

Sony DWZ Wireless System Adopted for Rick Camp's Students

Customer:

- Rick Camp, Master Mix Live School

Industry:

- Professional audio

Challenges:

- Finding wireless equipment that is easy for his students to learn on
- Providing excellent sound quality during live performances
- Picking up closely spaced channels during a live show
- Finding equipment that is durable enough to travel without damage

Solution:

- Sony DWX and DWZ series receivers, transmitters, and microphones

Benefits:

- Survived transport without damage
- Delivered rock-solid reception with no dropouts
- Offered ease of use for students to learn on
- Provided clear accurate sound in diverse situations.

Beyond Definition



With some 30 years working with A-list clients who include Earth, Wind & Fire, Jennifer Lopez, Madonna, and Beyoncé, Rick Camp is considered one of the pre-eminent mix engineers in live sound. Now his Master Mix Live School, based in Las Vegas, offers a hands-on education to small classes of aspiring A1, A2, or live audio engineers using the best tools and technology available. His pick for wireless audio? Sony DWX and DWZ series receivers, transmitters, and microphones.

While music genres and the hottest artists have come and gone as the nature of music and technology changes, Camp has seen consistency in the quality of Sony's audio offerings. "I started using Sony wireless working with Earth, Wind & Fire in 1994 and have found that they've always had superior reception and are long-lasting," said Camp. "I have stuff that's still running great that I bought back in the '80s, and this tradition of excellence and longevity has carried through the years, now with the DWX and DWZ series. Babyface really put the products to the test a few summers back running into the audience; sometimes he'd be 150 feet away and we never had any dropouts!"

Now, with Master Mix Live's 20-week program, Camp is offering a unique

and semi-private learning environment covering live and recorded audio topics and techniques including etiquette, acoustics, microphones, mixing, and more. He added that his course covers the nuts and bolts of audio engineering and mixing, including changing capsules, controlling the whole microphone, naming inputs and outputs, and using tablets in conjunction with wireless audio.

Camp brings vast experience to his teaching and offers courses in an area with a dearth of educational outlets. With one graduated class and another forthcoming, Camp has found his business growing exponentially through word of mouth from current and former students and has had inquiries from across the globe.

Before he came to the craft, Camp was a professional musician who studied trumpet at the prestigious Berklee College of Music. While performing, he was always also a "gearhead" interested in the technical side of delivering excellent sound to audiences. So when he switched from the stage to the mixing console, he brought a pair of finely tuned ears. Over his career, he's witnessed the incredible evolution of live sound that brings us to today's digital technology.

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"When I started, everything was strictly analog. Now, with digital, it's definitely gotten much, much better, not just in terms of sound quality but also the ease of use. Things were cumbersome to adjust and program," said Camp. "Still, today's plug-and-play digital environment has its drawbacks. The simplicity can give you the idea that you can become an expert effortlessly. But there's a whole lot more to this, and that takes time and talent."

Back in the day, many acts relied on wired mics. But in today's performance space, it's more than just sound, and wireless is a necessity. "Concerts are now produced for video, and so the musicians are moving all over the place. So you've got to be wireless to pull that off," Camp said.

Rock-solid reception in tight spaces

For Camp, the decision to go with Sony wireless audio for his students was easy. "There's nothing better than Sony. It's important to introduce my students to the best, because when they get to working, this is what they're going to see. The DWX and DWZ series really stand out because they deliver rock-solid reception all the time, no matter what's going on, with no dropouts," said Camp.

Staying locked in on a channel is just one of the challenges for wireless audio. Working well within today's increasingly crowded spectrum is equally important. Camp says that Sony's systems make the most of available bandwidth.

"Typically, when you scan for signals to see what's open, there's a lot that's taken up by TV channels, and so fitting in 10-15 channels for a major show can be challenging. So the question is: how close can your wireless system get to these signals? For normal channel set-up, you want 125 megahertz spaces. Sometimes we've been squeezed to using channels just 10 megahertz away from each other, but the Sony handles it just fine," Camp said.

"With my background as a musician, I know what the instruments are supposed to sound like, the timbre of everything from a trumpet to a bass guitar, so I can set the EQ right," Camp said. "Sony wireless is true and transparent, and so the audience has a no-compromise experience of the mix we've created."

Typically, Master Mix Live students work closely with the DWZ series receivers, transmitters, and mics. It's important for them to know the added capabilities of the DWX series to integrate any microphone or line level source with XLR 3-pin male output into the DWZ system. Whatever the musician's personal taste, the DWX series makes it simple to add their choice in microphone into the mix. These all share the same digital wireless remote control capabilities. Engineers can turn mics on and off, set levels, and monitor how each piece of equipment is doing through the same control interface.



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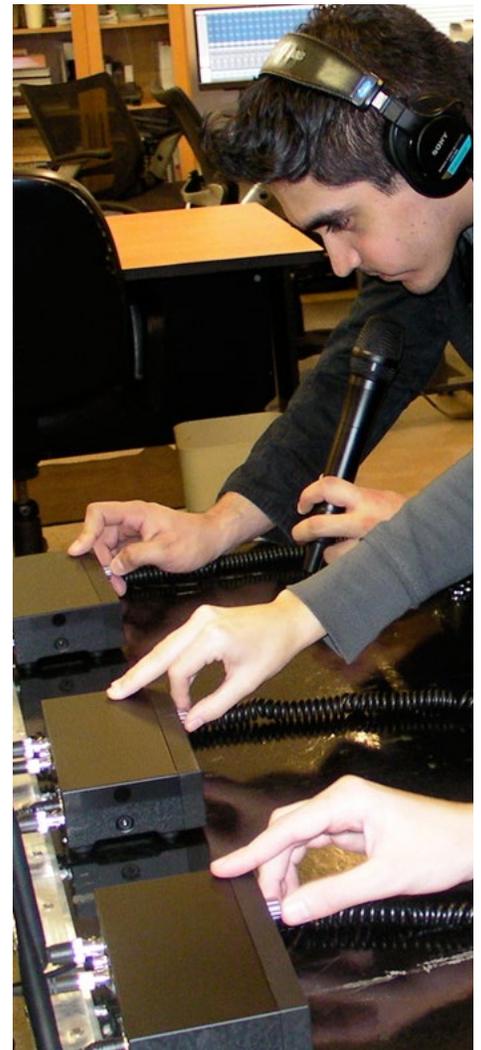
“It’s very easy for the students to master the controls here, so they can focus on getting the sound right, instead of worrying about the mechanics of running the wireless. With the Sony system, they are up and running fast, even with a complicated set-up,” Camp said.

As the students learn to appreciate the power of the Sony DWZ and DWX series in class, they will come to learn another key quality after they leave Master Mix Live to hit the road. Another hallmark of Sony’s products that Camp is eager to speak about is durability.

“These products have definitely proven themselves to be roadworthy,” Camp explained. “Even though they live in protective cases, they still have to hold up, bouncing around for hundreds of miles between gigs. You’ve got to be able to open the case, start up, and have the systems work right, since there isn’t time to be replacing things. I haven’t had any problems with Sony wireless.”

Looking to the future

After several decades helping pave the way for today’s sound engineers, what does Camp think is next? He sees even higher sampling rates and frequencies, and an overall push for superior sound quality. And, if you take part in Master Mix Live, perhaps you’ll have a special guest session from Camp’s son, a successful sound engineer who tours the world and is the first person Camp taught the ins and outs of the business to. In the end he hopes his students will help be the influencers and implementers of audio trends in the not-so-distant future.



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