



***Column of LDS loudspeakers***

Leading audio distributor Autograph Sales has supplied a unique line source loudspeaker system from LDS, for 'On The Town', the first ever musical staged by the English National Opera(ENO). This unique production is now playing at their lovingly restored home, the London Coliseum, until the end of May 2005.

The LDS system was specified by sound designer Nick Lidster, who faced several challenges when designing this premier production. The loudspeaker installation had to be discreet, especially as it stays rigged during other opera performances in the ENO spring season, while also being aesthetically pleasing against the backdrop of the beautiful Grade II listed auditorium. Finally, fitting sound reinforcement into a venue designed for acoustic performances was never going to be a straightforward task.

To achieve the conflicting demands, a unique cantilevered rigging system was designed by ENO's in-house engineers, upon which the LDS loudspeakers were partly suspended. The twenty-two cabinets, were hung in two columns on either side of the stage, each measuring over 17 metres high and consisting of ten LDS 800's and a single LDS 400. In total, the proscenium system uses 168 ribbon HF transducers and the same number of 7" LF drivers.

The exceptional height of the system means that the vertical coverage is controlled to within half a metre of the dimensions of the array - which reduces unwanted reflections from the Coliseum's domed ceiling. Thanks to the absence of traditional horns and the physical properties of a true line source system, front-row audience members are able to enjoy the performance within 3 metres of the LDS loudspeakers in an almost identical way to those at the back of the auditorium.

In order to blend harmoniously into the theatre's surroundings, the loudspeakers were covered with a beige gauze, toning the columns into the auditorium's colour scheme. Other LDS theatre installations have been successfully disguised as elements of the set and proscenium surround, making this a near-invisible solution for visually sensitive surroundings.

The LDS loudspeakers produced such even and coherent coverage that only a single Meyer Sound MSL-2 was required for the centre cluster. However, due to the exceptionally deep balconies on both upper levels of the theatre, miniature delay loudspeakers were employed using 34 single ribbon drivers.

The show and even the sound system have received enthusiastic reviews from the general press. The Glasgow Herald commented 'Nick Lidster's impeccable sound system provides a rare experience at the Coliseum', while adding that, in this case, the sound reinforcement improved, rather than detracted from, the intelligibility of voices from the stage.

