



Waves Plug-ins Part 13: Doubler



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April 2012 Issue

Production Profile

Lady Antebellum's Own the Night World Tour



Lady Antebellum is an American country music group, fronted by the tight harmonies and songwriting trio of Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood, who also plays guitar and mandolin. They're currently touring in support of their third album, *Own The Night*, released last

September, which won Best Country Album at this year's Grammy Awards, following their previous album, *Need You Now*, which won five for a career total of seven.

Written by Mark Frink
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This is Lady Antebellum's first arena headlining tour in major markets, following their *Own The Night 2011 Tour*, 2010's *Need You Now* theater tour in a short but busy career that began opening for Martina McBride in 2008, Kenny Chesney in 2009, Tim McGraw in 2010 and Keith Urban's 2011 Australian tour.

Lady Antebellum recently announced that they'd host the Rebuild Henryville event in Louisville, KY on May 16 to benefit the students and community of Henryville, IN, devastated by an EF4 tornado on March 2. Lady Antebellum's sound services are provided by Sound Image and Everett Lybolt out of their Nashville office.

Front of House



Brett "Scoop" Blanden mixes the show on a 96-channel Avid Profile taking 87 inputs from the stage. A studio engineer who made the crossover to live sound, Blanden made the switch to the Profile a year ago for Lady Antebellum's opening slot on Keith Urban's 2011 Australian tour, citing the desire for harmonic distortion and colors on this tour that the Studer he previously used was free of.

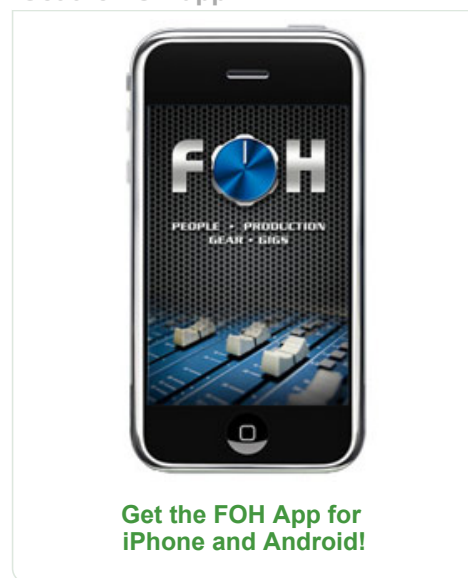
Keeping with that colorful mentality, he employs many plug-ins and enjoys products that "replicate the THD and harmonic relationships that afford live mix engineers opportunities of color similar to those of studio environments." His arsenal includes

Avid's Impact mix bus compressor and Serato's Rane Series 31-band Graphic EQ, which he likes to use for its linear-phase congruency and its Hi-Mid-Low tone function.

Blanden is also a big fan of the Waves plug-ins and lauds their C6 multi-band compressor which he calls a "very musical tool for dynamically solving frequency-specific problems that only jump out at certain times," allowing him to "tame them without taking body and tone out of each input by using EQ." He applies C6 instances to all the vocals, pointing out that vocals all follow the same plug-in architecture in order to maintain correct phase by minimizing shift often caused by latency.

He adds that the C6 is also helpful on electric guitar inputs. "The C6 allows you to tame some of the thumpy-punch

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created by the combination of a 4x12 cabinet and a Les Paul, without making those channels deficient in the low mid when the guitar player switches to a Strat on the next song."

He also mentions that, by far, his favorite implementation of the C6 is on the stereo matrix outputs to the main hangs of his PA, "providing dynamic musical frequency management without having to dive right into the house EQ." He also mentions Waves' new Renaissance EQ and their classic Q10 parametric EQ as favorites and points out that he uses Waves' Doubler on acoustic guitar and backing vocals.

Microphone Choices



When it comes to microphone choices for stage inputs, Blenden clearly enjoys classics. He uses a Shure Beta 52 on the kick drum right at the hole in the front head and, inside the drum, a Sennheiser e 901, leaning more on the 901 in arenas and theaters, while going more towards the Beta 52 in festival situations. He strongly recommends checking the phase relationship between the two kick mics daily and adjusting when needed.

He uses SM57s on both snare top and bottom, and has reverted to an AKG C-451 on hi-hat, given its history as his studio standard favorite, and for its off-axis rejection. On toms, he uses a Sennheiser e904 on the rack and a pair of Sennheiser e 902s on the floor toms, stating that as a drummer himself, he's simply a fan of dynamic mics on drums, particularly enjoying the e 902's "EQ characteristics, controlled bottom end, crispy top and the fact that they're generally indestructible."

Drum overheads are a pair of AKG C414s, and keeping with an adapted studio approach now used for live sound, he uses an Audio-Technica AT4047 mounted on a claw in front of the kick drum on the floor tom side to capture the rich drum kit warmth with a classic sound of a FET mic, occasionally applying a few milliseconds of delay and "compressing the heck out of it."

For electric bass, Blenden uses a custom Desert Island Audio "The Gardener" Bass Pre, based on a Class A Neve BA283 amp card, miking the Ampeg speaker cabinet with a beyerdynamic M-88. On the Eastman upright bass and all the line-level instruments, he uses Radial Engineering's passive JDI direct boxes.

Jason "Slim" Gambill's stage-right electric guitar rig is double-miked with a combination of Royer R-121 and a Sennheiser MD 421, while a Shure SM57 is substituted for stage-left electric guitar player and often slide guitar player Clint Chandler's rig, each panned across the stereo mix with up to a dozen milliseconds of delay, depending on the song, pointing out that only dynamic mics on the electric guitars are sent to any mono PA sends to prevent comb-filtering or phasing. Dave Haywood's electric is miked with an MD 421 and an off-axis AT4047.

The eight wireless vocal microphones are all Sennheiser SKM 5200-II transmitters with Sennheiser's famed MD 5235 dynamic capsules, using their top-end EM 3732-II receivers. These microphones also contain the new Sennheiser Command Channel, giving artists the ability to press a button and talk directly with the monitor engineer. Additional hard-wired vocal mics are all Sennheiser e 935s.

High performance is required during the acoustic part of the show that is performed downstage center at the end of an average 57-foot thrust, out in front of the PA. Drummer Chris Tyrrell plays a Cajon, miked with a Beyer M88 inside and an SM57 on the front. Haywood's several acoustic guitars, mandolin and bazouki all use Sennheiser wireless.

At his Front of House mix position, Blenden uses a pair of JBL LSR6328P near-field monitors before getting the PA and during line-check. Using HDx cards and Pro Tools for Virtual Soundcheck, he uses tracks from the previous show to "get his head in the game," and besides having a multi-track copy of each night's show, he says the technology also serves as a medium to record and rehearse the often-daily changes that the artists wish to make to the show.

"We have been very fortunate on this tour to have great artists, great gear and a great crew," Blenden adds. "Without any one part of this equation, this show would not be near the success it has been, and not near as much fun. Artists and crews with great attitudes make for an audience that has a great experience!"

Sound Image's System



Sound Image's Jim "Fish" Miller is crew chief and system engineer, assisted by Alex Moore on the stage-right hang. Miller spent six years on Brad Paisley's crew, working his way up to system engineer before moving to this tour last year.

The tour carries a total of 64 JBL VerTec VT4899 line array enclosures, and for arenas, they typically hang a dozen per side, though at Arco Arena in Sacramento, CA, they hung 16-deep mains, with three VT4887 cabinets under-hung. Side coverage is from 10-box VT4889 arrays and, now that the show is selling 270°, he hangs eight- or nine-box rear fill arrays to catch the back.

The main flown arrays are supported with six-box VT 4880A subs flown five feet behind the main and side hangs and are part of the main mix. Another 18 VerTec subs are ground-stacked and driven from an auxiliary send. The center sets of three are in a cardioid arrays beneath the stage thrust, and the rest are spaced out in pairs across

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the arced stage front and physically attached to four-foot-wide crowd barriers with special fittings so that blow-through barriers aren't required in the barriers. The system is powered with Crown I-Tech 12000 HD amplifiers and uses JBL's V5 presets.

In arenas, a VIP section in front of the stage holds 150 lucky fans, covered by stereo triple-stacks of VT4887 with individual VT4886 cabinets used for stage lip fills. This "Pit Fill" mix is fed by groups on the Profile with a reduced number of drums and electric guitars due to the inner pit audience's proximity to the source instruments. The system's FOH Lake Mesa EQ is fed by a Midas XL88 that takes feeds from Blanden's Profile and any support act consoles, such as Billy "Squirrel" Huelin mixing Darius Rucker on a Midas PRO6.

Monitor World



Pete Bowman mixes monitors on a Soundcraft Vi6 console, assisted by stage and monitor technicians Annie Hallquist and James "J-Mac" McCutcheon. Bowman previously spent seven years mixing monitors for Gretchen Wilson and switched over when this tour began last year. He points out that, due to the extensive communication and talkback of a dozen inputs between band and crew, he has all but two of his 96-input console's inputs filled. The desk's outputs are stuffed as well, with 16 IEMs, a drum sub and a reverb auxiliary.

Bowman uses the console's on-board Lexicon effects, with a dedicated reverb for each vocalist, based on a large hall but shortened a bit. Scott and Kelley each use just one mic, so their reverbs are simply fed a direct send, while Haywood uses six different vocal mics, so his reverb is on an aux send.

Bowman also mentions that he and production manager Curt Jenkins both are Belmont University alumni, as are drum and audio tech Annie Hallquist, stage manager Will Wilkison, keyboard tech Jeff Irwin, music director Jonathon Long, bass player Dennis Edwards, drummer Chris Tyrell, head carpenter James Mckinney and GAC rep Jill Ferris. Belmont is home to the only AACSB International-accredited Music Business program in the world, the Mike Curb College of Entertainment & Music Business.

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