

Customer
Case
Study



Commonwealth Games

Glasgow Games Put on a
Show with Clear-Com

December 2014

All eyes turned to Glasgow for 11 special days in July and August 2014, as Scotland's capital hosted the XX Commonwealth Games. Athletes from 71 nations braved the often inclement Scottish weather to produce outstanding sporting achievements across 17 sports, including more than 140 Commonwealth records.

And it wasn't just the sport that had over a billion people around the world glued to their televisions – the all-important Opening and Closing ceremonies represented Scotland's chance firstly to set the tone for the Games, and then to celebrate what was arguably the most successful 'Friendly Games' ever. It was therefore a major responsibility to ensure that the ceremonies went off without a hitch, and it was here that Clear-Com's communication systems played a major role.



Jack Morton Worldwide, a global brand experience agency with vast experience of large scale events including ceremonies at the 2004 Olympics and the 2010 FIFA World Cup, was tasked with producing the Opening and Closing ceremonies in Glasgow.

"We create award-winning public ceremonies and events that have inspired billions of people around the globe – moments of drama and spectacle that bring the world community together and celebrate the unique qualities of time and place," says Brew - James Breward, Production Manager of Comms and Special Projects, Ceremonies, Jack Morton Worldwide. "Clear, reliable communication is imperative to producing these large scale events. With so many people working and collaborating with one another, being able to communicate and give instructions is a pivotal service. Without it, producing events like this would simply not be possible."



Jack Morton Worldwide worked with global audio and communications company Delta Sound, the official communications supplier for the Glasgow ceremonies. The communications equipment needed to cover three separate Glasgow locations - Bellahouston Academy for the off-site rehearsals, Celtic Park for the Opening Ceremony and Hampden Park for the Closing Ceremony.



The Opening Ceremony marked the end of the Queen's Baton Relay, which had travelled to 70 Commonwealth countries over 288 days, and featured iconic Scottish performers including Rod Stewart and Susan Boyle. By contrast the Closing Ceremony turned into a jubilant party that celebrated arguably the best ever 'Friendly Games', with performers including Scottish singer Lulu and Australian mega-star Kylie Minogue symbolising the handover to the next Commonwealth host city, Gold Coast City in Queensland.

The rehearsal site stayed active throughout the Games and served as the location for the full rehearsals of the Closing Ceremony. Once the Opening Ceremony was complete the equipment was derigged and taken out of Celtic Park; for the Closing Ceremony the team pre-cabled what they could during overnight and early morning sessions in Hampden Park, but the main load-in commenced at 00:30 on the morning of the closing ceremony.

Delta Sound is a long-standing Clear-Com house, so the choice of system was easy; the equipment installed was a full-scale, integrated communications solution with Eclipse HX-Omega digital matrix systems as the backbone, and an HX-Pico frame along with 60 x 24- and 12-key V-Series Panels connected to Eclipse HX over the IP network. Six HelixNet digital partyline systems were deployed in the stadium: two in the front half and two at the back half. A total of 22 HelixNet beltpacks were used by the crew and follow spot positions.

The events also required a wireless system that would allow operators and crew to roam and cover wide areas, so in addition to 16 interfaced semi duplex and 16 interfaced semi duplex Motorola channels, Clear-Com stepped in to supply 12 FreeSpeak II transceivers and 16 FreeSpeak II wireless beltpacks which connected directly back to the Omega frame with the integrated E-Que cellular controller card. The FreeSpeak II wireless beltpacks enabled supervisors to cue performers onto the stage during the Opening and Closing ceremonies, and to speak directly to V-Series key-panel and HelixNet beltpack users.

“Robust and reliable wireless coverage is nearly always the biggest problem on large events. Users can be any distance apart - for example, in Glasgow, one of our active locations as part of the opening ceremony was some 10 km away from Celtic Park,” says Brew. “Even when users were within the stadium or arena, due to the construction of the building and the propagation of radio waves it was a given that someone would need to be stationed in a location that was far-reaching via RF. Therefore the coverage range and reliability of the wireless system was crucial.



“I’ve used many different systems in the past but the FreeSpeak II was by far the best full duplex wireless system I’ve used. The reliability and coverage behaviour is better and more consistent than any other digital products I’ve used. Also the audio fidelity is better than any other digital product on the market.”

Brew adds, “Support from Clear-Com was fantastic, they were supportive from the start with the planning and were involved with minor tweaks and on-site support throughout the production. Ernie Addow and the support team in the Cambridge office were also receptive to suggestions and ideas that we as a team had regarding any issues or improvements, which was great to see.”

Thanks to the support from the Clear-Com team, communications on the ground were flawless and helped the ceremonies proceed to plan, providing wonderful book-ends to an immensely successful and memorable Games.