



MASQUE SOUND KEEPS THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT PLAYING AS THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA CELEBRATES 25 YEARS ON BROADWAY

*Audio Equipment Provider Commemorates Silver Anniversary
With Longest-Running Show in Broadway History*

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 13, 2013—When *The Phantom of the Opera* celebrated its 25th anniversary on Broadway on January 26, becoming the first show on the Great White Way to achieve such a milestone, **Masque Sound**, a leading theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design company, joined the festivities as the show's legacy audio equipment rental provider for the past quarter century.

One of the first of the great British musicals to hit America, *The Phantom of The Opera* rocketed Andrew Lloyd Webber to the pinnacle of success. From an equipment standpoint, it was also one of the first truly elaborate shows on Broadway. *Phantom's* quantity of sound equipment, along with the distinctive way that gear was used, helped change the industry's perspective of sound. It also helped Masque Sound grow into the company it is today.

"When *Phantom* first opened on Broadway 25 years ago, Masque Sound was operating out of a brownstone on West 51st Street, with barely enough space to put together one company of *Phantom*," says Geoff Shearing, president, Masque Sound. "As *Phantom* has grown, so has Masque Sound, and today we operate out of a 70,000-square-foot facility. These days, we are capable of doing multiple companies of *Phantom* at the same time."

The Opera Ghost first haunted the Broadway stage at the Majestic Theater on January 26, 1988, where Masque Sound worked with Sound Designer Martin Levan to bring a unique audio experience to the audience. One of the first musicals to use the Cadac A-Type console, from an audio perspective, *The Phantom of the Opera* was a groundbreaking show.

"The Cadac was an automated A-type," says Dennis Short, director of sales for Masque Sound. "Prior to *Phantom*, mixing was a little more hands on. The A-type on *Phantom* was now able to automate the VCA and mute functions on a scene by scene basis. You didn't have to make the changes yourself and that proved to be a game changer for the sound operator. For the 20 years the A-type was used on *Phantom*, it proved itself as the most enduring element within the sound system, requiring no more than regular maintenance to maintain its performance night after night."

Since *Phantom's* debut in 1988, sound technology has seen many advances. In 2008, to coincide with *Phantom's* 20th anniversary, the show's producers saw the need to bring the production's sound design technology into the 21st century. This culminated in a retrofit with Masque Sound, which provided a Yamaha PM1D digital console at the front-of-house position. In addition, digital playback systems replaced reel-to-reel tape deck sound effects.

"We also changed the PA," adds Short. "A selection of Meyer speakers and subwoofers replaced the existing Tannoy speakers and Bose subwoofers. Along with the digitalization of the show, when we changed the console and speakers, we also provided the Meyer Galileo 616 speaker management system, which replaced a rack full of discrete processing."

(more)



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Designed by Olivier Award-winner Mick Potter, the new surround sound system consists of more than six miles of cable and an incredible 155 speakers. The digital system upped the number of microphones used in the show from 58 to 76, and *The Phantom* himself now has three dedicated microphones.

“When my father first saw *The Phantom of the Opera* in the U.K., before it came to the U.S., he knew it was something special. He wanted Masque Sound to be a part of when it arrived on Broadway,” says Shearing. “Masque Sound has been fortunate enough and extremely grateful to be part of the show since its Broadway debut 25 years ago. We cherish the relationship we have had with the show’s producers over the past quarter century and look forward to providing the show with audio equipment and services for another 25 years and beyond.”

Phantom became the longest-running show in Broadway history on Jan. 9, 2006, when it marked its 7,486th performance, surpassing another Lloyd Webber musical, *Cats*. *Phantom* crossed the 10,000 - performances mark on Feb. 11 this year. To date, the musical, which has been mounted at the Majestic Theatre since its Broadway debut, has grossed more than \$800 million and consistently remains strong at the box office amid tough competition from other Broadway contenders.

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 lead by Geoff Shearing, the firm’s 3rd generation owner, and General Manager Stephanie Hansen. 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” and “Once” 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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