

Shure

Shure's New PSM900 In-Ear Monitoring System



The PSM-900 In-Ear Monitors.

Later... with Jools Holland goes with Shure's latest high-performance in-ear monitors

When it comes to high-performance TV, nothing comes close to the complexity of *Later... with Jools Holland*. The show has aired every year since 1992, regularly featuring seven or eight world class acts that perform seamlessly in front of a live studio audience. The calibre of musicians and the longevity of the show makes it one of the most respected music programmes to air, regularly pulling in over half a million viewers.

Since the show's inception almost two decades ago, one company has been entrusted with delivering the sound – the legendary John Henry's in London.

For over 30 years John Henry's has been the backbone of the UK's entertainment industry and festival scene, whether it's putting together concert touring systems, monitoring systems, or full blown concert and event production. *Later... with Jools Holland*, Wogan, Latitude, The Big Chill and Simon Cowell's 50th birthday represent a mere smattering of projects they've been involved with of late.

General Manager Robert Harding has been with John Henry's for 30 years, and in that time has become the go-to man for anything sound related in the entertainment market.

"I have a very big involvement with the equipment we buy here. As a

hire company we are generally client-led in our purchasing of equipment – i.e., they ask for it and we'll go get it, but we are always looking at new products and some of those make their way into our inventory".

"Sometimes a product will come out and it'll take a year before you get clients requesting it, other times they'll be an anticipatory buzz around certain items. A good example of this is Shure's latest in-ear system, the PSM-900 – engineers are already requesting it, even though it's only been available for less than six months now. Word's already getting around and now we're really beginning to see them spec'd on gear lists for all events, big or small."

But even with Robert's wealth of experience there are still many questions to ask of a product wanting to make its way in to John Henry's amply stocked warehouse. "New products need to be road tested before we can recommend them to our clients. You have to make sure they're reliable and that people want them, and that you're not just buying something for the sake of it – you're buying it to improve your stock."

"Each week on *Later...* we tried them on one of the six bands as we only had one rack of them, so I found out who was using the most in-ears and then we'd convince the engineer to try these new Shure ones out. The

bands that used them included Hot Chip, Macy Gray, Alicia Keys..."

A man of few words when few are needed, Robert sums up the PSM-900s based not only on his own experience but also from the feedback he's received. "We've tried them out, and they are very good. They work well, they sound good. And that's why we've bought some."

"We also have to look to the future. As far as some of the other in-ears we use from other manufacturers go, we're not going to be able to use them soon because they're not Channel 38 compliant – they just won't work after the 'Big Bang' in 2012 when they switch off the analogue broadcast and go completely digital."

Aden Gregory, who co-manages John Henry's audio department, has been closer to PSM-900s out in the field...

"I've been working on *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Later... with Jools Holland*, *Jonathan Ross*, most of the Maida Vale sessions for the BBC... and yes, we've been using Shure's PSM-900 in-ear monitors. They're much better than anything else we've used. The totally quiet background is what most people like about them."

"We like the compact size of the belt packs, and they seem really stable. I think a lot of engineers also like that you can whiz through the mixes on them, which is a really neat feature. You can go through all of the individual mixes on your monitor belt pack rather than listening through a desk. No one else is doing that. It makes things a lot quicker when you're setting up, because you can walk on stage and listen to every frequency and know that it's stable without having to change belt packs to see if each of them is okay."

"But the sound quality is the main thing, and that's what every engineer who's used them thought – they

sound brilliant. And they sound very musical, they don't sound processed. Most in-ears sound like cheap radio and these sound like expensive FM. Much better dynamic range than you'd expect and they're ultra-stable. And they're quite a reasonable price. Plus you can use them worldwide because they've got a massive range of frequencies. This was the hang up with the older systems as you could only really use them in one country, so these new ones are perfect for those world tours."

But it's not just the engineers who laud the sound quality of Shure's latest in-ear monitors, as Aden suggests: "The artists have also said that they sound great. Other than that people just want things to work, and these things are solid." Solid indeed, largely due to the legendary and rigorous Shure testing process – details of which are largely kept under wraps. "I'm sure Shure drop these on the floor a couple of times to make sure they're up to it. You just know Shure gear is going to work day in, day out."

"So now we're going to start spec'ing the PSM-900s as a matter of course," continues Robert. "Why? We like them. We've bench tested PSM-900s on live-to-air conditions, you know... *Later... with Jools Holland* is live, *Wogan* is live, and we've tried them on a couple of other shows as well. They have some features on them that none of the other systems have got, and they sound better."

SHURE®

Shure Distribution UK

t 01992 703058

w www.shure.co.uk

e info@shuredistribution.co.uk

Robert Harding, John Henry's General Manager.

