



LDS Line Source System at the Donmar Warehouse

Autograph Sound Recording is using LDS700 ribbon loudspeakers on a production of Stephen Sondheim's Pacific Overtures at the Donmar Warehouse. The musical, which continues Autograph's long relationship with the theatre, chronicles the arrival of an American expedition on the Japanese island of Nippon in 1853, changing the ancient kingdom's way of life forever.

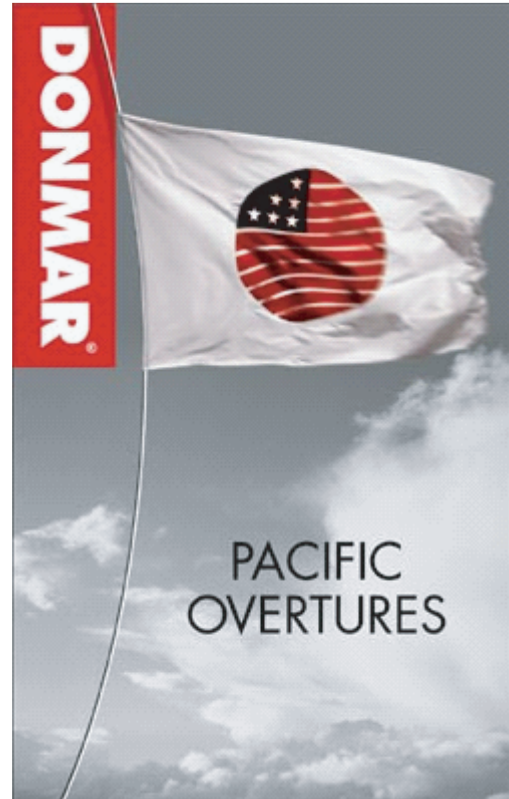
"Pacific Overtures is a fantastic musical which requires subtle amplification," says Lidster. "Choosing a loudspeaker system for this type of reinforcement while providing the auditorium with even, 360-degree coverage is extremely difficult. These problems are made worse at the Donmar as it has no obvious loudspeaker rigging positions, and this particular production is unusual because it is performed in the round, with the stage in the centre of the theatre."

The Swedish-manufactured LDS700 loudspeakers are a 1400mm high box containing a continuous (1400mm long) ribbon loudspeaker designed to stack vertically to create a true 'line array' source, offering extremely high audio fidelity.

"As with all ribbon speakers, the LDS700 is slightly underpowered and this limits the types of show it can comfortably amplify," continues Lidster. "However it is much more robust and punchy than its predecessors. For old style shows requiring minimal and tasteful amplification it is perfect. We were able to put LDSs in each corner of the Donmar auditorium and have each column firing diagonally across the stage and into the opposite facing corners of the room. This allowed each seating block to face its own left and right loudspeaker system, which gave the amplification tremendous balance and clarity."

Lidster's design for Pacific Overtures includes eight LDS700s, Crown K2 amplifiers, an XTA DP226 loudspeaker control system, a Cadac E type mixing desk, 12 Sennheiser SK50/1046 radio microphones using DPA 4060 mics for the actors and Neumann and Schoeps mics for the band.

"I feel Pacific Overtures is one of the best sounding shows I have ever designed," he concludes. "It is very sensitively amplified, but the voices and instruments have a definition, warmth and clarity that is both transparent and of an extremely high quality. Every seat in the Donmar has remarkable similarity of audio quality. And all these LDS attributes have helped to make the audience completely unaware of any amplification."



Pacific Overtures at the Donmar Warehouse

Sondheim musicals appear particularly suited to LDS's ribbon technology. Autograph first used them on a production of Follies at the Royal Festival Hall last year designed by Autograph MD and sound designer Terry Jardine, who is now designing the sound for On Your Toes at the same venue in partnership with Autograph's Simon Baker.

"We had great success last year on Follies with the LLW(LDS), so I had no hesitation in specifying them again for On Your Toes," explains Jardine. "Indeed the producers actually asked that I did use 'those wonderfully sounding discrete boxes' - a true recommendation!"

Both On Your Toes and Follies are recreations of previous productions mounted at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre and directed by Paul Kerryson.