USER   REPORT

Jazz Network Packs SixMix for the Show

Henry Engineering's USB Broadcast Console Selected for Live Coverage of Music Festival

by Bernie Celek
President
Arizona Jazz Network

SEDONA, Ariz. The Arizona Jazz Network is an Internet broadcast station with a contemporary jazz format. On the air since early 2008, our music library includes more than 7,000 CDs from current artists, as well as those from the early days of jazz.

Our wide range of music was one of the reasons that Arizona Jazz Network was selected as the "official voice" and broadcast outlet for the six-day Sedona Jazz Festival scheduled for Sept. 23–28.

On location

I selected **Henry Engineering**'s new SixMix USB broadcast console to be our main remote audio console. This unit is perfect for our remote studio. It's compact and easy to use, and will handle all the source gear we'll use at the festival.

Our "Sedona studio" has been built into a portable rack case.

There are three mics, two Teac Pro-01CD players and a Marantz PMD671 flash recorder. Because the SixMix console has two mic inputs, I use an external mic preamp for the third mic and feed it into (line) chan-

Host Debbie Celek uses a SixMix console for remote broadcasts of the Sedona Jazz Festival.

> **Although the SixMix is** intended for a studio setting, it makes a superb remote broadcast mixer. It's about the same size as my laptop, and is much easier to operate than 'garage band' mixers.

We've been chosen to provide live coverage of this popular music festival, which requires us to build a fully functional "satellite" studio that can be transported easily and set up at the festival location in Sedona. Because we'll be broadcasting live, we also need a way to get the audio signal back to our main studios in Cottonwood, Ariz.

nel 3 on the mixer. The CD players are for music playback, and the flash recorder will be used to record artist interviews during the shows. We'll also take a stereo mixdown from the live stage mixer for putting live performances on the air.

Our RE-20 mics are used for the show's host commentator, jazz historian and other announcers. We have three of

Henry's MiniPod headphone amp modules for the announcers. They connect directly to the SixMix, so each announcer has his own headphone jack and volume control. Our broadcast booth uses JBL 4310 monitor speakers, fed from the Monitor output of the SixMix.

Although the Sedona Jazz Festival is a few months away, we've already built the remote studio and have had it in use for a few weeks just to be sure everything is working okay. And it is.

The SixMix is an awesome mixer. It might appear simplistic, but there's lots more "under the hood" than what you see from the outside. The Monitor output mutes when the mics are on, so there's no feedback in the booth when the mics are live.

The Cue speaker is loud and clear. It also mutes when a mic is live, yet the board operator can cue (preview) sources through his headphones when the mics are in use. There are six mixing pots (with nice big knobs), but each channel has two

inputs (A and B) so you actually have inputs for eight stereo line sources.

Cool stuff

The coolest feature of the SixMix is its built-in USB codec. I'll be using a laptop with the SixMix for playback of pre-recorded segments, and to record some parts of live performances. The SixMix codec overrides the sound card in the laptop, and sounds much better. After recording an interview using the Marantz PMD671, I just unplug the compact flash card, plug it into the laptop and edit the interview as needed.

The edited interview can then be played directly from the laptop via the USB connection to the SixMix. It's efficient and quick … and sounds great.

The SixMix has a stereo analog Program output that I feed into a Barix Instreamer 100, which is connected to a high-speed Internet connection. This produces a digital feed to our main studio in Cottonwood, where a Barix Exstreamer 100 receives the remote site IP audio and sends it to our digital Harris console.

Although the SixMix is really intended for use in a conventional studio setting, it makes a superb remote broadcast mixer. It's about the same size as my laptop, and is much easier to operate than the "garage band" mixers that I've used for live remotes. When you're on the air doing a live show, you don't need scores of tiny knobs to add confusion and complication.

The SixMix obviously is designed for broadcasting, not for mixing PA system audio or a multi-track recording session. It does what a radio station console should do, such as turning on the "On the Air" warning lights, and providing a mix-minus output for your telco hybrid.

I did a quick audio proof on this unit, and was impressed that the noise floor is almost 90 dB below the normal operating level, which is +4 dBu on the balanced Program outputs. It sounds great.

The SixMix would be a great choice for anyone needing a compact yet capable broadcast console for a small on-air studio, production or news room, college radio or Internet radio as I'm using it. I've been impressed with its feature set and performance. Tune in to our live broadcast in September and take a listen for yourself: *www.azjazz.net*.

For more information, contact Henry Engineering at (626) 355-3656 or visit www.henryeng.com.