

# Cabsat MENA 2013

The region's premiere broadcast show returned to Dubai with its largest ever footprint and some genuine world launches. But does a larger scale result in a successful show?



**DiGiCo's Ian Staddon on the Delta Sound booth**



**Harris Broadcast gave a debut to its Platinum IP3 router**



**TC Electronic launched the DB6 at Cabsat 2013**



**Product demonstrations on the Snell booth**

## THE HALLS OF THE DUBAI

International Convention and Exhibition Centre are a familiar site for the regional pro audio industry. Three important industry-specific trade shows take place at the venue every year, but few have taken up as much of a footprint as Cabsat 2013.

Cabsat has exuded a sense of confidence in a growing market for the last few years. In previous iterations this has been felt through the buzz on a packed show floor, but for the latest edition it was evident in the sheer scale of the floor plan. Previous Cabsats have seen the show spill the smaller Zabeel Halls and the Sheikh Zayed Halls with visitors filling packed aisles. So it is easy to see why the organiser this year decided to upgrade its presence to cover the eight main halls at the venue.

This gave Cabsat the necessary 'wow' factor when exhibitors and visitors alike first entered the show.

Indeed, the first comments made to *Pro Audio Middle East* about the event universally concerned its apparent size. 'It feels much bigger, we're seeing more people,' said **Lawo's** Klaus-Joerg Jasper, on a stand highlighting the new MC<sup>2</sup> 56 and its V<sub>pro</sub>8 video mixer. These views were echoed on booths from the likes of **TSL, Snell, Canford** and **Argosy**.

It was not just the footprint that had increased. Walking around the halls a number of stands were noticeably



**BBH showed off some of its equipment outside the show**

larger as manufacturers increased their presence at the show. 'We've been expanding our stand space for the past five years since we've been at the show, and again this has been the best show that we've done,' said **Calrec's** Anthony Harrison. 'Cabsat is the biggest show for the region, not just the Middle East, it's also useful for Africa.'

Of course, with an expanded floor plan came new exhibitors and more stands. In some cases, such as with **Riedel** and **Wohler**, it provided the opportunity to have a stand in their own right rather than being with a distributor or systems integrator. 'It's making sure we're agnostic to who we are dealing with,' noted Wohler's Terry Alford on a stand highlighting the manufacturer's DVM Series. 'A lot of the SIs are working collaboratively to deliver the larger projects. If they are doing that, we need to free ourselves up for conversations.'



**Trilogy's Malcolm Reed with the new Messenger**

In terms of first time exhibitors, there were new booths from distributors such as **BM Audio**, which highlighted products from **Avalon Design** and **Brauner Microphones**. Several manufacturers also made the decision to come to the show

for the first time. 'Our expectations were somewhat low because we didn't really know what to expect but we've been very pleased, it's been worthwhile,' said Brad Harrison from **Wheatstone**. 'We've seen good systems integrators, we talked to end users, it's all been managers and engineers, none of the tyre-kickers that we get at NAB.'

Equally important were the systems integrators such as **Tek Signals**, **BCE**, **Media Group International** and **AI Futtaim Technologies**, all of whom took stands at the show. 'Much of the business we do out here is install-based and the people involved with that are the systems integrators,' noted **DiGiCo's** Ian Staddon. 'They exhibit here and are at this show. You get the majority of customers coming here because the SIs are here and it's a big dedicated event.'

One of the interesting upshots of the new floor plan, and a potential

issue for the organiser to examine for the 20th edition of Cabsat, was that it created a divide in the halls that made it feel like two separate shows. The bulk of the broadcast manufacturers and systems integrators seemed to be in halls five to eight, while satellite companies were around the corner in halls one to three. This left hall four in an uncomfortable position. Here the broadcast manufacturers including **AVT** and **AEQ** were separated from the main core of interested visitors around the corner in an area with seemingly lower footfall.

'We're supporting our UAE distributor Venuetech in hall four and whenever I've been through to Hall 6 it's been more active in there,' reasoned **Sennheiser** Middle East's Ryan Burr on a stand showing the new **Neumann** KH 10 monitors. 'Because it is so large, more people aren't necessarily walking all the way through. The perception is that from hall four down to hall one is all satellite, when realistically there is a lot of audio here.'

There were indeed plenty of audio highlights in hall four. On the **GSL Professional** booth there were products and representatives from **Harman** and **Klotz AIS** who were kept busy with pre-scheduled meetings. **Genelec** was prominent on the Thomsun



**Ashley Shepherd explains Yamaha's Nuage**

Trading booth while **Extron** took a stand at the show for the first time. Of equal note was **Yamaha** giving product demonstrations of its Nuage console. 'We've seen lots of broadcasters who've started to branch out into postproduction and I think that's an indication of a more active market,' noted Audio Grotto's Ashley Shepherd who came to the show to demonstrate Nuage at its regional launch and was pleased with the response to the console.

Regional launches are familiar to Middle East exhibitions. Indeed, there were plenty of local launches from the likes of **Sonifex**, **Solid State Logic**, **Sony**, **L-S-B**, **Snell**, and **Blackmagic Design**. But more impressively there were also some global launches. **Harris Broadcast** and **Cobham** premiered

new equipment on the visual side, while **Trilogy Communications** unveiled its Messenger intercom and **TC Electronic** launched its DB6 loudness meter on the HHB Communications stand.

With Cabsat taking place just a few weeks before NAB, the timing of these global launches was particularly interesting. 'We could have waited for NAB, but we were a little bit ahead of schedule and it was better for us to show it now rather than in a month,' reasoned TC Electronic's Allan Strand. 'All our sales staff know about DB6 and have been waiting for the go. They really want to show this to their customers so now they can get it out on the road.'

But it wasn't only the timing that attracted these manufacturers to

do global launches at the show, it was also the suitability of the new products to the local audience. 'We're offering Messenger as an entry-level product and we're hoping to open up the market out here with it,' said Trilogy's Malcolm Reed. 'We could have launched it at BVE or NAB but we felt the Middle East and North Africa was the right market for it.'

This desire for smaller systems was equally seen elsewhere on the floor, with manufacturers such as **RTS** noting the prevalence of smaller independent studios and production companies looking for equipment. Equally, business was being written on the show floor. Dubai-based distributor **NMK**, for example, had a number of sales with particular interest in products from **Roland** and **Midas**.

It is hard to tell if the increased footprint was a help or a hindrance

to Cabsat 2013. There was the prestige of occupying the main eight halls of the exhibition centre, but there was also a sense of wide aisles and more open space that was deceptive in making the show feel a little empty at times.



**Sony demonstrated its 4K solutions**

As companies like **Clear-Com** and **Avid** noted, the right people were certainly there and good quality leads were generated so the majority of exhibitors went home happy. The global launches and new products on show should hopefully mean the visitors did as well.

<b>2013 Dates:</b>	12 - 14 March
<b>2014 Dates:</b>	23 - 25 March
<b>Venue:</b>	Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre
<b>Total exhibitors:</b>	840
<b>Attendance:</b>	TBC
<b>Contact:</b>	www.cabsat.com

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