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Glittering Venue Adds Spice to Phoenix Spectaculars

Although Phoenix Satellite Television has only been in operation for a little over 10 years, it's fair to say that its impact on Chinese-language television in China and the rest of the Asian region has been considerable. And last year, it celebrated its 10th anniversary by throwing a lavish birthday party – Phoenix's 10th Anniversary Celebration Gala. Phoenix was also the presenter of the Miss Chinese Cosmos Pageant 2006 in October. And the broadcaster chose AsiaWorld-Arena, the purpose-built entertainment hall at AsiaWorld-Expo, to stage both events.

AsiaWorld-Arena is the venue that the Hong Kong entertainment industry has been waiting for. It was purpose-designed and built to accommodate world-class concerts, entertainment and sporting extravaganzas and large scale corporate functions and conferences. It has employed a flexibly configured layout with sophisticated acoustics, lighting and purpose-built backstage amenities that provide an excellent backdrop for truly dazzling spectaculars.

The two glittering Phoenix shows marked the first time that the venue has been booked by a major broadcaster for presenting television spectaculars for consumption

by a large television audience. And, according to the deputy head of Phoenix Chinese Channel, Bobby Wan, it won't be the last. Mr. Wan, who is also the broadcaster's Director of Programme Co-ordination, is extremely complimentary about the venue. "We found that this versatile venue together with its professional staff allowed us the greatest flexibility to present the Phoenix TV's 10th Anniversary Celebration Gala in an exceptional production, and the effect was so dramatic," he says. "I'm delighted that, at last, Hong Kong has built a venue with the capability to achieve our production needs."

Phoenix Rising from the Airwaves

And Phoenix had good reason to celebrate. Phoenix Satellite Television is a Hong Kong based broadcaster that was established with the aim of promoting a free flow of information and entertainment within the Greater China region and beyond. In effect, Phoenix has grown to become a key player in bringing to China a more relaxed attitude to media freedom as a natural consequence of China's economic reforms. Its global coverage is much more comprehensive than that of any comparable Chinese language broadcaster.



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Phoenix Chinese Channel broadcasts 24-hours a day in Mandarin into China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, the Middle East, North Africa and Russia. In total it reaches 53 countries and regions with more than 200 million viewers worldwide.

A Cure for Booking Headaches

Talk to Bobby Wan for a few minutes and it's obvious that here is someone who might be the personification of modern Greater China. A native of Hong Kong, he is passionate about China but has international tastes and finds a lot to appreciate in Western popular culture.

His interest in AsiaWorld-Arena stemmed from the difficulties Phoenix encountered in booking venues with the right kind of facilities and resources to stage major TV productions. Even with venues that were suitable, availability was always a major issue.

"Phoenix is a listed company in Hong Kong so we will consider Hong Kong first as a venue to hold such events unless there are some other objectives to be considered," he says. "Availability is very important and it is the key factor in making a venue decision. Additionally, we look at how accommodating a venue might be in enabling us to achieve the best audio and visual results. AsiaWorld-Arena provides the best audio acoustics necessary for recording television programmes and live performances. Another important aspect is that the size of this vast venue fires our imagination from a creativity aspect."

Two AsiaWorld-Arena Spectaculars

AsiaWorld-Arena, located at the East side of AsiaWorld-Expo is a superb new addition to entertainment in Hong Kong and represents a major step forward for the performing arts. It offers a unique world stage for stars to perform and reach an international audience. Situated close to the airport and served by a convenient multi-modal transportation system, AsiaWorld-Arena is Hong Kong's largest indoor seated venue, purpose-built to create a truly stunning atmosphere for an audience of up to 13,500 people. Its state-of-the-art facilities allow it to play host to every kind of entertainment and sporting spectacular. It can accommodate concerts by international rock and jazz performers, Canto-pop icons, classical music and Broadway spectaculars. It can also stage ice shows, dance performances, beauty pageants, award ceremonies, fashion shows, major sports events, and large-scale corporate functions and conferences.

Phoenix's first experience with AsiaWorld-Arena was when it put on its big party, the 10th Anniversary Celebration Gala held on 31 March 2006. Incorporating a spectacular variety show, it was a huge television hit when broadcast, achieving the highest ratings of the month.

In October the same year, AsiaWorld-Arena also hosted the finale of the Miss Chinese Cosmos Beauty Pageant 2006 presented by Phoenix. One of the most an-



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venue in terms of audience numbers, configuration and specifications. When asked how well AsiaWorld-Arena delivered what Phoenix had envisioned, Mr. Wan replied, “On the whole it is the best and most ideal venue in all my production experience. As well as offering superb production facilities, it is a venue that enables us to put on a big show on the one hand, and also hold a sumptuous banquet at the same time.”

A ‘Tasty’ Venue for Great Shows!

“AsiaWorld-Arena has many advantages over other Hong Kong venues, one of them being the better acoustic environment. Also the venue is so spacious that it can help you turn your dreams into reality,” he declared. “Its easy and direct accessibility also helped us a lot. When loading all our equipment and putting together the set, our trucks could be driven straight into the Arena and unload everything on the spot without the necessity of using outside loading bays. That helps in saving our resources too. And we were actually able to build our own make-up and changing rooms at the back!”

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anticipated events by the global Chinese audience, the finale brought together Chinese beauties from all over the world to compete for this prestigious title. The event was held for three years previously in Hong Kong (2003), Malaysia (2004) and Indonesia (2005). The 2006 pageant featured performances by leading acts from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. These two events were very different and made diverse demands on the

Comments placed on the Phoenix website after the 10th Anniversary Celebration Gala made it very clear that they were very pleased with the venue, the management and the whole organisational effort. When asked about his opinion on why the event was so successful, Mr. Wan points to the human factor. “The key is the





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people there,” he says. “The staff of the venue do their jobs so professionally and conscientiously. They are so involved and they always think of our needs. This is why I ended up holding two shows in a row there in 2006.”

Both events were big successes and television rating hits. The feedback from Phoenix’s guests and the other parties involved were universally positive and many attendees were impressed with the way the whole venue was utilised to accommodate the stage, the banquet and the back stage area for such large gatherings.

Mr. Wan believes that the spectacular AsiaWorld-Arena contributed a great deal to the glamour of the television specials and would unhesitatingly recommend the venue to all production people who need space to fuel their creativity.

Meanwhile Mr. Wan assures that besides the next Miss Chinese Cosmos Beauty Pageant 2007 which is confirmed to be held again at AsiaWorld-Arena on 3 November 2007, Phoenix would also be very keen to use the venue for Phoenix

Chinese Channel’s other major events in the future. “The two shows of 2006 were very successful because they were great shows,” he smiles, “but the venue was one of the key success factors – like providing the salt to a wonderful dish.”



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