



PARNELLI AWARDS

2014 Filled with Emotion, Surprises

PHOTOS BY ADAM KAPLAN

By Kevin M. Mitchell

It was Las Vegas, after all, so the bet was on. "We were all voting when Benny [Collins] would start crying, and I said he wouldn't make it through the introduction, and I won," laughs production professional and friend Steve Thomas. Thomas, with Michael Ahern, presented the Parnelli Lifetime Achievement Award to Collins, the live event industry's highest honor. Collins took the stage choked up and shed some tears in giving his appreciation to all he's worked with and made friends with over the years. It was a fitting end to an evening filled with emotions, laughs and tears.

PLSN and FOH magazine publisher Terry Lowe (and executive producer of the Parnelli Awards), spoke of a feeling of mutual respect among the nominees of the live event industry's highest awards. "When you take a look at our list of sponsors and production partners, it's inspiring to see competitors in business come together as an industry to make the Parnelli Awards possible," Lowe stated. "It is a true testi-

mony to that old saying that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Throughout the evening, emcee Fee Waybill (lead singer of The Tubes) regaled the crowd with jokes and stories, including tales of his experience in the early days of special effects. "In 1977, we did a special show at the Shrine in L.A., and wanted to give 150 percent. So our pyro guy, Robert Warner, put 150 percent worth of flash powder in the flash pots... it shook the building, but I'm grateful I can still count to 10 without taking off my shoes!"

Memorable Moments

As is frequently the case, the Parnelli Awards offered up the unexpected, and no one expected to see Frankie Valli himself to show up onstage to offer humble thanks and accolades to Audio Innovator Honoree Bob Goldstein. "I never expected to see him," Goldstein said after. "I can't believe you did that!" Frankie it turned out lent Goldstein a couple of hundred dollars

in the early days to build a sound console and the two have had a mutually beneficially relationship for over 40 years.

Richard Belliveau easily made the case for lighting designer Howard Ungerleider receiving the Parnelli Visionary award. He recited the seven signs of a visionary is saying, "They are imaginative ... for Howard that is an understatement. His imagination is always on turbo and like fueled on a continuous supply of five-hour energy drinks." Ungerleider was also congratulated in an exclusive video presentation by Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson from Rush. (Rockers Journey sent in a video salute for Benny Collins, and John Oates sent one in for Bob Goldstein.)

"Throughout everything we have done together, Benny has never lied, evaded, avoided, or spared the truth, and has never been anything other than patient, kindly, and helpful," Ahern said prior to bringing Collins to the stage. "He also never lost sight of who he is. When faced with racism and intolerance, I have seen him deal

with it with dignity — to one arena crew chief who goaded him for an hour or so, he eventually said: 'You have a problem, and I understand it. I am your worst nightmare — a really smart black man. You should get over that.'"

Of course, the recent passing of Parnelli co-founder Patrick Stansfield was on the mind of many attendees, and longtime friend and TMB founder Marshall Bissett came out and introduced a video he shot of Stansfield a few weeks earlier.

"Patrick was a natural on camera and as we were shooting his big concern was that his hat looked right and we did several takes with different hats to get it perfect," Bissett explained. "He then said: 'I know you're doing this because you think I might be gone by show time?' I took a chance and said, 'No — that would be really inconvenient because they have the script nearly finished.'"

"He said — 'You're right - it's an awards show about Parnelli and I don't want to be the one

And the 2014 Winners Were:

TOP HONORS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Benny Collins

AUDIO INNOVATOR AWARD

Bob Goldstein

VISIONARY AWARD

Howard Ungerleider

AUDIO AWARDS

SOUND COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Sound Image for Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

FOH MIXER OF THE YEAR

Craig Doubet for Michael Bublé

MONITOR ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

Greg Looper for Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

AUDIO SYSTEM TECH OF THE YEAR

Andrew Dowling for Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

HOMETOWN HERO SOUND COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Audio Visions of Omaha/Minneapolis

INDISPENSABLE TECHNOLOGY - AUDIO

Eastern Acoustic Works for Anya Line Array

LIGHTING/VIDEO/EFFECTS AWARDS

LIGHTING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Upstaging

HOMETOWN HERO LIGHTING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Eggshell Lighting of Hawaii

LIGHTING DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Butch Allen for Jason Mraz

VIDEO DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Mark Haney for Eric Clapton

LIGHTING BOARD OPERATOR OF THE YEAR

Eddie "Bones" Connell for Toby Keith

VIDEO PRODUCTION COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Moo TV for Garth Brooks

INDISPENSABLE TECHNOLOGY - LIGHTING

Clay Paky for the AJeda B-Eye K20

INDISPENSABLE TECHNOLOGY - VIDEO

PixelFLEX for the FLEXCurve

PYRO COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Strictly FX for Super Bowl Halftime Show

PRODUCTION AWARDS

TOUR MANAGER OF THE YEAR

David Milam for Toby Keith

PRODUCTION MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Chris Adamson for Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

SET CONSTRUCTION COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Gallagher Staging for Avenged Sevenfold

SET/SCENIC DESIGNER OF THE YEAR (TIE)

Mike Swinford for Toby Keith

Jordan Coopersmith for Avenged Sevenfold

STAGING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Stageline

RIGGING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Atlanta Rigging Systems

COACH COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Hemphill Brothers

TRUCKING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Upstaging

FREIGHT FORWARDING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Rock-It Cargo

INDISPENSABLE TECHNOLOGY - STAGING

Stageline for the SAM750 Mobile Stage

to make it run long - I hope I can be there next year." The general consensus was that Stansfield will always be at the Parnelli Awards, if only in spirit.

Following that was the video of those the industry's lost this year in addition to Stansfield, which many noted contained many more names than usual, and those who passed were much younger than usual. (This prompted two long-time veterans to pledge to help each other quit smoking.)

The Stars Come Out

Emcee Waybill struck the perfect tone.

"I'm glad to be with you tonight," he said at the top of the program. "See, I started out in this business as a roadie." It turns out he had followed friends Roger Steen and Prairie Prince to San Francisco with their band and while he "didn't know what he was doing," he "got pretty

"My days of wearing bikini bottoms that say 'prime meat' on it are behind me, and for that I think we can all be grateful."

—Steve "Chopper" Borges

good with gaffer tape." That band would merge with another who apparently had better, more experienced roadies, and Waybill joked he was "demoted" to background singer, and than "my career went horribly wrong" when he was made lead singer of what would be The Tubes.

The Tubes were known for their outrageous stage antics in addition to their musicianship and catchy tunes. Waybill talked about how members of the crew would always be part of the show — included in this was one Steve "Chopper" Borges who in addition to roadie du-

ties, was the strongman in a circus act.

Borges would go on to have a successful career in the industry, and is currently a highly sought-after production manager for acts touring Central and South America. He would also show up as a presenter that night. When he came up later to give some awards, he quipped: "Whenever Fee's around, I ended up on stage. But at least in this case I'm a bit more appropriately dressed ... my days of wearing bikini bottoms that say 'prime meat' on it are behind me, and for that I think we can all be grateful."

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Benny Collins accepts the 2014 Parnelli Lifetime Achievement Award



Howard Ungerleider, the 2014 Parnelli Visionary Award recipient



Surprise presenter Frankie Valli and 2014 Audio Innovator Bob Goldstein



Parnelli executive producer and PLSN/FOH publisher Terry Lowe

PARNELLI AWARDS

PHOTOS BY ADAM KAPLAN



Robert Scovill accepts Greg Looper's Monitor Mixer of the Year award from presenter Marguerite Nguyen.



Dave Shadoan of Sound Image with the 2014 Parnelli Award for Sound Company of the Year.



Stan Miller and Michael MacDonald served as awards presenters at the 2014 Parnelli Awards gala.



Andrew Dowling was honored with the 2014 Parnelli Award for Audio System Tech of the Year.



"Chopper" Borges has appeared on stage with Fee Waybill before, but dressed conservatively this time.



Solotech's Lee Moro and Dean Roney accepted the FOH Sound Engineer award on behalf of Craig Doubet.



Jeff Rocha accepted the 2014 Indispensable Technology Award for EAW's Anya System from George Petersen.

In addition to Borges, the star-studded list of presenters included LD Marc Brickman, director Bob Higgins, FOH Engineer and Parnelli honoree Stan Miller, ATK's Michael MacDonald, and Coldplay tour manager Marguerite Nguyen. The audience was filled with our industry stars as well including lighting designer Patrick Woodroffe and production manager Charlie Hernandez, among scores of others.

One of the many touching moments of the show, at the end when Waybill and Lowe closed the ceremony, the emcee said, "I'm so glad you guys have the Parnelli Awards, because you make rock star's rock stars. You're the ones who make it all happen."

"Just wanted to say it was an excellent show it was," noted Solotech's Dean Roney. "The speeches were short, emotional, and meaningful — it was a really great night!"

"I would like to thank you all for making my evening not only special but very memorable," Ungerleider said after the show. "As much as I appreciate this award, I am very thankful that all of us could come together like family to honor, mourn, laugh and celebrate the incredible lives, opportunities and friends we have been so fortunate to have experienced throughout our careers."

"I'm just ecstatic over this year's show," said Lowe. "The production was flawless and the sincerity from all of the recipients were touching. We're again thrilled with the participation of the attendees and sponsors for the Parnelli Awards." **FOH**

For more on the 2014 awards show, including a video tribute to the three lifetime honorees, go to ParnelliAwards.com.

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