

Blog: Drop the Mic!

Joel Osteen, Microphones & HOW to Bring the House Down

In AV, and for many of our microphone applications, a popular market channel for us is House of Worship. When you think of a HOW, I bet you are probably not thinking about the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, right? But in this age of mobile churches and pop up locations, nearly any venue can become a center for spiritual awakening.

So, recently I had a chance to go to the “Night of Hope” at the Barclays Center and see none other than Joel Osteen, the charismatic, sometimes loved, sometimes not, ever-smiling American preacher and televangelist. Now I’ve been to the Barclays Center before for several different types of events from hockey games to a Bruno Mars concert, but on this night, what surprised me was how the staging for this monumental event was so minimal.

Nothing was over-done, not the backdrop, and not the sound system. Of course, there were the much-needed jumbotron images of Joel and his crew (since I was seated in the nose bleeds), but there was also a humble simplicity to the AV technology they utilized (although the flashing lights from the sound board could have lit up a small city).

Promptly at 7:30PM Joel stepped out after one musical introductory number, greeted the crowd and started the evening. He had a lavalier microphone, neatly centered below his chin, on his chest between the lapels of his suit. His voice was loud and clear, and he moved with ease despite having the lavalier attached to him. Simplicity and a lot of practice.

In addition to the spoken sermon being delivered by Joel, the evening had an on-going musical element where Joel’s son and daughter were joined by other musicians on stage. For these numbers, each musician “manned” his own microphone and mic stand, and then carried them back and forth from the front to the back of the stage for each song.

Visually, the jumbotrons helped me to make out the facial expressions of Joel and his preaching crew, and several times over the evening I caught myself hyper-focused on watching the “jumbotron” version of Joel and not the real deal. He just seemed so small there on the stage, but his voice was still powerful and crystal clear. Sound quality capture at its finest.



Honestly, what I really like about Joel is that his first love was working behind the scenes as the AV techno-geek that ran the television production for his father's ministry. Joel understood that in order for the words to be understood, they had to first be captured in just the right light, caught at just the right video angle, and heard at just the right sound. Under his AV skills and guidance, the television ministry flourished.

When his dad passed away suddenly, the world looked to Joel to step out from behind the scenes and take up the proverbial microphone. And so, he did. He stepped away from his father's traditional pulpit pounding, gooseneck mic and stepped onto the world stage in his own style...with his lavalier.

The HOW environment has been changing and evolving more than ever in recent years. With expanded venues, portable services, video-walls and more and more complex AV systems, today's integrators must be prepared for a holy host of challenges. One thing's for sure, with Clockaudio by their side, they will certainly hear the calling for something that is "clearly different."