Focusrite RedNet for Coachella 2025



For nearly two decades, Chicago-based audio production company American Mobile (AM) has delivered real-time broadcast mixes for some of the nation’s most iconic live broadcasts and music festivals, including Coachella, Stagecoach, Farm Aid, The Weeknd in Brazil, Head in the Clouds, Camp Flog Gnaw, YouTube Live and others. Founded by Owner and Chief Engineer Chris Shepard, AM has increasingly relied on Focusrite components in recent years as a critical part of its mobile mixing infrastructure.

When it comes to festivals, Coachella sets the benchmark for what these events can be, not just in terms of spectacle but also in live broadcast production. Highlighting the scale and complexity behind the scenes, Hank Neuberger, founder of Springboard Productions, whose company produces and transmits the live-stream webcasts for Coachella and other major festivals, stated, “Coachella is by far the most viewed festival broadcast in the world. This year we had seven channels live 24 hours a day for both weekends. We broadcast over 800 hours of Coachella programming on YouTube over the two weekends.”

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Shepard and his remote mix team deliver pristine, real-time audio to streaming audiences worldwide requiring a reliable and scalable infrastructure – and for that, Shepard turns to Focusrite. The 2025 Coachella festival drew an estimated 125,000 attendees with more than 140 artists taking the stage over two weekends in April at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, California. The 2025 Stagecoach Festival, which took place at the same site, had a variety of headliners and surprise guests and drew an estimated crowd of 89,000 attendees. And the resulting live stream broadcast on YouTube has tens of millions of views, underscoring these events' worldwide impact.

Both festivals presented an eclectic mix of musical styles, ranging from pop and rock to hip-hop, electronic, country and classical. Major headliners at Coachella included Lady Gaga, Green Day, Post Malone and Travis Scott, while standout sets came from artists like Benson Boone, Missy Elliott, Charli XCX, Megan Thee Stallion, Kraftwerk, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic led by Gustavo Dudamel. Headliners at Stagecoach included Zach Bryan, Luke Combs (who closed the show with Garth Brooks) and Jelly Roll. Surprise guests included Kesha, Kate Hudson, Mumford & Sons, Brandon Lake and more.

"This was our 18th year mixing live broadcast audio at these two festivals, covering the five stages at Coachella including the Main Stage, Outdoor Theater, Mojave, Gobi, and Sonora, and the Stagecoach venues of Mane Stage, Palomino Stage, Diplo's HonkyTonk, and the Toyota Music Den" said Shepard. "Each year, the workflow evolves. There's less analog and more MADI. We have to connect quickly with a variety of artist rigs – especially headliners who bring in their own FOH and monitor consoles. That means being MADI-flexible, and Focusrite is central to that."

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L-R: Steve Weeder, Nate Weeder

Shepard’s remote broadcast team uses Focusrite RedNet D64R MADI interfaces for their ability to perform real-time sample rate conversion – crucial in an environment where artist rigs often run at 96kHz while the broadcast runs at 48kHz. “The RedNet MADI units are key,” Shepard added. “We’re able to convert on the fly without missing a beat.” Across the festival’s broadcast setup, Focusrite RedNet interfaces helped Shepard manage live audio capture for up to 256 channels across multiple rigs. Input counts reached 144 channels for headline acts like Lady Gaga, with other performances pushing the system’s full capabilities. Smaller stages ran up to 128 channels, still requiring redundant capture of crowd mics and FOH stems.

“We can capture up to 256 channels live across two rigs in the audio truck, which gives us the flexibility to handle anything from standard festival sets to much more complex productions. Even when an artist like Lady Gaga rolls in with 144 inputs, we’re covered – especially once you factor in crowd/audience mics and FOH backups. On the smaller stages, 128 inputs usually does the job, though we’ve had exceptions - like when the LA Philharmonic performed at Coachella on the Outdoor Theater Stage and pushed our system to the max.”

“The channel counts are only going up,” said Shepard. “The RedNet PCIeNX cards have been a game changer, giving us the power to handle huge input lists without issues.” These cards can handle up to 256 audio channels with super-low latency, which means Shepard’s team can easily manage more complex setups. “We used to split inputs up to multiple rigs or make compromises,” he added. “Now, everything connects through one system, and it just works. It’s a big improvement in how we work and how confident we feel going into each show.”

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Dante integration was also a critical factor in choosing Focusrite. “Our entire input structure is Dante-based and built around Focusrite,” Shepard noted. “The ability to control RedNet preamps directly from Pro Tools and save those settings per artist has saved us countless hours – especially when soundchecking multiple artists before the gates open each day.”

When asked about gear support for a production of this magnitude, Shepard emphasized Focusrite’s reliability and service. “We prep and stress-test everything before hitting the desert. But if something’s had a rough ride, Focusrite has been fantastic about quick swaps. It’s rugged gear, but even the toughest boxes need a little TLC after fighting heat, dust and miles. We've been on Focusrite RedNet since 2016 and we see plenty of sound companies using it in tough environments as well.”

Looking forward, Shepard and his team continue pushing the limits of live broadcast audio, armed with a RedNet system they trust – and a vision for even greater integration ahead. “Every year, the demands get more complex, and artists bring in increasingly elaborate productions,” says Shepard. “But with RedNet at the core of our workflow, we’re able to adapt quickly, scale up without compromising quality, and maintain total confidence in the reliability of the system. It’s what allows us to focus on the art, not the limitations of the tech.”

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