

PALA 2006 Report

By Steve Mowry

PALA 2006 was held in Bangkok, Thailand, for the first time ever (*Photo 1*). Although a regional hub due to its large diverse Asian population (~10 million) and central location within Southeastern Asia, Bangkok lacks some of the sophisticated mature infrastructure of Singapore and Hong Kong. I call it the friendly city. I lived in the Puthamonthon section of Bangkok for 3½ years before relocating in Phuket.

The similarity to Singapore—which was the setting for PALA 2005 and will host next year's event—was more than just coincidence. Thailand and Bangkok want to compete with other Pacific Rim cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and Hong Kong for industry trade events and conventions.

One of the most interesting exhibits was the "intelligent home of the future," featuring a home studio and living space including automation and home entertainment systems. The exhibit was the joint effort of Mahajak and Kramer Electronics.

Zhang Yong Jia, President of CETA (Chinese Entertainment Technology Association, *Photo 2* on the left) brought a large number of manufacturing companies (>20) to PALA 2006. CETA was formed to better reflect China's changing role in the industry. Primarily formed to coordinate and promote the domestic market of theatrical equipment, it has set up a market network covering the whole country with more than 300 members, including research institutes, provinces, autonomous regions, and municipal cities.

Not all exhibits were of audio products. There were several exhibits of lighting, staging, and visual products. Many of these were also from Chinese manufacturers.

The show was somewhat busier than anticipated, with many visitors from India, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore. Surprisingly, there was a lack of visitors from both Indonesia, a country with a population of about 190 million, and Vietnam, population 84 million.

Rosalind Ng-Seah, Managing Director (Asia) IIR Exhibitions Pte Ltd and elected Secretary of the AES Singapore Section (*Photo 2* on the right), said, "Education has always been a major element of PALA," noting "over 45 master classes, technical sessions and exhibitors' presentations conducted by international and local industry gurus."

Rosalind has been instrumental in organizing and maintaining the educational programs at PALA. The seven master classes are:

Digital Musical Sound Synthesis—Dr. Bernard Tan, Chairman, AES Singapore Section

Surround Sound Reinforcement—Daniel Choo, Program Manager SAE Institute, Thailand

A System Designer, Engineer, Organizer & Musician Experience—Dr. S. Kandaswamy, Practicing Structural Engineer & Acoustics Consultant, India

The Use of Computer Modeling in Room Acoustics—Dr. Roland Tan, Associate Director (Technology Services) Technology & New Media, Singapore

Digital Radio Revolution. The Future is Here!—Katenan Juntimathon, SAE Institute, Thailand

Electronic Music in Live Surround: The Musician Perspective—Scott Whittaker, Director AECAsia & DWP Partnership, Thailand

Developments of Architectural Illumination in Commercial & Residential Settings—Stephen A. Mowry, Loudspeaker Development Consultant, Thailand, *Searching For Loudspeaker Linearity in South East Asia* with a

short informational presentation for friends and colleagues at ALMA International, www.alma.org, *What Is ALMA?* (Photo 3).

Additionally, there were technical and product presentations from JBL Pro, Shure, Sony, HMG & Crown, Mediamatrix, GENELEC, Degidesign, Novation Music, Kramer Electronics, Sennheiser, and Ketakan Consulting.

A large LED screen—6m × 3m—displayed live video feeds of the PALA activities in real-time, which could also be viewed at www.palaonline.com, using Live Streaming technology. This makes it possible to visit PALA from any computer with a good Internet connection. There were numerous musical performances following the opening ceremonies, including the Pala-Denon DJ competition, numerous local bands, and a violin concert by young Thai students (Photo 4).

The major A/V exhibitors were 360 Systems, Adam Audio, AEQ, AKG, ARX, B&C, Bardl, beyerdynamic, BSS, C-Mark, Camco & Heath, Crown, d&b audiotechnik, DAS Audio, dbx, Denon, DIS, EAW, Elder Audio, Equipson, GENELEC, Harrison, JBL Pro, Klein + Hummel, L-Acoustics, Lab.Gruppen, Lundahl, Mackie, Martin Audio, Meyer Sound, Mipro, Nexo, PHD, Pioneer, Peavey, Powersoft, Prism Sound, Quest, Rode Sadie, Sennheiser, Shure, Soundcraft, Studer, Symetrix, Tapco, Tasso, TOA, Turbosound, Windforce, XTA, and Zomax. There were approximately 360 exhibiting companies from 28 countries in Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia. PALA continues to be a major trade event for professional A/V within SE Asia.

There was one more surprise for PALA visitors: a Bangkok municipal election was scheduled for Sunday, the day after the show had finished, and an alcohol ban was in effect from 6 AM Saturday until 12 AM Monday. All nightclubs and bars were closed! Any idea of participating in Saturday and Sunday night activities in one of the world's most exciting cities was met with disappointment. Fortunately, I was invited

to the Exhibitor Nite Party on Friday evening. Attendees were treated to a Thai/western buffet and live popular music in English, of course.

Now it's on to PALA India on October 5-7 in Mumbai (Bombay). PALA is back in Singapore next year, July 12-14, at the Singapore-Expo, one train-stop from Changi Airport. This is a change in the location of previous years from Suntec City in the downtown area. Hope to see you there.



Photo 1. A bird's eye view of the exhibition floor.



Photo 2. From left to right—Zhang Young Jia, president of CETA; Peerapong Oeusoonthornwattana, Director General Thailand Convention & Exhibition Burea; Rosalind Ng-Seah, Managing Director IIR Exhibitions Asia and Secretary AES Singapore Section.



Photo 3. Steve Mowry conducting a loudspeaker workshop in one of the conference rooms.



Photo 4. Thai students performing on the busy PALA stage.

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