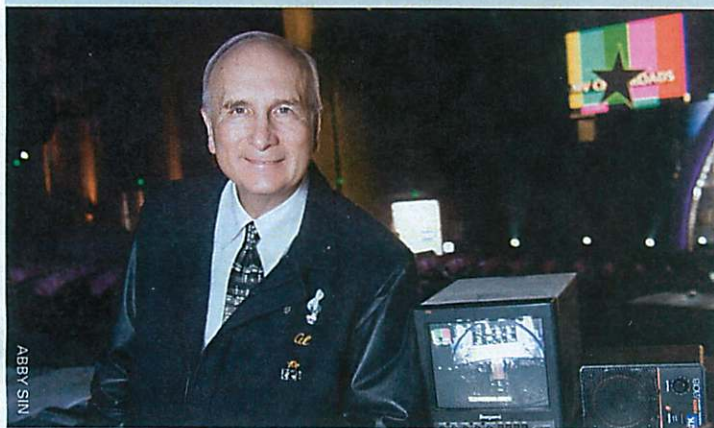


### Al Siniscal Honored with Parnelli Audio Innovator Award



ABBY SIN

Others may have a higher public profile, but few in the live event audio business have been at the forefront of as many advancements and innovations as Al Siniscal. He will be honored with the Parnelli Audio Innovator Award at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Parnelli Awards on Oct. 22, 2010 in Las Vegas. Read all about it on page 26.

### In Memoriam: Eugene Czerwinski, 83

SIMI VALLEY, CA — Eugene "Gene" Czerwinski, the audio innovator and founder of Cerwin-Vega, died Aug. 6, 2010 at age 83. Czerwinski graduated from the University of Michigan and worked as an aerospace engineer before founding Cerwin-Vega in 1954.

Known for his interest in ever-more-powerful speaker and subwoofer designs, Czerwinski is credited with the first solid-state amplifier (1957), first 18-inch speaker (1964) and development

with Universal Studios of Sensurround (1974), for which he was recognized with a technical Academy Award.

Cerwin-Vega was sold to the Stanton Group in 2002 and now has locations in Deerfield Beach, Fla. and Brussels, Belgium. Cerwin-Vega CEO, Timothy Dowart, recognized the Czerwinski's legacy and extended condolences to the family. Czerwinski is survived by a daughter, Connie and two sons, Steven and Darius.

### Hometown Heroes Named, Parnelli Voting Opens, and More Sponsors Step Up

By Kevin M. Mitchell

LAS VEGAS — The regional winners of FOH's 2010 Hometown Hero voting competition have been announced, and voting for coast-to-coast 2010 Hometown Hero honors and all the other Parnelli awards categories is now open at [parnelliawards.com](http://parnelliawards.com). Support for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Parnelli awards program has also increased to record levels as the Oct. 22, 2010 ceremony approaches.

The top regional Hometown Hero sound companies follow: *Canada*: Wall Sound and Lighting, Ottawa, Ontario; *Northeast*: Concert Quality Sound, Egg Harbor City, NJ; *Southeast*: Beachsound, Miami Gardens, FL; *Midwest*: Harvest Productions, Kansas City, MO; *Southwest*: Richter Scale Productions, Denver CO (and Phoenix); *Northwest*: Sound On Stage, Hayward, CA.

Each of these regional sound companies are profiled in a feature that begins on page 28. They're also listed on the 2010 Parnelli Awards ballot, which appears on page 31, along with all the other individuals and companies nominated for awards this year, including FOH Mixer, Monitor Mixer, Sound Company of the Year and Indispensable Technology "IT" Award for Best Sound Product of the Year.

The ballot also appears at [www.parnelliawards.com/vote](http://www.parnelliawards.com/vote), and voting is now underway. Readers of FOH and PLSN will be able to vote throughout the month of September.

### Clair Acquires Wireless First, GTO Live; Launches Broadcast Services Division

LITITZ, PA — After agreeing to acquire the assets of Wireless First and GTO Live, Clair launched a new broadcast services division. It is to be led by Shaun Clair and Kevin Sanford, who founded Wireless First in 1996 and GTO Live in 2008. Employees from both companies were also expected to be retained by Clair.

The new division will aim to offer clients a "one-stop" solution for broadcast and touring productions, including those producing high-profile live televised events, expanding opportunities for Clair in the U.S. and abroad.

None of this well-deserved recognition would be possible, of course, without the generous support of Parnelli Awards sponsors.

"It's an exciting time for the Parnelli Awards, and we're thrilled for the support that is turning out," declared Terry Lowe, Parnelli producer and PLSN/FOH publisher. "The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Parnelli Awards is guaranteed to be our best yet in large part because of the outpouring of support from this group of forward-thinking members of the industry."

New Gold Sponsors include Branam Enterprises, Meyer Sound, Pyrotek Special Effects, Rock-It Cargo, SeaChanger, Show Distribution, Tyler Truss and Ultra-tec Special Effects.

continued on page 6

### Physics? What Physics?



Martyn "Ferrit" Rowe and Preston Soper

Martin Audio made some pretty bold claims with the announcement of the MLA multi-cellular array, and FOH took a trip to Chicago to check out the rig being driven by Preston Soper and some guy named Ferrit for country phenom Zac Brown. For more, turn to Production Profile, page 22.

### Road Tests

Who says analog is dead? We take two solid old-school consoles out for a spin.

### On the Digital Edge

Are you trying to deal with "two PAS?" One that you are driving, and one that the drummer controls? How to use your system processor to line up the kicks.



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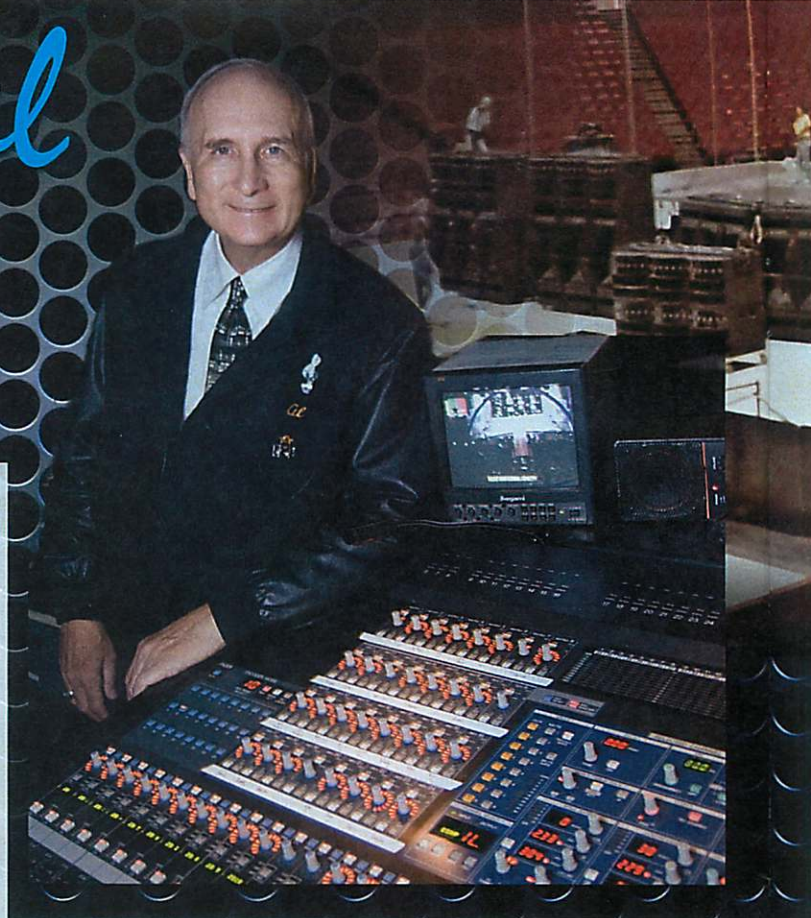
**"JH AUDIO HAS RAISED THE BAR, THE DETAIL AND EFFICIENCY GOES FAR BEYOND ANYONE ELSE"**  
KEVIN "KG" GLENDINNING  
Monitor Engineer - Alicia Keys | Black Eyed Peas | Justin Timberlake

# Al Siniscal

## Honored with Parnelli Audio Innovator Award

**Military Discipline and Degrees in Engineering Propelled A Prolific Career**

By Kevin Mitchell



His personal motto says it all: "The stakes are too high for amateurs."

Al Siniscal has a long history of having distinguished himself, not only for his considerable pro audio breakthroughs, but also for his business savvy. Jere Harris of PRG says this about him: "He's the toughest negotiator in the business! And he always had the big picture in sight."

His development of concepts ahead of their time includes tri- and quad-amplification; self-powered loudspeaker systems; line arrays; and foamed-back horns.

"He has distinguished himself as an engineer's engineer, and few of us have a 'PE' after our names," says sound engineer Stan Miller, who was honored with this award in 2009. "On top of all his tremendous achievements, he's a consummate businessman."

Siniscal is a Registered Professional Electrical Engineer and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and a Master of Business Administration Degree, both from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. He was a First Lieutenant Engineer in the USAF Missiles and Space Systems Division where he says the mantra of "Zero Defects" influenced him.

With a pedigree like that, you'd think he's a titan running some multi-national company, or at least an executive with the big oil company he

once worked at. But he turned his back on all of that for a place called Las Vegas, where his scientific mind and ingenuity became focused on creating better live shows for those who performed there and beyond.

His list of credits is aligned with a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century pop history time line and includes world tours with Frank Sinatra, Barry Manilow, Paul Anka, Tony Orlando, The Righteous Brothers, Johnny Mathis, Tom Jones, Charo, Shirley MaLaine, Debbie Reynolds, Dionne Warwick, Wayne Newton, Bobby Vinton, The Everly Brothers and many others originating in Vegas. World tours have also included Aerosmith, The Doobie Brothers, Van Halen, Engelbert Humperdinck, Julio Iglesias, Chicago and Mötley Crüe. He also worked on several theater tours including *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, *The Who's Tommy*, *The Wiz*, *Starlight Express* and *Joe's Coat*, and he provided the sound design system for Pope John Paul II at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles in 1987.

### A Row or Two Ahead of the Rest **FOH**

Siniscal was born in St. Louis on July 6, 1941, and he spent his early years in the small town of Rolla, Mo. "I went to school in a small one room school house, where when you 'graduated' from grade to grade you didn't change rooms, but moved over one row!" His father was a doctor in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and in 1957, they moved to St. Louis. There he attended Chaminade High School, a Catholic prep school. He turned heads at the school's science fairs, and at one he built a Tesla Coil from scratch and made a spark of 150,000 volts jump 15 centimeters.

He received a partial scholarship to Washington University in 1959, where he joined the USAF ROTC program to help get him through college.

**His development of concepts ahead of their time includes tri- and quad-amplification; self-powered loudspeaker systems; line arrays; and foamed-back horns.**

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A fixture on the Las Vegas scene since he first showed up as a soldier cooling his heels for a little R&R in 1967, he has been a provider of sound, lighting and backline production equipment both for casino showrooms and the biggest touring acts performing there. He built his company, A1 Audio, into a powerhouse before selling it to PRG in 1999. At the time, the company had locations in Hollywood, Santa Monica, Lake Tahoe,

Branson, Mo. and New York City. "We sometimes overuse the word innovation, but Al is the definition of innovation in the touring audio industry," says Ted Leamy of Pro Media/Ultra Sound. "Early on, when no manufacturer was building products specific to touring audio needs, he was designing and building audio systems from scratch based on what was needed. Today, you can see the influence of Al's early innovations in products now mass-manufactured and techniques we take for granted as indispensable."

Nine months later, in 1966, he was needed at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah. He would spend his off-hours experimenting with electronics, and he got called into Lt. Col. William Dille's office regarding his extracurricular activities and feared some dressing down would ensue. "Instead, he invited me to join him in an off-base project of building plug-in amplifier cards and to help in developing early recording consoles."

The military asked him to be an engineer in the Missiles and Space Systems Command in Utah. After a few months, he was promoted to First Lieutenant and was responsible for all USAF conventional munitions coming from the U.S. Navy, "which was about one-third of the total USAF munitions used in Vietnam."

One night, Siniscal and three others from the base piled into a car and drove the 460 miles to Las Vegas for some R&R. Counting cards at the Black Jack table proved too laborious and took the fun out of the trip, so the fellas found themselves in Caesar's showroom by the stage.

"There was a horrible buzz during the show, but we didn't really care of course," he says. "In

those days, stagehands were mostly carpenters and set designers with no electrical experience." Siniscal figured out immediately it was a ground loop issue, and the Caesar crew was astounded how he fixed it. They showed up again on their next visit and fixed another grounding problem, and he started a long friendship with Dave Rogers, who was in charge of sound at Caesars.

In 1969, a serious vehicle accident put Siniscal in two military hospitals for over four months and led to an honorable military medical discharge. "I had to decide if I wanted to go back to New York and be a yuppie or do something else," he says. He chose "something else."

### "Three," as in \$300 **FOH**

He followed his heart and ended up in Las Vegas, hanging out at Caesars and building audio consoles and speakers on his kitchen table. During this early period, he also started putting amplifiers into speakers. "It was purely engineering," he said. "I'd hear someone complain that their monitor speakers didn't sound good, and I'd see they were connected with a 22-gauge wire running from the back of the room. Obviously, you lose a lot of power in that distance. When you put the amp by the speaker, the resistance is nil, and the sound greatly improves." The result was a low distortion and clean sound.

Chips Davis, a well-known recording studio and acoustical engineer in Las Vegas requested good-quality speakers. "I knew that there was a need to bring a higher level of engineering to the stage shows, and that I could at least try to get the shows closer to the high level of engineering going on in the military industries," he said. "In the course of these activities, I met the Righteous Brothers and built two bi-amplified JBL 4320 Studio Monitor Loudspeakers for them, without the specified passive crossovers. I used multi-layered plywood rather than pressed wood, which was commonly used for studio monitors."

Davis also came into Caesars Palace to mix Paul Anka's live performance sound and "was always seeking ways to bring the live performances up to the recording studio quality level,"

he said "Because of the pressure to always get a better live show product, Chips and Rogers brought me in to help with the load-in and to insure that there would be no technical problems and ground loops with the live show equipment."

Siniscal decided to build larger touring Tri-Amplified, Self-Powered, Loudspeaker Systems. "The power amplifiers were plug-in amplifier cards that were developed during my USAF days and were placed into hand-wired card frames, along with the three-way electronic crossover PC cards. I also built a small solid panel audio console with plug-in preamps to ensure a clean sound. This was certainly a leap of faith to build a high quality system that few might appreciate and even fewer knew how to operate."

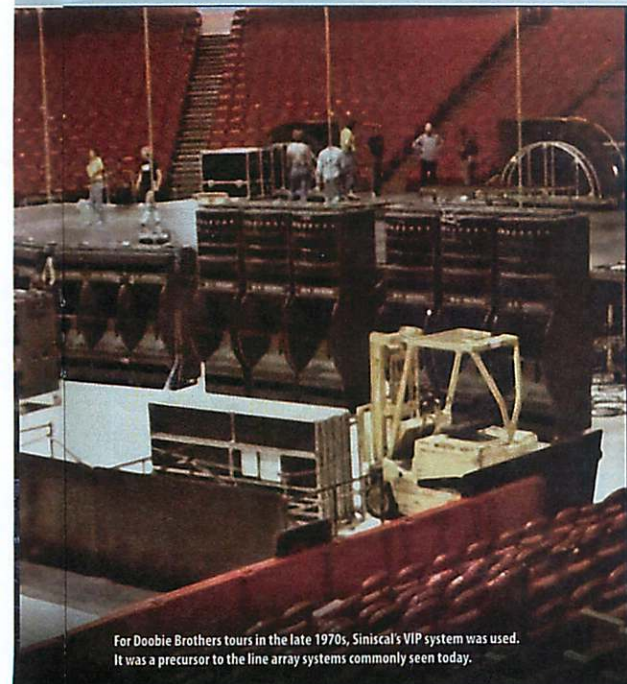
Anka loved it and wanted to buy the complete powered loudspeaker system along with the preamp console. "I told Paul that I didn't know the sale price, since I built the speaker system and small mixing console, both from scratch." Since Siniscal was the only one who knew how to operate the system, he decided to rent it. When he was doing his first official gig with Paul Anka, he asked Davis how much he should charge. Davis said to charge "three."

"I thought, 'three' what? And he said three hundred a day. I almost fell over. In the Air Force I was making \$227 a month." Siniscal now saw his future, and that involved being a technical person experienced, knowledgeable and educated in the emerging field of true pro audio.

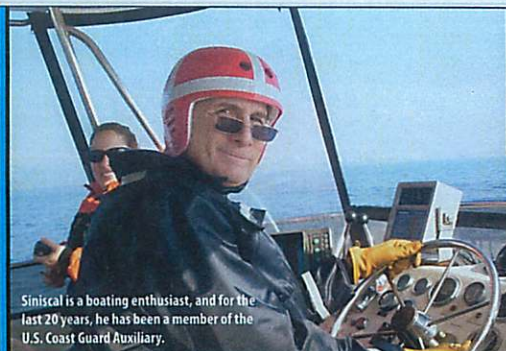
The early days were fraught with peril. "Of course, I would earn all my money in the first 10 minutes before the show," he says. "Suddenly there'd be a buzz, and it would be because the ice maker was on the same circuit."

A1 Audio was formed. His first "warehouse" was a U-Store-It unit. "I'd unscrew a light bulb and rig it for a light and my soldering iron and build powered speakers there — but only after 2 a.m., because it was too hot otherwise."

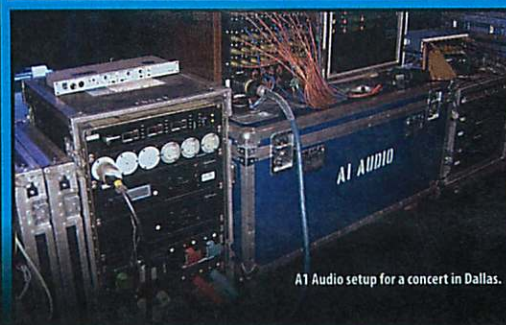
When Wayne Newton heard Anka in concert, he wanted the system too. He built another one and another. "It wasn't long before Shirley MaLaine, Ann-Margret, Tom Jones and Frank



For Doobie Brothers tours in the late 1970s, Siniscal's VIP system was used. It was a precursor to the line array systems commonly seen today.



Siniscal is a boating enthusiast, and for the last 20 years, he has been a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.



A1 Audio setup for a concert in Dallas.



A jumbo-sized A1 Audio rig comprised of Meyer Sound MSL 3s.

Sinatra also came to the shows and also wanted the systems, too. And thus A1 Audio rapidly expanded.

Increase in quality was not just for the benefit of the pointy-headed audio aficionados, but significantly increased the quality of the shows. These were the days of 14 shows a week with full orchestras backing up the likes of these artists. When they could hear themselves better, roam the stage and see the audience enjoying the act because they could hear the full range of frequency like never before, it pumped up the artist and lead to a better overall show in every way.

**Brothers: Righteous to Doobies** **FOH**

In 1971, the March/April issue of *Recording Engineer/Producer* magazine hit the streets, and there on page 27 was Siniscal's article on bi- and tri-amplification. The three-page article had a deep impact on the pro audio business — such as it was at the time. Then the Audio Engineering Society asked him to come to Munich, Germany in March, 1972, to present his 10-page technical paper, *High-Intensity, Modular Tri- and Quad-Amplification Loudspeaker Systems*. It was here his European contemporaries first learned about self-powered, multi-amped loudspeaker systems. He would do a similar presentation two months later at the AES Convention in Los Angeles.

Another far-reaching innovation was discovering that if he injected foam into the horns, it would dampen the horn and eliminate ringing. His expertise was used in creating better monitors for the performers as well.

In 1974, he developed the VIP system, or Vertical Integrated Power, a bold precursor to the Line Array system that would come decades later. "These VIP Bass Cabinets were big horn-loaded, bass-reflex cabinets, about seven and a half feet tall, three feet wide and about three and a half feet deep. The mid-high end matching enclosure was two and a half feet tall, bringing the entire VIP System to 10 feet. The enclosures were all powered by BGW 750B power amplifiers that were recessed and mounted directly into the speaker cabinets and provided direct coupling to the loudspeakers with only about two feet of heavy gauge copper wire between the amp and speaker. At the same time, all other companies mounted their amps hundreds of feet from their actual speakers, and had tremendous power losses in the wire alone, plus terrible damping factors. This tri-amplified, direct coupling of amp to loudspeaker was very nice, open-sounding and clean."

In October 1978, an article called "The Doobie Brothers Touring System" appeared in *Recording Engineer/Producer* magazine. It

showed the practical applications accomplished in bi- and tri-amplification with self-powered loudspeaker systems for the U.S. touring industry. It featured photographs of the system Siniscal used in the Aladdin Theater for the Performing Arts, a large indoor 7,000 seat Las Vegas venue. It also discussed "flying" the system in various concert arenas. "Sometime after this article, one or two professional touring companies also started experimenting with these methods. Gradually, over the next 20 years, everyone began adopting these technical innovations." Meyer Sound was certainly one of the first.

Siniscal's work on a Sinatra show in Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Soccer stadium in 1980, a first for that stadium, and also the subject of another technical article, landed Sinatra in the 1981 *Guinness Book of World Records* as the largest live audience ever gathered for a single concert for a solo performer, as 175,000 showed up to hear the crooner.

In the early 1980s, in what must have been a head-scratcher at the time, Siniscal invested in a little backwater town called Branson, Mo.

But while A1 Audio was the first pro sound company in what would eventually surpass Nashville as a country music Mecca, it wasn't the last.

In 1999, after three decades, A1 became part of PRG. Siniscal stayed on for a while as a consultant and was supposed to "kind of retire," but after two years, he transitioned from PRG to a new version of his company, A1 Entertainment Services, which he still runs today. From the buyout, PRG had left him leases with the Vegas showrooms, so he continued with that and did some impressive installs. Just a few years ago, he oversaw a complete audio system upgrade to the Aladdin Resort & Casino — now Planet Hollywood — that included a Yamaha DM2000 and then two Yamaha PM5D-RH digital mixing consoles with a DSP5D, plus at the time the largest permanently-installed L-Acoustics V-DOSC PA system in the U.S.

His relationship with clients was built on mutual respect. "When they spotted that I knew what I was doing, we immediately clicked. They wanted that kind of quality," he says, adding: "It's been an interesting journey."

"It was a real surprise," he says of receiving the Parnelli. "I mean, I did a lot of stuff, but didn't think people cared much about that. When I got the letter, it was humbling, especially when you see the names of the people who are the Parnelli Advisory board. All outstanding people!"

He's also been a lifesaver in the very literal sense. For the last 20 years, Siniscal, a boating enthusiast, both sailing and power, has been a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. He participated in rescues that have saved three lives. He lives, works, and volunteers in Las Vegas with his wife, Holly, an artist, occasionally plucking one of his five banjos. Son Gabriel and daughter Abby are both in college, studying piano/business and photography/modeling, respectively.

Siniscal will be honored for his innovations in pro audio at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Parnelli Awards, which will take place on Oct. 22, 2010, at the Rio Hotel in Las Vegas. For more information, and to make your reservation, go to [www.parnelliawards.com](http://www.parnelliawards.com). **FOH**

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