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**MASQUE SOUND PAYS HOMAGE TO CLASSIC ALFRED HITCHCOCK
FILM IN OFF-BROADWAY COMEDIC REVIVAL, *39 STEPS***

*Custom Audio Equipment Package Provides
Evenly Distributed Sound Reinforcement for Slapstick Spoof*

NEW YORK, MAY 20, 2015 — When the two-time Tony Award®-winning hit comedy *39 Steps* made its triumphant return at New York’s Union Square Theatre, Sound Designer Mic Pool and his team worked closely with **Masque Sound**, a leading theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design company, to create a custom audio equipment package for the madcap adventure.

Pool has been designing the sound for *39 Steps* since its inception more than 10 years ago and has been involved with more than 25 productions of the play worldwide. In 2008, Pool won the first Tony Award for “Best Sound Design of a Play” for the Broadway production. The play’s recent revival at Union Square Theatre takes the show full circle, reuniting the entire U.S. original creative team.

39 Steps is a slapstick spoof of the classic 1935 Alfred Hitchcock film, with only four actors portraying more than 150 characters and sometimes changing roles in the blink of an eye. The story revolves around an innocent man, Richard Hannay, who learns too much about a dangerous spy ring and is then pursued across Scotland before returning to London to foil the villain's dastardly plans. *39 Steps* contains every legendary scene from the movie, including the chase on the Flying Scotsman, the escape on the Forth Bridge, the first theatrical bi-plane crash ever staged and the sensational death-defying finale in the London Palladium.

Considering Pool’s intimate involvement with the play over the past decade, both he and his Associate Sound Designer Drew Levy knew that their goal for the show’s latest venture would be to build upon the existing soundscape they created. “We wanted to reinforce the sound with area microphones to make sure the dialogue could reach the back of the room, and Masque Sound was extremely helpful in providing us with what we needed to make that happen,” says Levy. “In addition, the show features almost constant sound effects, so it’s really important to have an operator be able to quickly fire all of those cues while simultaneously mixing all of the area mics.”

The old build of the theatre paired with its layout, particularly its broad proscenium, proved to be one of the biggest challenges faced in designing the sound. “Evenly distributing the sound was not easy,” he says. “There are no FOH points downstage of the proscenium, and the balcony itself is a little too deep to cover with one set of speakers. Also, with the old age of the building, we were not comfortable drilling holes into the ceiling to add more speakers.”

Given the theatre’s complex infrastructure, the sound design team had to be very specific with their choice of under balcony speakers, as well as their placement and focus. “It was a big challenge to get the equipment to fit properly, and we worked closely with all of the other departments to make sure we could get speakers where we needed them to take care of these spots throughout the theater,” he adds. “Masque Sound was excellent in listening to our needs and finding us just the right speakers and hardware to address these challenges.”

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On a show of this nature, it was also essential that the operator be up to speed. “Our mixer, Miriam Milder, does an amazing job and is so involved that she spent a week of rehearsal outside of the theatre learning the show and its intricacies,” he says. “It’s one of those odd shows in which she has to mix the microphones while wearing a headset, basically splitting her focus between directives from the stage manager in her left ear and what she hears from the mics in her right ear. On top of that, there are also a few dozen visual cues that she manages on her own, so it’s quite a challenge.”

For the digital live sound mixing console that Milder relies on, Masque Sound provided a Yamaha M7CL. The sound designers have chosen to work with Yamaha consoles on *39 Steps* since the show’s inception, the choice was a natural fit for this venue as well, as it ensured even distribution of the sound to every seat in the house. The M7CL compliments a Yamaha DME64N digital mixing engine, which is used for its processing power, while Riedel’s RockNet digital audio distribution network serves as the backbone between the console and DME.

The PA system features d&b audiotechnik speakers with E12s on the proscenium high and low and center cluster, as well as E3s for under balcony delays and surround. The onstage effects speakers are L-Acoustic 112Ps. Five foot microphone runs, consisting of DPA d:dicate™ 4011Es, are placed along the front of the stage, while DPA 4061s are hidden in the false proscenium. Additionally, though the show was originally done on Stage Research SFX™ 5.6 playback software, Pool made the decision to transfer the whole show to QLab for the first time for this iteration.

“Masque Sound is always great to work with, and they once again made sure we were well-equipped with everything that we needed to be successful,” concludes Levy. “In addition, my Assistant, Ben Truppin-Brown, and Production Head Dave Hunter, who oversaw the shop build and load-in, both did an incredible job. The show looks and sounds great.”

39 Steps had its American premiere at the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston prior to opening on Broadway in 2008 at the American Airlines Theatre. Following the initial run’s conclusion, it transferred to the Cort Theatre and then to the Helen Hayes Theatre on Broadway before closing in January 2010. The production then moved to New World Stages, where it ran through January 2011.

39 Steps officially reopened on April 13 at the Union Square Theatre, located at 100 East 17th Street in Manhattan. For more information, including where to purchase tickets, visit www.39stepsny.com.

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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For further information contact:

Mackenzie Gavel

D. Pagan Communications, Inc.

631-659-2309

mackenzieg@dpagan.com

www.dpagan.com

Stephanie Hansen

President

Masque Sound & Recording

201-939-8666

StephanieHansen@masquesound.com

www.masquesound.com