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MASQUE SOUND DELIVERS A BASKET FULL OF SONIC GOODIES IN REVIVAL OF SONDHEIM AND LAPINE'S FAIRY TALE INSPIRED MUSICAL, *INTO THE WOODS*

*State-of-the-Art Custom Audio Equipment Package Includes
DiGiCo SD9T Live Digital Console and Shure ULX-D® Digital Wireless System*

NEW YORK, JANUARY 28, 2015 — When Sound Designer Darron L West and Associate Sound Designer Charles Coes were given the challenge of creating a dynamic audioscape for Fiasco Theater's production of *Into the Woods*, presented by Roundabout Theatre Company in association with McCarter Theatre Center, they turned to **Masque Sound**, a leading theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design company, to supply a custom audio equipment package for the wildly theatrical, fairy tale inspired musical.

Directed by Noah Brody and Ben Steinfeld, Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine's Tony Award®-winning musical, *Into the Woods*, weaves together the stories of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack (and his beanstalk), and a childless baker and his wife as they quest to achieve their greatest wishes. With only 10 actors, one piano and boundless imagination, *Into the Woods* includes dazzling classic songs such as "Children Will Listen" and "Giants in the Sky." Audiences are asked to mind the wolf, heed the witch and honor the giant at this extraordinary musical about the power of wishes and what happens when they really do come true.

In this actor-driven production, the sound designers' main challenge was to create a soundscape that would support the actors, bringing their dialogue front and center, and ensuring clarity as they convey the story to the audience. "This production was about transparent reinforcement and supporting the artists as they are doing their work on stage," says Coes. "All of the sound effects are created using the instruments and other objects on set, so we were tasked with finding interesting ways to mic those objects to create reverb and other effects that would help turn the production into something magical and remarkable. Masque Sound was wonderful at once again providing us the equipment we needed to achieve our vision."

Another challenge that the designers faced was with the layout of the theatre itself. The Laura Pels Theatre has an excellent house system, but it can be difficult to reach deep under the balcony to the last couple of seats. To accomplish this, the sound designers enhanced the theatre's existing house system with a Meyer Sound PA system, provided by Masque Sound.

"We elected to use Meyer M1D speakers because of their relatively tight vertical pattern, which allowed us to throw sound deep into the under balcony," says Coes. "We also used those same cabinets in their more conventional line array form as a center cluster so that we could cover the orchestra and the balcony. We chose the Meyer speakers because they are tried and true, and very compact. Despite the very low ceiling height of the theatre, we were still able to get enough boxes in to cover the room without protruding too far into the visual picture.

In addition, the designers used a pair of Meyer 500-HP subwoofers, which allowed them to get enough gain before feedback on the stage's majestic piano walls. "On the stage right and left, the piano walls

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are giant frames constructed with grand piano harps, minus the wood," Coes adds. "The harps are tuned, contact mic'd and heavily processed and played by the actors for various 'magic' effects throughout the performance."

At the heart of the custom audio equipment package provided by Masque Sound was the DiGiCo SD9T Live Digital Console. "We had done the show at The Old Globe in San Diego on a DiGiCo SD10 and wanted to find a way to stay in the world of DiGiCo when we moved into New York City, so we approached Masque with the idea and they helped us make it happen," says Coes. "Working with an SD9T brought the software price down without sacrificing sound quality. It is incredibly flexible, has enough channels for this show, doesn't take up many seats and has a rental cost that the producers really liked. Specifically for this show, in which the actors are frequently trading lines and changing characters, the DiGiCo theatre software made those transitions incredibly easy to handle."

In addition, one of the interesting components to the custom audio equipment package provided by Masque Sound was the use of the new Shure ULX-D® Digital Wireless System. "Scott Kalata at Masque Sound suggested the ULX-D, and since we knew that there were enough channels to cover our vocals, we gave it a shot," adds Coes. "We used four of the new receivers for the vocals. They are incredibly transparent, cost-effective and sound fantastic. We are really glad that Masque Sound made them available to us."

For microphones, Masque Sound provided 12 channels of vocal wireless, four channels of instrument wireless, along with two Sennheiser SKP Series plug-on transmitters mounted on to the show's piano equipped with DPA 4021s, which gave the piano great volume and clarity without getting in the way of the piano player who frequently spins around.

"Masque Sound has been incredibly supportive and helped us put together a wonderful system that sounds great and does everything we needed it to do for a very reasonable budget," concludes Coes. "As always, all of the equipment was delivered in fantastic working condition and on-time. In addition, our team, Walter Tillman (A1), Gillian Walker and Richard Lund (A2s), did a great job."

Into the Woods premiered in May 2013 at the McCarter Theatre in association with the Fiasco Theater. The Off-Broadway production, presented by Roundabout Theatre Company, began preview performances on December 18, 2014 and officially opened on January 22, 2015 at the Laura Pels Theatre in the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre (111 West 46th Street). This limited engagement was recently extended through April 12, 2015.

About Masque Sound

Founded in 1936 by a trio of Broadway stagehands, Masque Sound evolved into one of NYC's most successful theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design companies specializing in theatrical, house of worship, sporting, corporate, TV broadcast and live concert events. Celebrating more than 75 years in the industry, the company is led by President Stephanie Hansen and the firm's third generation owner, Geoff Shearing. The company also operates Florida-based Professional Wireless Systems, a leader in the development and implementation of wireless technology. Credits range from major Broadway shows and tours including "Phantom of the Opera," "Mamma Mia!," "Lion King," "Jersey Boys," "Memphis," "The Book of Mormon," "Newsies," "Once" and "Kinky Boots" to yearly Super Bowl broadcasts and installations of varying sizes, including New York's New Victory Theater and historic St. Bartholomew's Church. Masque Sound's 70,000 sq. ft. corporate headquarters and main assembly facility is located at 21 East Union Ave., East Rutherford, NJ, 20 minutes from midtown Manhattan. For more information, call (201) 939-8666 or visit www.MasqueSound.com.

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