

Award for Outstanding Achievement Songs of the Sea

sentosa's multimedia beachfront experience



by Dan Ferrisi

Songs of the Sea, being performed right now on Sentosa, an island resort in Singapore, has melded the elements of fantasy, high technology and reverence for a proud culture to create a truly memorable experience for the island's two million yearly visitors. Work on the multi-million-dollar Songs of the Sea began in January 2006, with completion reached in February 2007. The show made its spectacular debut in March. Design and engineering were by ECA2, a company whose reputation for excellence in multimedia experience creation has been further bolstered by this achievement.

"Sentosa, Singapore's island resort and leisure destination, is home to more than a dozen attractions," said Ko Eng Wee, general manager, Leisure Business, Sentosa. "Songs of the Sea is located within a zone on Siloso Beach that is popular for its vibrant beach culture, high-energy sports activities and chill-out bars." The nightly extravaganza is set in the sea off the beach.

"Sentosa wanted to have a show performed each evening based on the sea—not just based on it but, in fact, actually located in it," said Yves Pepin, founder and president of ECA2 and never one to refuse a creative challenge. The beautiful, mysterious sea - evoker of legends, giver of sustenance, path to the outside world - has cultural as well as practical significance to Singapore and Sentosa and is also a popular setting for

leisure activities. With this in mind, ECA2 got to work designing the show and its open-air amphitheatre, which seats 2500.

Pepin explained that the storyline centers on the transcendent power of music. The setting is a mysterious fishing village, regionally known as a "kelong." At the beginning of the show, a group of young men and women come onto the set, singing and dancing. The youth named Li has a particularly marvelous voice. Suddenly, a vision of a beautiful girl, Princess Ami, appears (via the magic of waterscreen projection). It is revealed by some mischievous sea creatures that the village has been enchanted and, in order to break the spell and free the girl, Li and his friends must channel the power of song.

The Lord of Fire, the Spirit of Light and, finally, the Lady of the Sea appear, asking for

Li's song to free them from the enchantment that has trapped them as well. Their images and Princess Ami's are realized with CGI projection onto a triptych of waterscreens, the center screen some 40 meters wide.

The freeing of each of these spirits is expressed as technical elements explode. "The natural elements of Siloso Beach come alive with bursts of pyrotechnics, psychedelic lasers and water jets," explained Goh Lye Whatt, director, Property, Planning and Development, Sentosa. "The lights, lasers, fire effects and water jets create a stunning visual feast." Sixty-nine water jets are used, and the flames leap as high as 20 meters. At the conclusion and with the audience's help, Li's song finally brings Princess Ami back and eradicates the enchantment over the village. The final scenes show the kelong returning to full vitality.



.....
Dan Ferrisi is assistant editor of *Sound & Communications*, a more than 50-year-old magazine that serves the commercial systems integration industry. For more information, visit www.soundandcommunications.com.



Because the sea cannot be controlled and the show is performed nightly, whether the waters are calm or turbulent, every component of Songs of the Sea had to be built with the utmost robustness without sacrificing the look and feel of an authentic kelong. “There are no barriers between the show and the natural elements,” commented Cecilia Chen, assistant director, Contracts, Sentosa. “The centerpiece of the show, a specially built 120-meter-long kelong structure, truly resembles original Asian fishing village huts. Using modern, non-flammable materials, it is built to withstand the roughest of weather conditions, including strong winds, waves and high tides.”

Songs of the Sea has enjoyed tremendous success since opening a year ago. According to Pepin, “During the weekend, it is absolutely sold out—all performances.” Weekdays, too, routinely draw huge crowds, evidence of tourists’ alacritous response to this unique multimedia experience. Between March 27, 2007 and December 31, 2007, Songs of the Sea was watched by 991,723 guests, and there are no signs of the enthusiasm waning.

According to Juliana Yeo, zone manager, Sentosa, one of the biggest challenges associated with the show—ensuring that the seven performers interact naturally with the projected images and the various technical effects, such as flames, laser beams and water jets—ironically has transformed into its greatest strength. “Together, these convey the essence of the story and draw on the audience’s emotional involvement and participation. This intricate relationship between technology and the human touch makes the show a work of art.”



THE HETTEMA GROUP

architecture design resort
playful concepts storytelling
immersive attractions museums
master planning environmental
innovative

Now Playing World Wide