

# DWR supplies Avolites and LumenRadio to SABC

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Dave Whitehouse from DWR with Andre Roussouw from SABC TV Outside Broadcasts

SABC TV Outside Broadcasts have invested in an Avolites Quartz console, part of the Titan Mobile Family, and a Lumen Radio CRMX Nova FX RDM Transmitter and Receiver, their second LumenRadio acquisition. South African based DWR Distribution supplied the equipment.

Andre Rossouw, the Specialist Production Lighting Electrician for the SABC TV Outside Broadcasts, has only had two jobs his life. He worked at The South African Railways and Harbours where he earned his national electrical diploma over a four year period, and then, on 1 August 1984 joined the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Outside Broadcasts team as an electrician. He has witnessed technology change in leaps and bounds.

In South Africa, Andre is a living legend. He was involved in the industry in the “pre-staging” era. This meant that when the nation saw the major televised productions like the SAMA Awards, UN

50th Celebration, Miss South Africa or even sporting broadcasts such as a boxing match – anything really which did not take place in the studio – he was responsible for the lighting and power.

He was introduced to LumenRadio a couple of years ago when Peter Kirkup visited South Africa for a LumenRadio Roadshow. “The system is rock solid,” said Andre. He used LumenRadio for the second time at the South African elections in 2014. “I had two different areas which needed camera lighting and it was no hassle. I have sat under an escalator before with dimmers around the corner and the rig set up inside a hall. LumenRadio has a decent frequency.” He also used LumenRadio, working with Kurt du Preez, on the “South African Sports Awards 2013” held at the Superbowl in Sun City. Again the system ran smoothly.

The SABC TV Outside Broadcasts has also acquired a new Avolites Quartz. As large events are now lit by outsourced professional staging companies, Andre uses the Quartz to manually control his television lighting, and smaller television productions ensuring that the production is not only beautifully lit for the audience, but very importantly to ensure a slick, clean image for television viewers at home.

“The Quartz is user friendly and ideal for me to work on,” said Andre. “It is quick to set up and runs perfectly on wireless. It is fairly priced and there really is no justification for us to have a bigger desk.”

### **Looking Back**

Andre recalls his position some 31 years ago. “In those years we were given a drawing of what the client wanted. My job was to take the lighting plot and set it up,” said Andre. “We had to go to the venue, source lighting fixtures, rig it and provide the dimmers, desk and cabling.”

There was no trussing so a scaffolding company would be called in. Lighting fixtures would be pulled up to the scaffold bars by means of a rope and pulley. When the lighting designer or operator wanted a lighting fixture in an obscure position, it would be a matter of getting a rope, a steel bar and literally pulling it up and tying of the ropes at the desired height. Those were the days of no hard hats or harnesses, each light ran on it’s own power cable. Anyone could operate a cherry picker without any specific regulations in place. There were no multi-cores! Yet, by being involved from the ground up, the SABC TV Outside Broadcasts with Andre at the helm, helped

develop the lighting department to a better digital system. It is now equipped with DMX control systems, digital dimmers and multicores, trussing and electric motors and controllers.

Establishing his trade over numerous years, Andre worked with influential names like set designer Michael Gill for shows such as Miss South Africa. When a new model pageant was to be hosted at Gallagher Estate, Michael Gill asked Andre to be the lighting designer. While he knew how to operate a desk, Andre did not believe he was a lighting designer and almost pulled out of the event.

“All the generics ran off an Arri Impulse 108 channel desk,” he recalls. “We ran the Strand Show Changers off a Strand MX 48. Intelligent lights had just arrived in the country and ran on a LCD control. Andre and a colleague, Kurt du Preez, spent the evening running up and down the sides of three desks. It was an overwhelming success and a significant event for Andre, who thereafter had the confidence to step into a position of lighting designer for a multitude of large productions. “It was thanks to Michael Gill who believed in me,” he acknowledges.

“I have been happy to be part of the technical transformation that has taken place in South Africa,” said Andre. “Ofer Lapid, owner of Gearhouse South Africa, has played an enormous role in revolutionising the SA industry. He brought in the first rig with his company back then, Lighting Unlimited. He implemented standards and technology which he had been exposed to on international productions.”

Going hand in hand with technology is the human element. “Working on a television production is absolutely about team work, including the lighting designer, set designer, staging guy, technical and show director’s and audio,” ended Andre. “And it’s all about being disciplined.”