**HEAR’s John Harris Brings His Decades of Experience to Trio of Major Awards Shows, Including the Academy Awards, Grammy Awards, and CMT Awards**

**Las Vegas, NV, June 30, 2022 -** Major awards shows like the Academy Awards, Grammy Awards, and CMT Awards are hallmarks of broadcast entertainment, delivered to millions of viewers around the world. Combining numerous high profile musical acts, speakers, and media packages, production of these live events is demanding, complex and unforgiving. “Shows like these are very important, very expensive, and a lot of people’s reputations are on the line,” says Hugh Healy, Head of Audio for NEP’s Denali team, whose fleet of high-level video, audio, and broadcast vehicles played a role in all three of the productions. “You need to completely trust everybody involved in the process.” The shows’ producers turned to engineer John Harris and his over 40 years of experience to bring polish and stability to this string of important television events.

**Timeless audio**

For Harris, mixing the musical performances for the 64th annual Grammy Awards was business as usual, this being his 33rd appearance mixing the show. “I’ve mixed half the Grammy Awards shows ever made,” Harris says. “They all have similarities and differences, but I try to be the common thread.” This year’s show was the first to take place in Las Vegas at the MGM Grand Hotel, having traditionally been held in New York City or Los Angeles, and Harris helped ensure a consistent sonic vision for the broadcast. “Working in broadcast for as long as I have, I have a really clear idea in my head as to what the mix should sound like,” he says, noting that his vision always centers the viewer. “You want to bring across the excitement of a live performance in a way that gives people the sensation of being there when they’re not. That’s the trick.” Facilitating this across a multi-hour show is no small feat. “I’m performing with the artists in a way,” he explains. “The performance may be very similar to the rehearsals, but it’s never the same, so I’m really adapting. My hands are never not moving. It’s like the way a writer writes or a painter paints, they can create something that reliably bears their signature no matter the raw material.”

Harris points out that every person working on a show like the Grammy Awards brings a level of professionalism to the production that allows the broadcast to go off without a hitch despite its inherent complexity. “On a show like the Grammys, we’ve got artists using up to 110 channels of input, and then we’re transitioning to the next act in less than six minutes,” he says. According to Healy, it is Harris’ ability to integrate with the entire team of experienced audio professionals that is critical to the success of any major broadcast. “John turns out a good mix that works well within the context of the show,” he says. “He recognizes that it’s not all about him, it’s a combination of the music and the rest of the production. He interfaces well both politically and technically, which is what matters most.”

**Cinematic sound**

Harris mixed the Grammy Awards only a week after his company Harris-Elff Audio Resources (HEAR) facilitated the use of the powerful Gemini audio truck–available through the company’s partnership with NEP Group–for another major awards show: the 94th Academy Awards at the Dolby Theater in Los Angeles. With HEAR partner Jody Elff otherwise engaged mixing a live-to-stream broadcast from Sony Hall for Amazon Prime, Harris was dispatched to ensure that the full facilities of the dual-mix-room audio truck were accessible to the production team. “Gemini is out handling some of the biggest shows in the world, and that’s both because of its technical capabilities and the experience that HEAR provides as its purveyors,” Harris says. “We have refitted Gemini with the latest gear and systems, but these systems need to be managed. Jody and I make sure that whoever is operating them is able to leverage their full capacity.” At the core of Gemini are a pair of Lavo 96 consoles that Elff notes are both powerful and complex. “Even an experienced engineer may not know all the nuances of a particular tool like that if they haven’t used it extensively,” Elff says. “John really knows those Lavo consoles that we have in Gemini and can get a team up and running quickly. Not to mention he brings years of experience working in the most demanding audio environments to any role he undertakes.”

Tim Kubit, the Engineer-in-Charge for this year’s Academy Awards, has worked with Harris on numerous high-profile broadcast productions. As important as Gemini’s technical capabilities are to Kubit, it is HEAR’s steadying presence that is the difference maker. “What you’re hiring is the people, not the gear,” Kubit says. “Someone like John has decades of experience doing high end events and every one of them is stellar.” Kubit also values both Harris and HEAR partner Elff’s rapport with artists. “Audiences will judge these artists by how they sound on the broadcast, and it’s not like a studio recording where they can go back and tweak the mix for a year or more,” he says. “It’s very stressful for artists in that way. But both John and Jody have reputations that put the artists at ease. When you tell an artist that HEAR is involved in the project, any apprehension immediately disappears because they know they will be taken care of.” Healy echoes that sentiment. “When an artist representative comes in and sees John in the mix position, they feel very comfortable.”

**Country goes big**

While the CMT Awards–honoring the best in country music–may not yet have the international profile of the Academy Awards or Grammy Awards, they are ever on the rise, airing on CBS network television for the first time this year. The show’s producers once again leveraged HEAR’s capabilities, bringing John Harris on-site with the Gemini audio truck to mix the show live to air. “The CMT Awards had a thousand-percent increase in viewership this year,” Harris noted. “The producers wanted to step up the production level to match and absolutely did.” Though the show focuses strictly on the country music genre, it contains considerable stylistic variation within that umbrella. “There were artists running the gamut from more traditional to contemporary, from simple instrumentation to highly orchestrated,” Harris says. “There were also a number of duets as well as remotes coming in from all over Nashville. So the key for me was maintaining a clear and consistent sound throughout the show despite all these disparate elements.” Harris feels eminently comfortable crafting the perfect mix from Gemini, which he compares to a musician’s favorite guitar. “It’s a very fine instrument and I know I can play it very well.” The results were a resounding success, with Rolling Stone’s Jon Freeman noting in his review that the show was “mixed really well,” highlighting in particular that the “vocals sounded crisp.”

**Part of the team**

HEAR’s reputation continues to grow as Harris and Elff add more of the highest profile events in broadcast and live recording to their resumes, ensuring that they will continue to be a first call for years to come. Their experience level provides the assurances that production teams need for the industry’s most watched events. “When it comes to shows like these, it goes without saying that you need to hire people that you trust,” Kubit says. “If it’s a serious project, you hire a serious person like John or Jody.” Healy concurs, citing their self-sufficiency. “With HEAR, they just take care of things,” he says. “When there are millions of dollars and many reputations on the line, nothing beats a proven track record.”

**About HEAR**

Harris-Elff Audio Resources is a partnership between John Harris and Jody Elff, providing recording and mixing services, promoting awareness of the value of experienced audio professionals, and connecting content producers with audio specialists across the media spectrum. Harris and Elff have partnered to address the needs of an evolving media industry, providing recording, mixing and audio production resources that focus on the talent and experience of the engineers, coupled with hardware solutions to meet the needs of a new generation of content producers.

With over 70 years of combined professional audio experience focusing on (but not limited to) music, John and Jody have worked in some of the most demanding audio production environments in the world, from high-profile international television broadcasts to field recordings in Africa, art installations to award-winning album productions, their experience spans the spectrum of what is possible when working with audio in the 21st century.