

IDIS 491V – CMA Music Fest Journal 2005
Rachel Addison

Sunday, June 5, 2005

Jes Mercer and I left for Bill's house around 5:30 in the morning. We headed down to Nashville in my car, the Purdue van, and the Purdue truck. We arrived there around noon in the blazing heat. Setup had already begun in the Coliseum, but many of us were told to go back to the hotel and rest up. After checking in and relaxing for a while, Bill told us that there wasn't much for us to do just yet and to get rested because we had a long week ahead of us. We met up with some people from Moo TV and went out to dinner.

Monday, June 6, 2005

We all had to wake up fairly early today to begin unloading the trucks and to start setting up. We get to the Coliseum and the control room is freezing cold. We help set up a lot of the equipment in the control room, and then about half of us are sent over to the river stage to set everything up there. We arrive in the rain and find that we have to move our stuff from the truck, over the stage, and back down to our trailer/control room. The rain sure made that easy. The entire day is spent moving the racks from the trucks to the control rooms at both stages. We got a lot of help from the people who were building the stage, so luckily it went pretty quickly. We head back over to the main stage to help, but most of the work had already been done for the day. By about 9pm we were all pretty exhausted, but we knew it was just the beginning.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Today was another early day, 7am lobby call, and the day was spent helping build the main stage. I helped in the control room for part of the time, but most of my day was spent under the stage running cables, and on the stage building the LED walls. There were three walls to be put up, and 25 cubes per wall. Each cube had to be lifted individually by the pulley, and attached in rows. The humidity was unbelievable since it had rained the previous day. Most of the stage got built and it seemed we were pretty ahead of schedule. I began to help Louie with the graphics for both of the stages; making lower-thirds for each artist or band that was going to be playing. We left the Coliseum around 7 or 8pm and headed back to the hotel.

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Another early day. I spent most of my day helping Louie finish the rest of the graphics, which took longer than we had thought, but there were about 15 to 20 acts on the river stage every day for the four days of the festival. Once the graphics were finished, there wasn't much heavy labor to do. The stage is pretty much complete, the control room is up and running, and we are having very few difficulties. Bill put me in and Jes Mercer in charge of the golf carts and driving people to and from their vehicles or wherever they needed to go in the Coliseum.

We were basically in charge of keeping things organized and helping people get the little things accomplished, because at this point many people are getting stressed out, being as it was the last night to get things ready for the festival. Many of us stuck around for a while to make sure things were good and prepared for the shows, and then we headed back to the hotel.

Thursday, June 9, 2005

Today was the first day of shows. Bill had put me in charge of the graphics and running the VMP on the river stage, so of course I had a 7am lobby call. We finally get settled down there around 8am and begin to set up for the day. I convinced Bill and Fritz to let me borrow a laptop at the river in case I needed to fix any of the graphics; and it's a good thing I did. After helping set up,

I load in the graphics to the VMP for that day, and testing to make sure the lower thirds that were going to be put up on the boards did not have any mistakes. I notice that there were actually quite a few mistakes. So I spent the entire day working on graphics on the laptop, and putting up the lower thirds when the bands came onstage. After the bands at the river stage finished, we headed over to the main stage. Some of the people



who worked on the river stage were put to work on cameras on the main stage, some were told to go back to the hotel, and others, like me, were told to stick around to help out until everything was done on the main stage. We were told that there were many problems on the main stage with the lights that day, and many fuses had been blown; they weren't sure if everything was going to run smoothly or not in time for the main show. I helped out by picking up people from the parking lot and running any errands that needed to be done. I left with a few others for the hotel around 12:30 in the morning.

Friday, June 10, 2005

Today was a lot like the day before, 7am lobby call, river stage all day, main stage at night. There were only a few graphics this time that needed to be fixed, so I was able to spend more time focusing on the show and helping out with other chores. The show went smoothly and I even got to help direct for a few minutes while everyone was busy. Other times when there was no graphic to be shown, I shaded the cameras while Fritz went to help fix other problems and work his engineering magic. Somehow at one point I was running graphics, shading cameras, and switching out the tapes to be recorded; it was nuts, but I

loved being so busy. We went back to the main stage, ran errands, and helped with some more lower-thirds. Bill told me to go around to the other areas of the Coliseum to see how everything works and how the show is put together. So Jes



Mercer and I walk around the crowd and then over to the front-of-house cameras and watched part of the show from the scaffolding in the center of the Coliseum. It was actually pretty amazing, since this entire week up to this point I had only seen the shows from the control room. We watched Sara Evans and Dolly Parton while talking to some of the sound people. We eventually went back to the control room to help out,

and then some of us were told to go ahead and go back to the hotel just before the show ended to avoid the massive traffic.

Saturday, June 11, 2005

Today we arrived at the river stage to find that the humidity and condensation had taken a toll on our equipment. There was moisture on the computers and monitors, and our beta decks actually had the warning "HUMID!" and wouldn't work. After spending the entire morning drying our decks and trying to get things ready, and hoping that the rain would let up in time, we were informed that the show was going to be delayed. It had been raining pretty hard this morning and many people in the crowd decided to leave. Once the show had been given the okay, we were about an hour behind



schedule. The acts were told to keep their set short in order to catch up, but we still stayed behind schedule the entire day. I decided I had been working hard in the control room too much running graphics and shading cameras, and needed to get outside and do some other jobs, so I was told to run one of the front-of-house cameras. Three hours later I went back to help finish up the rest of the show. After the acts finished we decided to prepare our equipment better

overnight in case it kept raining. We left for the main stage once again. I spent most of the time at the main stage remaking a company logo to be shown at the end during the fireworks. About halfway through the show I went to the parking lot to pick up a few of the Moo TV employees. We all helped out as much as we could, but it was raining really hard and we eventually had to bring in one of the cameras. The show was finishing up and I left the Coliseum with the Moo TV employees for the night.

Sunday, June 12, 2005

Today is the last day of the CMA Music Fest, so we knew from the moment we woke up that we would be working hard until everything on the main stage was done and loaded out. We head over to the river stage and we get through the last remaining acts pretty quickly. The show was pretty flawless, when the bands came onstage I put up their graphics; in between acts I put up the screen dresses. While they are going on, we are also preparing everything in the control room so that as soon as the last act is done, we can just start moving everything out as quickly as possible. Bill is again requesting that his main camera ops be given frequent breaks so that they are ready to work the main stage at night. After the bands are done, we begin to tear down. I begin to shut down the computers and help unplug everything in the room. By the time I am finished, most of the cameras are taken apart and the truck is ready to be loaded up. Once again we have to move everything from our trailer up over the stage and then back down to the truck. At this time it's about 8:00pm and the last night at the main stage has begun. We try and finish loading out as fast as we could, but we had to send about half of our people over the river, while we continued to load out. We help out the lighting and screen guys load up their stuff, and then we finally can go. We get everything loaded and we end up at the main stage around 10pm. I help out Louie with some more graphics and begin to take down stuff in the control room. Once again we had to prepare everything so that the moment the last act walks offstage we can power through and get everything loaded up as soon as possible. At this point, every single person is exhausted and sleep deprived. In the past we had been told that load out has taken about 5 or 6 hours on average. We talked with the fork truck drivers and they agreed to help us move our large equipment up the ramp and to the loading dock. We were able to get all of the racks from the control room to the truck in only two trips, totaling about 30 minutes! Without the fork truck drivers it would have taken about an hour and a half with one or two people pushing each rack individually. Mercer and I helped load the Moo TV truck with all of the equipment that was put on the dock. Imagine two short girls and one man moving the majority of the video equipment into this large truck. We reach a certain point where we are in a holding pattern, and we have to sit around for just a little while for the rest of the equipment to arrive. We finish shortly and are amazed to find that it's not even 4am, we weren't expected to finish until at least 5:30. I help take trips back and forth to the parking lot to drop off people at their cars. Once everyone is ready and all of our stuff is packed in the cars, we carry on tradition

and head to Waffle House. Then after a good meal and some goodbyes to the people at Moo, we head to bed around 6am as the sun is coming up.



Monday, June 13, 2005

We left for Lafayette around noon, and of course everyone is so exhausted they can barely speak. We get back home in the early evening and I go to bed fairly early because I have to work the next day, but overall I had an amazing time. After this week I had decided that this was the type of work that I really wanted to do after I graduate, so I'll work a little bit harder to make sure it happens.