Focusrite RedNet Used at Super Bowl 2022

Pictures: Christian Hugener

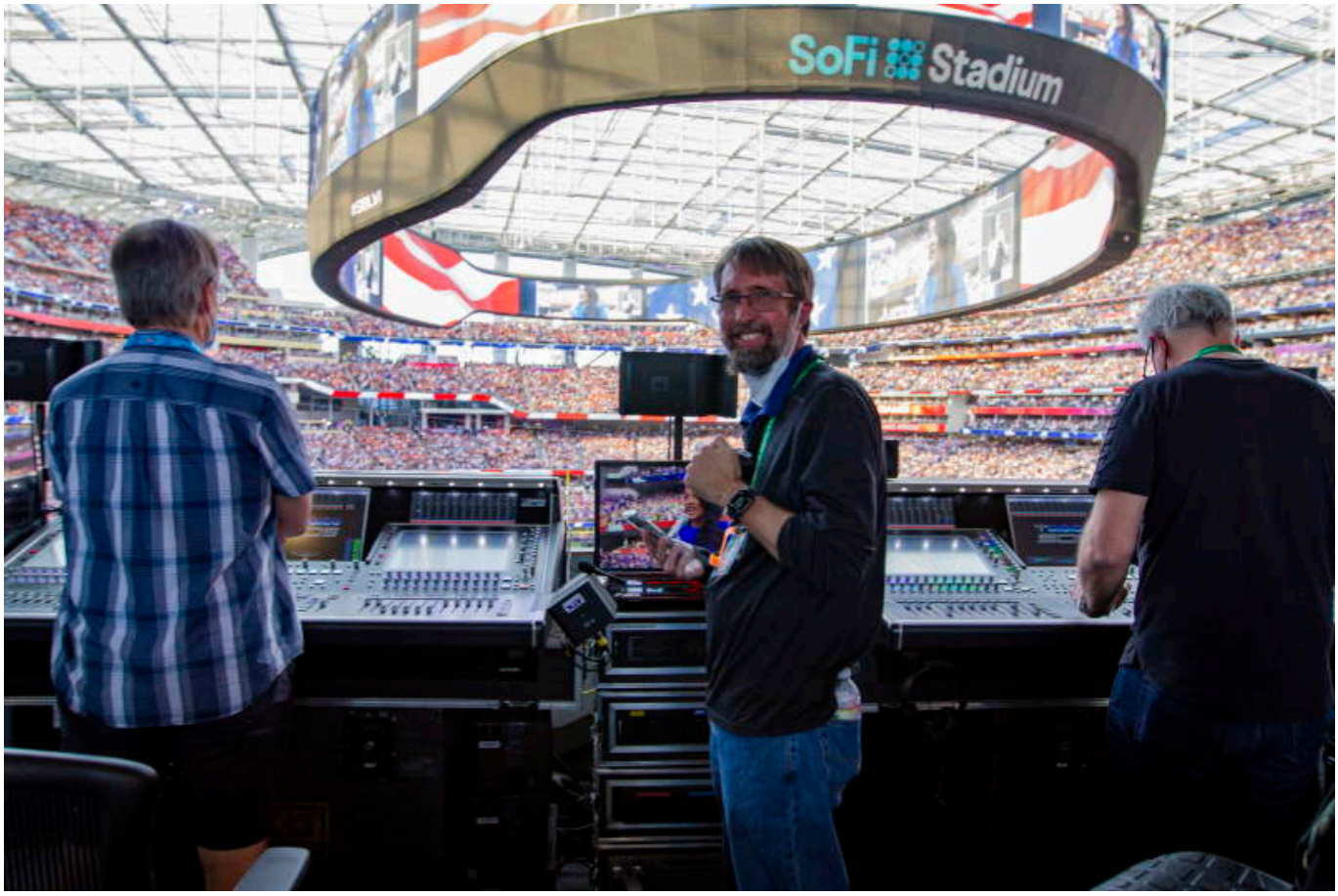


On February 13, 2022, the Los Angeles Rams defeated the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California. As one of the most highly anticipated sports events of the year, Super Bowl LVI had a record viewership of over 112 million. The event clearly was football's biggest Sunday of the year, and it featured a halftime show extravaganza right out of Hollywood to match. This year's Pepsi Super Bowl LVI Halftime Show featured performances by Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar and Mary J. Blige, with special appearances by 50 Cent and Anderson .Paak. Once again, ATK Audiotek, the live-sound provider for the Super Bowl for the past 24 consecutive years, had an all-digital audio signal path thanks to an extensive Dante® networked audio infrastructure featuring components from Focusrite's RedNet range of Dante-networked audio converters and interfaces.

"For the past seven Super Bowls, we've employed RedNet with our Dante Audio-over IP network," stated Kirk Powell, Engineer-in-Charge for ATK/Clair at Super Bowl LVI. "We started using RedNet years ago on a small scale, and then it's just grown and grown year after year. This year was just over the top, because we have to feed signal to so many different entities throughout the stadium, not to mention that we

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were being fed signal as well, so we've got to have connectivity back and forth. It's all about having strategically placed nodes so you can jump into and out of the RedNet system. We have a huge fiber backbone. We used mostly the SoFi Stadium's fiber, which is very nice because that's one of the big advantages of this venue. This new facility has tons and tons of dark fiber, so we're able to utilize the building infrastructure as opposed to running all of our own fiber. And RedNet is the key component that gives us that interconnectivity and flexibility."



ATK Audiotek's Focusrite gear setup for Super Bowl LVI included 16 RedNet D16R 16-channel AES3 I/O's; 25 RedNet A16R 16-channel analogue I/O interfaces; 17 RedNet D64R 64-channel MADI bridges; eight RedNet MP8R remote-controlled mic preamps and six RedNet AM2 stereo audio monitoring units. Additionally, the audio system included four DiGiCo SD5 digital audio consoles (two at front-of-house and two at monitor mix positions); 14 ATK PA carts that each employed six JBL VTX A12 Line Array Loudspeakers; four JBL VTX S28 Dual 18-inch Subwoofers; and four M-Force Subwoofers.

"The flexibility we have with RedNet is a game-changer," said Powell. "We're able to send any signal anywhere in the building; so, for example, if we need a microphone at a particular location, we just plug it into the network, and through RedNet it's there."

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At Super Bowl LVI, RedNet A16R and RedNet D16R interfaces were used to connect digital and analog sources and feeds to and from the network. RedNet D64R MADI bridges were deployed for connecting signals to and from the various digital audio consoles in the system, and for connections between production groups. The RedNet MP8R’s remote-controlled mic preamps were employed for audience reaction microphones, while the RedNet AM2s were used throughout the venue by various engineers to monitor their audio signals.



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Clock management during the Super Bowl is important not only for the teams on the field, but also for audio production. The RedNet D64R blends a high channel count with the ability to convert sample rates between disparate audio systems on a multitrack scale, providing glitch-free inter-system audio transfer and sharing without a common master reference clock. While FOH and stage monitors could share a clock, Powell explains, “the production tracks are on a different clock, because they're not used all day long. The D64R allows me to break the clock between my system and the production tracks because they're done after halftime. They start to pack up, and I don’t want to be on their clock and have them shut down.”

When asked about the challenges of this Super Bowl versus others, Powell replied, “It’s just the sheer magnitude of this gig. It’s always challenging getting from point A to point B. With SoFi, everything’s just a little farther away. This is a big stadium. We also had a really big house PA system that we had to interface with for our audio carts, and we had to meld our system into parts of the house system to cover higher levels. The other thing you have to remember is that even though it’s considered an outdoor stadium, SoFi is still under a roof, so it’s enclosed, hence the volume level was louder than it was last year in Tampa Bay, which is an open-air stadium.”

There were also several advantages ATK had this year at Super Bowl LVI, since it was a local event for ATK, who is based only about 38 miles away from the stadium in Valencia. “We did a lot of the programming at the shop this year, which really helped us out when the Rams had that championship game at home. That really threw a wrench in everybody’s workflow, because then we weren’t really allowed to start our normal production schedule until after that game,” stated Powell. “We set the entire system up in the shop. All the racks were next to each other, and we did probably 90-95% of the programming at ATK. Then when we were on-site, it was really just a matter of getting the nodes up and then doing whatever changes were needed. Another advantage was that since this event was in our own backyard, the cool thing was all these Union guys we worked with on all the other TV shows were at SoFi, so we knew them all. Unlike other cities, we typically don’t know anybody in that Union in that city. In L.A., they know us, we know them, so it made things even more seamless.”

Focusrite gear was ubiquitous at this year’s Super Bowl; Powell noted, “It was very similar to what we’ve done before, it’s just every year I feel like we just add more and more and more RedNet, and this year I tapped out our inventory. ATK has huge Focusrite inventory, and I tapped it out – hard to believe, but I did. In thinking about it, I am really blown away. We employed every RedNet unit we had, and there was nothing left in the shop. Each year it’s just more and more RedNet, and that’s a good thing.”

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