



Shakhtar Donetsk Celebrates

Mike Clark reports from Donetsk, Ukraine on a show to mark the 75th anniversary of local sporting legends, Shakhtar FC . . .

Ukraine - Supported from a technical point of view by tech directors Marco Astarita and Matteo Tagliabue, K-Events/Filmmaster Group president Marco Balich recently created and produced a huge show for the 75th anniversary of Shakhtar FC, just two years after organising the inauguration ceremony for its home ground, the Donbass Arena in Donetsk.

Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich welcomed the 51,000 spectators to the event, a multimedia combination of the past, present and future of Shakhtar and its home town, featuring the club's mascot (a mole) "playing" a huge spiral keyboard projected onto the pitch, a gigantic birthday cake, an enormous inflatable soccer player, mass choreography with 700 performers and - as a finale - a show by R&B diva, Rihanna.

The technical production team coordinated by Astarita included LD Durham Marengi, audio designer and director Daniele Tramontani, France's Cosmo AV and E\T\C (providing the video content and large-format projection system respectively) and Italy's Parenti Fireworks. The main contractors were all Italian: Agorà (audio, lighting and rigging), Gioforma (stage design) and Limelite (stage and props). Marengi, Tramontani and Agorà had previously worked together on another memorable K-Events/Filmmaster production - the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics.

Astarita, already in Ukraine four months before the show for on-site surveys and pre-production, explains: "Logistical difficulties included having to set up and dismantle some of the equipment before and after soccer matches, which continued during the period prior to the celebrations. We also had to cover the pitch with Terra Tiles and some of the technology used was delicate from a weather point of view. Then there was the modular stage used by Rihanna, which had to be assembled like that used for half-time Super Bowl concerts."

Tramontani designed an impressive 360° main L-Acoustics rig (eight clusters of V-DOSC and dV-DOSC and four of Kudo enclosures) flown from the roof, integrated with a series of pitch-side stacks covering the front rows of the first level of seats and eight SB28 subs in each corner of the pitch: a total of 272 enclosures.

In the audio control room, an Avid Venue console handled all the sound sources - main PA, services and performers' monitors. Outside on the stand Alessio Comuzzi assisted Rihanna's FOH engineer, manning an Avid Profile desk, while Oliver Marino was at the side of the pitch, assisting the artist's monitor engineers at another, 48-channel, Avid

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The stadium (top) and views of the show to mark the 75th anniversary of the club, including a close-up of the sphere (right).

console. The Optocore signal transport network, designed by Luca Giaroli, was a dual fibre ring connecting two X6R16LI-FX, two X6R16LI-TP and eleven V6R-FX (on the pitch side and the catwalk under the roof). The 64 audio signals from the Meyer Sound Galileos arrived at the Control Room and were fed to the XTA processors, L-Acoustics LA8 and Lab.gruppen amplifiers.

Marengi described the lighting rig: "General wash cover was provided by 120 Robe Colorwash 1200 AT PC, and spot gobo coverage and audience lighting by 130 Coemar i-Spot eXtremes. Specific focuses on performance areas were provided by Clay Paky Alpha Beams - fantastic for this type of long-throw application. We had 48 Alpha 1500s and 48 700s. Lighting at pitch level, to illuminate performers without impacting the projection, was provided by 48 CP Alpha Spot HPE 700. Lycian 4kW were in conventional followspot positions, with a further six Lycian 2.5kW at pitch level, picking up performers while keeping their beams clear of projection on the pitch surface."

Marengi added: "The challenge was to light up to 700 performers dancing on the projected effects - light levels had to be very low so as not to wash out the projected images, but still be visible to the live audience and for HD broadcast. Normally we would work with lux levels of between 700 and 1000 but we were generally running at around 200 lux during the projection sequences!"

The E\TC technicians were directed by Patrice Bouqueniaux and coordinated by Alison Gill, who commented: "A total of 32 Christie video projectors (a combination of 18 and 20k units) were installed in six different locations in the stadium's upper seating tier: for the pitch and the mountain hiding the sphere, 12 Roadster 20K and 12 Roadie HD 18K were divided across two platforms on either side of the stadium, while for the sphere, eight Roadie HD 18K projectors were divided into four platforms, one on each side of the pitch."

E\TC's proprietary multimedia control platform Onlyview performed all the soft-edging, image keystone correction and pixel and 3D texture mapping for the projectors, and synchronised images to the show's soundtrack. Images were also relayed to the stadium's two giant LED screens via Onlyview, complementing the action below.

Gill continued: "We were only able to finalise the mapping on the day of the show (without full darkness) and be sure of the definitive form of the 360° objects (mountain and sphere). We also had the challenge of creating perfect 3D video mapping onto the sphere which was hidden inside the mountain, from where it emerged and rose to a height of 25 metres; our Onlyview system allowed the projections to follow the sphere's movement, remaining in perfect sync."

E\TC and Cosmo AV had already worked together on various important projects, such as the celebrations for the Eiffel Tower's 120th anniversary and the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games' opening and closing ceremonies.

For the Shakhtar celebrations, Cosmo AV transformed almost the entire pitch into an enormous, whirling galaxy and a flower-covered lawn. It also covered the mountain in newspaper articles about the team, then turned it into a "real" mountain, from which coal miners of old appeared. Dynamic abstract graphic effects alternating with real images told a visual story of the team.

As well as the spectacular closing roof-top effects, Italian pyro company Parente Fireworks' 18-strong team had the unenviable task of firing effects from the huge inflatable cake, but the job was further complicated by the fact that the cake was taken on to the pitch deflated and folded on a platform. The pyro show, designed by Antonio Parente, was controlled by 75 of the firm's wireless Firemaster systems.

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