

# A Thousand Suns Over the Garden

BY CLIVE YOUNG

Linkin Park first rose to fame during the waning days of Nu Metal, but 10 years later, the band is bigger than ever, thanks to an increasingly mature yet experimental sound. While “mature” is usually a codeword for “mellow,” the band’s music remains anything but, now incorporating everything from prog rock to electronica into the longstanding rap/rock amalgam that’s sold 50 million album sold worldwide.

Fronted by singer Chester Bennington and rapper/multi-instrumentalist Mike Shinoda, the band just finished the U.S. run for its latest collection, *A Thousand Suns*; while it will spend the summer playing to massive crowds on the Europe-

an festival circuit, the U.S. leg tour found Linkin Park taking home that ultimate tour souvenir: a concert taped at New York’s Madison Square Garden.

While any world tour will keep an FOH engineer busy, that



Linkin Park guitarist Brad Delson faces away while vocalist Chester Bennington and rapper/multi-instrumentalist Mike Shinoda let loose into their Sennheiser SKM2000 wireless mics with 865 capsules.

doesn’t even begin to describe the rise and grind schedule of Ken “Pooch” Van Druten. When not behind the 96-input Avid Venue Profile desk at front of house, he can typically be found buried neck-deep in an Avid Pro Tools HD3 rig as he mixes every night’s show for subsequent free download by anyone who bought a ticket.

“Starting at 8 a.m., they unload the trucks and by 9, I get all the stuff,” he said, pointing to his dressing room workstation. “I work straight from 9 until 4, go out, do a virtual soundcheck and line check for an hour. Come back here, work 5 to 8, take a 20-minute break and then do the show. We have a five-day turnaround on shows, so you can guess it’s really constant listening to Linkin Park, especially now with Pro Tools 9; I’m able to mix in my hotel room or on the bus, dragging my MacBook Pro around with all the tracks and plug-ins.”

While there’s no escape, at least the process has gotten easier compared to four years ago when the band first began providing concert downloads. “I didn’t sleep for about a year,” he laughed. “It was really a lot of work; it still is, but now we have a template and things that get us on our way. It’s been really exciting for me—it’s fun now. I get to be really creative about this.”

Since by necessity Pooch is sequestered with the Pro Tools rig, monitor engineer Kevin “Tater” McCarthy keeps an eye on audio setup for the night’s festivities,

making sure everything progresses as planned at both front of house and monitorworld. “I really rely on Tater to be the guy that goes out and takes over that role—and he does it well,” said Pooch.

Keeping everything moving forward during setup requires something akin to preventative troubleshooting, Tater explained: “Me and (monitor tech) Paul White do a small line check ourselves before they tune the PA, just so that when Pooch comes out, we’re not wasting any time with ‘Hey, this line isn’t set up.’ He’s mixing all day in there, so we don’t want him to have to wait for us. Not only is it faster this way, but if there’s a problem, we know it’s his side of the split and we can work from that.”

Gear and crew for the U.S. leg was supplied once again by Audio Analysts (Colorado Springs, CO) and Atomic Pro Audio (Rutland, VT), with the latter providing a sizable Adamson Systems house PA. “I think it’s the best PA out there right now, d&b being a close sec-



THERE’S MORE ▶ on Linkin Park’s concert at Madison Square Garden online at [prosoundnews.com/apr2011](http://prosoundnews.com/apr2011). See 20 minutes of their Fuse TV Broadcast.



Kevin "Tater" McCarthy uses a Waves SoundGrid system to add plug-ins to his mixes on the Yamaha PM5D in monitorworld.

ond," Pooch noted. "As I get older, I find that I am mixing with less volume, mixing at 102 A-weighted at FOH with some 103 peaks here and there. It's a responsible level that gives you impact, but you're not hurting people. Adamson plays into that well with their 21-inch stuff; you still get lots of movement on the low end and you can really impact the room with an 808 hit or whatever, even at 102 dB."

Acts with effect-heavy, manipulated production have always been a trick to reproduce live, and Linkin Park has traditionally been no exception. That's changing,

however, as the lines between the studio and the stage continue to blur. "The first single 'The Catalyst,' has a very effected vocal, almost no real vocal," Pooch pointed out. "First time I heard it, I was like, 'Aw, man; how am I going to make that live? It's gonna take a chorus and a delay and...' Then I went through the album's multis, and it was just a preset they'd

*(continued on page 44)*

## VITALstats

### Linkin Park

Audio Analysts  
Colorado Springs, CO  
Atomic Pro Audio  
Rutland, VT

- ▶ **FOH Engineer:**  
Ken "Pooch" Van Druten
- ▶ **Monitor Engineer:**  
Kevin "Tater" McCarthy
- ▶ **Crew Chief:**  
John "Boo" Bruey
- ▶ **Systems Engineer:**  
Chris Hoff, Evan McElhinney
- ▶ **Monitor/RF Tech:**  
Paul White
- ▶ **Techs:**  
Spencer Ellis, Todd Hartman, Ray Tittle, Jubal Reeves
- ▶ **FOH Console:**  
Avid Venue Profile 96-input, with Pro Tools HD
- ▶ **Monitor Console:**  
Yamaha PM5D, DSP5D
- ▶ **House Speakers:**  
Adamson Y-18, Y-10, T-21 subs, SpekTriX, Metrix, SX-18
- ▶ **Monitor Speakers:**  
Adamson M12, SX-18; Audio Analysts 15 SLP wedges, 360 VFX sidefills, ELF 218 sub
- ▶ **Personal Monitors:**  
Sennheiser SR 2050, EK 2000 IEM
- ▶ **House Amplifiers:**  
Lab.gruppen
- ▶ **Monitor Amplifiers:**  
Lab.gruppen PLM 10000 Q; Crown I-Tech 5000HD
- ▶ **FOH Equipment/Plug-Ins:**  
Dolby Lake DLP processors; XTA 448; Waves Live, McDSP, URS, Sound Toys plug-ins
- ▶ **Monitor Equipment/Plug-Ins:**  
Waves SoundGrid plug-ins
- ▶ **Microphones:**  
Audio-Technica AT4050, AT4047, AE2500; Shure 57, 91; Sennheiser EM2050, SKM2000 with 865 capsule; Radial DI

## Linkin Park

*(continued from page 43)*

made on a Waves plug-in called MetaFlanger. I was picturing all this work, and it was boop—steal the preset and I have it. All my worries of figuring out how to make it were gone.”

A side effect of that studio/stage blurring, however, is that it can trigger the rampant perfectionism of recording—and all the good and bad that comes with it. “I’ve had situations where I’ve gone off the map and said, ‘I can get the bass on that, I can nail it.’ And I struggle, spend hours on it and I can’t get it quite right. Then I tuck my tail between my legs, call up the engineer and it’s, ‘OK, can you e-mail me the preset?’”

Now plug-ins have also become part of the arsenal used at monitorworld, hidden directly behind

the band’s multi-level, arrowhead-shaped stage. There, Tater handles the band’s individual mixes on a Yamaha PM5D console attached to a Waves SoundGrid system, allowing him to use various Waves plug-ins. “Pooch gave me a demo of it when I was doing Slash, and I haven’t done a gig without it since; I absolutely love it,” said Tater. “I mainly use it to insert compression and limiting on the in-ear outputs, so each ear output has that on it—the SSL G-Master Bus compressor, an L2 Ultramaximizer and a C4 multiband processor on each output. And then for Chester and Mike, I’ve inserted a Renaissance Compressor and De-Esser on each of their vocals.”

Guitarist Brad Delson gets his audio from a pair of wedges onstage and 10 more hung beneath the perimeter grille-deck, but the rest of Linkin Park wears Sennheiser wireless packs con-



Ken “Pooch” Van Druen mans an Avid Venue Profile desk at the FOH position when he’s not sequestered in the dressing rooms, mixing every Linkin Park show for download release on a Pro Tools HD 3 system.

nected to JH16 earpieces from JHAudio. Each earpiece sports a customized Comply foam sleeve, produced from molds of the band’s ears and then shaved down slightly by Jerry Harvey in order to provide a tighter seal for the musicians. Unsurprisingly, most of the bandmembers get a traditional band mix with their own instruments or vocals on top, with the exception of Rob Bourdon. “He’s a drummer with no drums in his mix,” said Tater. “He likes to use his in-ears

as ear plugs and whatever he can’t hear, we put in there.”

The hours leading up to the Madison Square Garden concert taping may have been tense for some in the Linkin Park camp, but the engineers were almost surprised at how typical their day was. “I like to pretend it affects us more than it does,” laughed Tater. “We did a slightly longer line check, just waiting for the recording truck to say, ‘OK.’ We usually have our own redundant record, but today the truck is on that side of the split; after all, we don’t need a redundant if they’re there.” And

the big change for Pooch? “Our FOH position is usually at 95 feet, but today, it’s about 80 from the stage.”

And with that, the interview, the virtual soundcheck and the line check were all complete. Giving one last glance around the empty arena, Pooch turned and headed back to his Pro Tools rig, deep in the dressing rooms, where download show number 345 was still waiting to be finished and sent out into the world.

**1 BON JOVI | SOUND COMPANY: CLAIR**

**CREW:** Dave Eisenhauer (he); Glenn Collett, Andy Hill (me) Mike Allison (cc/se); Dustin Ponscheck (mse) Brandon Allison (tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Midas XL-4; MC: Midas Heritage 3000; Avid Venue Profile; HS: Clair i-5, i-5B, i-3, BT-218, FF-II; MS: Clair 12AM, 212AM, SRM, L3 NT/LF, ML-18; PMS: Shure PSM 600, PSM 700; Sennheiser G2; HA: Lab.gruppen; MA: Lab.gruppen **HARDWIRED MICS:** Sennheiser MD-421, MKH-416; Countryman DI; AKG C 414, C 460; Shure SM91, Beta52, Beta58A, SM98, SM57, SM58; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure UR; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Aphex 622; TC Electronic M5000, M2000, 2290; Summit TLA-100, DCL-200; Smart Research C2; Empirical Labs EL-8; Amek 9098; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** Aphex 622; TC Electronic M5000, D-Two; Summit DCL-200; Yamaha SPX990; dbx 160A

**2 LADY GAGA | SOUND COMPANY: EIGHTH DAY SOUND**

**CREW:** Tony Smith (he), Horace Ward (be), Ramon Morales (me), Bill Flugan (rf tech), Dan Klocker (mon tech), James Allen, Kevin Szafraniec, Wayne Bacon, James Lamarca (tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Avid Venue Profile; MC: DIGiCo SD7; HS: d&b audiotechnik J8, J12, J Sub, B2; MS: d&b Audiotechnik M4; PMS: Sennheiser; HA: d&b Audiotechnik; MA: d&b Audiotechnik; **HARDWIRED MICS:** Sennheiser; Shure; beyer; Radial SW8; Neumann; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** TC Electronic M-6000

**3 GEORGE STRAIT | SOUND COMPANY: ONSTAGE SYSTEMS**

**CREW:** George Olson (he/se), Josh Kaylor (me), Paul Rogers (cc/pm), Ernie Gonzales (ae)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Avid Venue Profile; MC: Avid Venue Profile; HS: L-Acoustics V-Dosc, dV-Dosc, SB-218, Kudo; MS: Clair 12AM; PMS: Sennheiser G2; HA: L-Acoustics LA8; MA: Clair 12AM; QSS; **HARDWIRED MICS:** Audix; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure UR4D; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Avid Pro Tools, Purple Audio MC77, Universal Audio LA-2A; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** Universal Audio LA-2A, 1176, Focusrite

**4 JASON ALDEAN | SOUND COMPANY: SPECTRUM SOUND**

**CREW:** Chris Stephens (he), Evan Richner (me) John Fritz (pm), Jeremy Seawell (se), Ryan Stotts (m tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Avid Venue; MC: Avid Venue; HS: d&b audiotechnik (64) J8 and J12, (16) J Sub, (16) B2, (8) Q10; PMS: Sennheiser G3; Ultimate Ears UE-7; HA: d&b audiotechnik D12; **HARDWIRED MICS:** Audio-Technica AE6100, AE2500, ATM-350, ATM-450, AT4050, AT4081; **WIRELESS MICS:** Audio-Technica AE6100; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Lake; ATI DDA 212XLR; Waves Platinum Bundle; Crane Song Phoenix; SPL Transient Designer; Massey De:Esser, vt3; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** Massey L2007, vt3, De:Esser

**5 BRAD PAISLEY | SOUND COMPANY: SOUND IMAGE**

**CREW:** Kevin Freeman (he), Mark Gould (me), Jim F. Miller (cc/se), Mike "Moses" Beck (ae), Alex Moore (tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Midas Heritage 2000; MC: Avid Venue; HS: JBL VerTec (44) VT4889, (16) VT4880, (10) QSC Powerline; MS: (2) SI PD15, (2) G2; (4) JBL VerTec VT4880; PMS: Sennheiser G2, Westone ES3; HA: Crown I-Tech 8000; MA: Crown I-Tech 8000; **HARDWIRED MICS:** Shure KSM, Beta Series; Royer; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** TC Electronic M-5000; Eventide Harmonizer; Yamaha SPX990, SPX2000; dbx DriveRack; BSS; TC Electronic 1128; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** McDSP plug-ins

**6 LINKIN PARK | SOUND COMPANY: AUDIO ANALYSTS / ATOMIC PRO AUDIO**

**CREW:** Ken "Pooch" Van Druten (be), Kevin "Tater" McCarthy (me), John "Boo" Bruely (cc), Chris Hoff, Evan McElhinney (se), Paul White (RF/m tech), Spencer Ellis, Todd Hartman, Ray Tittle, Jubal Reeves (tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Avid Venue Profile 96-input, with Pro Tools HD-4; MC: Yamaha PM5D, DSP5D; HS: Adamson Y-18, Y-10, T-21 subs, SpekTrix, Metrix, SX-18; MS: Adamson M12 wedges, SX-18 sidefills; Audio Analysts 15 SLP wedges, 360 VFX sidefills, ELF 218 subwoofer; PMS: Sennheiser SR 2050, EK 2000 IEM; HA: Lab.gruppen; MA: Lab.gruppen, Crown I-Tech 5000HD; **HARDWIRED MICS:** Audio-Technica; **WIRELESS MICS:** Sennheiser EM2050, SKM2000 with 865 capsule; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Dolby Lake DLP processors; XTA 448; Waves Live; McDSP; URS plug-ins; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** Waves SoundGrid plug-ins

**7 ERIC CLAPTON | SOUND COMPANY: CLAIR**

**CREW:** Robert Collins (he), Kerry Lewis (me), Jim Ragus (cc/se), Kevin Dennis (mse), Matt Patterson, Sean Prickett (tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: DiGiCo D5; MC: DiGiCo D5; HS: Clair i-5, i-5b, BT-218 subs, i-3, P-2, i-d; MS: Clair 12AM; HA: Clair StakRak (Lab.gruppen PLM series); MA: Crown Macro-Tech MA-3600VZ; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Summit TLA-100; Dolby Lake Processors

**8 ELTON JOHN | SOUND COMPANY: CLAIR**

**CREW:** Matthew Herr (he), Alan Richardson (me), Cliff Downey (cc/se), Nyle Wood (ae), Simon Matthews (tech)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Yamaha PM5000; MC: Yamaha PM1D, O-2R; HS: Clair i-5, i-5b, i-3, P-2, SLP; MS: Clair 12AM, 212AM; PMS: Sennheiser G2; Shure P6HW; HA: Crown; Carver; Crest; QSC; MA: Lab.gruppen; **HARDWIRED MICS:** AKG 460, C480B, 414/XLS; Audio-Technica AE6100, AE5400; Sennheiser MD-409, E-609; Shure SM57, Beta 58A, Beta 56A; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure U4S; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Clair IO; dbx 160i; AMS RMX16; TC Electronic 2290; Lexicon 480L; Eventide Eclipse; Aphex 612; Sony D12; Tascam DA-40 MKII; Alesis ML-9600; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** TC Electronic 1128

**9 KID ROCK | SOUND COMPANY: SOUND IMAGE**

**CREW:** Steve Cross (be), Beau Alexander (me), John Tompkins (cc/se), Vince Luchetta, Mike Bangs (techs)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: Avid Venue Profile; MC: Avid Venue Profile; HS: L-Acoustics K1, K1-SB, Kudo, SB-28, dV-Dosc; MS: Marshall MA2x12; Sound Image PD1x15; JBL VerTec VT4889, VT4880; L-Acoustics dV sub; PMS: Shure PSM 900; HA: L-Acoustics LA8; MA: Crown I-Tech HD12000; **HARDWIRED MICS:** AKG 414; Audio-Technica AT2500, 835; Audix D6, SCX1; beyer M88; Sennheiser 902, 904, 602; Shure Beta52, Beta57A, B91, B98, KSM32, SM57, SM58, SM81; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure UR4D; **FOH EQUIPMENT:** Standard Avid plug-ins; Crane Song Phoenix; McDSP MC200; **MONITOR EQUIPMENT:** Standard Avid plug-ins

**10 JANET JACKSON | SOUND COMPANY: CLAIR**

**CREW:** Kyle Hamilton (he), Mike Dunwoody (me), Mike LaCroix (ae)

**EQUIPMENT:** HC: DiGiCo D5; MC: Avid Venue D-Show; MS: Clair Prism SRM, BT-118, BT-218, R-4; PMS: Sennheiser 2000; MA: Crown; **HARDWIRED MICS:** Audio-Technica; Earthworks; Shure; AKG; **WIRELESS MICS:** Shure UR4D with KSM 9

**LEGEND:** (he) house engineer. (ahe) ass't house engineer. (be) band's house engineer. (me) monitor engineer. (ame) ass't monitoring engineer. (bme) band's monitor engineer. (se) systems engineer. (ae) ass't engineer. (tech) technician. (cc) crew chief. HC: house console. MC: monitor console. HS: house speakers. PMS: personal monitor systems. MS: monitor speakers. HA: house amplifiers. MA: monitor amplifiers.

Top 10 grossing tours according to *Billboard*. Some tours did not report grosses for all shows; rankings may be affected as a result. Equipment and crew information are provided by the respective sound reinforcement companies.