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## **MASQUE SOUND LIGHTS UP BROADWAY WITH THE ARRIVAL OF STEVE MARTIN AND EDIE BRICKELL'S NEW MUSICAL, *BRIGHT STAR***

*Custom Audio Equipment Package Shines for Highly Anticipated Production*

**NEW YORK, JUNE 1, 2016** — When *Bright Star*, Steve Martin and Edie Brickell's highly anticipated musical made its Broadway debut at the Cort Theatre, it was the culmination of a long, successful journey for Sound Designer Nevin Steinberg and [Masque Sound](#), a leading theatrical sound reinforcement, installation and design company. The two first collaborated on the show for its world premiere in 2014 at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre before moving to the Kennedy Center for its pre-Broadway run this past winter.

Inspired by a real event, this "unabashedly romantic" (*The New York Times*) original musical tells a sweeping tale of love and redemption set against the rich backdrop of the American South in the 1920s and '40s. When literary editor Alice Murphy meets a young soldier just home from World War II, he awakens her longing for the child she once lost. Haunted by their unique connection, Alice sets out on a journey to understand her past — and what she finds has the power to transform both of their lives. Tony Award-winner Walter Bobbie directs this entertaining musical of enduring love, family ties and the light of forgiveness that shines from a bright star.

The venue was one of Steinberg's biggest obstacles when moving the show to Broadway. "The biggest challenge was mostly real estate. The Cort is a small theatre, and while *Bright Star* appears to be a small or modest musical, there is a lot going on behind the scenes," says Steinberg. "Managing the theatre size and the equipment from all the departments including lighting, automation and the sound department, was a challenge at first, but was ultimately very successful. In the end, the venue helped with the appearance of lightness for the production, which is something that we were all striving to achieve. Our goal with the sound design was to try and do right by the score and blend the unusual appearance of blue grass orchestrations on the Broadway stage. The style of music and quality of the acoustic instrumentation is a delight, and a nice change from a lot of Broadway musicals."

In order to keep the sound as unobtrusive as possible, Steinberg was able to move the mix position to the rear of the mezzanine. This is an atypical mix position in the Cort Theatre, but is far better than the traditional upper balcony location that is often used for plays. By putting the board off the main floor and out of sight of the patrons, Steinberg was able to create the sense of low-impact sound design that he was going for.

"Masque Sound always helps me with the allocation of resources in terms of equipment specs, particularly as we moved through the three venues," he adds. "When we arrived in New York City we had confidence in the sound system, and in its preparation and quality, and also in the quality of choices that I was able to make for equipment. "We didn't waste any time or resources and landed in NY with an incredibly refined and beautiful sound system."

For *Bright Star's* move to Broadway, Steinberg started from scratch on the backend of the sound design, which moves out from the console forward to deliver an immersive experience to the audience. "Most of the loudspeaker system that I designed is specifically crafted to suit the architecture of the venue and the audience," says Steinberg. "The geometry changes drastically from venue to venue, so you have to

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revisit it every time from the point of view of how to deliver the show to the different audiences, and how to make sure everyone has a great experience.”

For his loudspeaker selection, Steinberg had long been developing a plan to deploy ribbon drivers by way of Alcons Audio. “I thought there was a real affinity between the bluegrass style of music and that style of loudspeaker design,” he says. “It was something I explored during the show’s San Diego run. I was able to plan most of my speaker choices for the Cort Theatre and use a great deal of Alcons Audio equipment, including RR-12s, VR8s and VR12s, which Masque Sound helped me get into use on Broadway. This was the first major deployment of Alcons Audio equipment on a Broadway show and they have worked out incredibly well. Masque Sound fully supported me and made sure that the Alcons system went together in the shop, was prepped properly and came out as part of an integrated package.”

Another interesting component to Steinberg’s sound design was the use of equipment from K-array. “K-array makes some very specialized loudspeaker devices with incredibly low profiles. I’ve been really happy with the performance of them for our front fill system and some of the on-stage monitoring,” says Steinberg. “They are virtually invisible.”

The console is one of the things that remained fairly consistent as the show went from venue to venue. Masque Sound provided a DiGiCo SD-10T and another SD-10 for monitoring. In addition, Steinberg retained much of the microphone selection and monitoring from the San Diego experience, including DPA 4011 microphones for the remote orchestra, with Sennheiser and DPA lavaliers on the cast.

For his digital wireless setup, Steinberg stayed with the Sennheiser 9000 system. “The on-stage band is completely mobile and wireless, and we were able to expand the existing digital wireless package we used in San Diego when we moved to Broadway,” says Steinberg. “This was an excellent investment of time in terms of research. When we needed more inputs for the Broadway production, the Sennheiser 9000 was there for us. It has been a game changer. The sound quality and reliability of the system has been remarkable. It sounds so clear, we forget it’s wireless.”

Masque Sound also supplied a combination of Sennheiser wireless on the performers’ DPA lavaliers and SK5212 transmitters with EMT1046 receivers. In all, a total of 40 channels of wireless were used on the actors, instruments and in-ear monitors.

“It was wonderful to continue my collaboration with Masque Sound and the rest of my team as our *Bright Star* journey made it to Broadway,” adds Steinberg. “My long time-associate Jason Crystal, Assistant Sound Designer Elize Simon, Engineer Scott Sanders, A2 Jake Scudder and Deck Sound Karen Zabinski all had critical roles in ensuring the show’s success and each did a fantastic job.”

*Bright Star* made its Broadway debut on March 24 at the Cort Theatre (138 West 48<sup>th</sup> Street). For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit [brightstarmusical.com](http://brightstarmusical.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 the firm’s Vice President, 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*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Once*, *Kinky Boots*, *Aladdin* and *Fun*

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*Home* to yearly Super Bowl broadcasts and installations of varying sizes, including Western Connecticut State University, the Jim Wise Theatre at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and the historic St. Patrick's Cathedral. 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](http://www.MasqueSound.com).

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