 capsule, and Maroon 5 singer Adam Levine. Making her Grammy show debut was first-time nominee (as co-writer of the song) Skylar Grey, who joined in to sing the haunting chorus of Dr. Dre's "I Need a Doctor," using an SKM 5200 paired with an MD 5235.

"Eminem and Dr. Dre both were singing into SKM 5200 handhelds with the ME 5005 capsule, all finished in chrome," reports Ryan Cecil, Eminem's monitor engineer. "We bring in the ME 5005 as it is Eminem and Dr. Dre's preferred microphone. Not only do these mics provide the fidelity these guys are looking for, but also high gain before feedback, and very little tonal and pattern change when it is cupped."

He continues, "Soundtronics and ATK provided us with eight mixes of Sennheiser G2 personal monitors for Eminem, Dr Dre, Adam Levine, Rihanna, Skylar Grey, and band members. The G2s are still the standard by which all wireless personal monitor systems are judged. The rock-solid RF performance and sound quality of these units make them the easy choice for all of Eminem's performances." Cecil adds, "As always, Sennheiser provides us with solid performance, incredible support, and the high-end sound quality we need."

The broadcast, on CBS, kicked off with a ten-minute tribute to Aretha Franklin, recovering from recent surgery, that featured Sennheiser users Christina Aguilera and Florence Welch, of Florence + the Machine, alongside Yolanda Adams, Martina McBride and Jennifer Hudson. Aguilera, taking the lead on "Ain't No Way," sang through her custom red SKM 5200 with a Neumann KK 104 S capsule while Welch, a first-time nominee, made use of her custom gold SKM 5000/KK 104 pairing as she sang "Freedom."

Throughout the evening's broadcast, Miranda Lambert, Muse, Katy Perry, and Rihanna in a duet with Drake, delivered electrifying performances with their favorite Sennheiser mic combinations. Additional Sennheiser artists who were recipients of

Grammy awards during the night's festivities included Rihanna, Muse, Miranda Lambert, the Zac Brown Band and Sade.

Sennheiser and Neumann microphones were also featured across the backline instruments throughout the show. Nearly three dozen e 602 II mics were used on kick drums and floor toms, along with four new MK 4 large-diaphragm condenser mics on overheads. A half-dozen MKH 800 mics were in use on the orchestra, while a large selection of Neumann KM 184 and 84 condensers were positioned on string players and throughout the audience at the arena.

"The MK 4s were very good – accurate and warm at the same time. It has a great look and a great sound," comments John Harris, one of the telecast's two music mixers, alongside Eric Schilling. "The e 602 IIs are my go-to choice for any large drum, especially kick drums and floor toms. You may have noticed that every set on the show had that complement. We do the same on the CMT Awards for all those kits. It's got a fat sound, and it's super-dependable, as well as rugged."

With Sennheiser artists making use of both 2000 and 5000 Series wireless handheld mics on the show, the company's new EM 3732-II receiver, which is compatible with both systems, proved to be a timesaver. David Bellamy of Burbank, California-based RF specialist company Soundtronics, the wireless coordinator for the telecast, observes, "Using this receiver means there is one less machine I need in the rack. We changed back and forth between the 2000 and 5000 series twice. It was nice to be able to do that."

The wide switching bandwidth of the new receiver was also a benefit in a dense RF environment such as the Grammy Awards production, especially since last year's mandated evacuation of the 700 MHz frequency range. As Bellamy noted, this year he had to squeeze the same number of RF channels into half the frequency range compared with last year's show.

According to Bellamy, Soundtronics owns more Sennheiser inventory than anybody on the West Coast. The company recently purchased forty channels of EM 3732-II receivers.

The broadcast enjoyed the best viewing figures in ten years with an average of 26.66 million tuning in, according to the Nielsen ratings – a three percent increase over last

year. The show was reportedly also the top trending topic on Twitter Sunday night and into Monday morning.

The Sennheiser Group, with its headquarters in Wedemark near Hanover, Germany, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of microphones, headphones and wireless transmission systems. The family-owned company, which was established in 1945, recorded sales of around €390 million in 2009. Sennheiser employs more than 2,100 people worldwide, and has manufacturing plants in Germany, Ireland and the USA. The company is represented worldwide by subsidiaries in France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark (Nordic), Russia, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Japan, China, Canada, Mexico and the USA, as well as by long-term trading partners in many other countries. Also part of the Sennheiser Group are Georg Neumann GmbH, Berlin (studio microphones and monitor loudspeakers), and the joint venture Sennheiser Communications A/S (headsets for PCs, offices and call centers).

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Photo Caption:

Lady Antebellum perform during the 53rd annual Grammy Awards.

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