Point Source Audio for Just for One Day: The Live Aid Musical



L-R: Dan Mac, Andy Green, Ollie Dudman, Gareth Owen, Florence Hand, Joe Green

Point Source Audio’s SERIES9 lavalier microphones were centre stage for Just for One Day - The Live Aid Musical, as the show completed its debut run from January to March at The Old Vic in London. Nominated for an Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Contribution, the musical has earned acclaim for the performances from its show band and cast, all relying on Point Source Audio’s latest microphone technology.

Gareth Owen, one of the most trusted and inventive sound designers in musical theatre, spearheaded the sound design for the production. "My approach was to imagine what the songs from the concert would sound like with today's technology," he explains. "The goal was to maintain the essence of the original performances while infusing modern production values.

"The Point Source Audio mics performed exceptionally well," remarked Owen. "We had ample opportunity over the run to compare them to various other microphones

Phoca PDF

and each and every time we came back to SERIES9." Held at Wembley Stadium in London and JFK Stadium in Philadelphia on July 13, 1985, Live Aid raised approximately $127 million to help alleviate the Ethiopian famine. “Live Aid was iconic – it showcased the power of music to unite people across continents for a humanitarian cause," says Owen. “I started by collating all the music from the show into a playlist and listening to it on repeat!” he continues. “There are so many iconic songs there which I thought I knew but realised I really didn’t when I started really drilling down into them. Details of effects and orchestrations were meticulously researched - I think I read every online thread about 80s reverb ever written!”

The show featured a live band on stage which performed with minimal acoustic screening. When this was combined with the lavalier microphones hidden in the cast’s hair, it made for a challenging design. Owen had heard of the advantages that Point Source Audio microphones can deliver, and decided that this show would be a good opportunity to experience this for himself. “My old friend Jonathon Deans (Cirque du Soleil Vegas Sound Designer) had been extolling the virtues of Point Source Audio microphones to me for years,” he explains. “I’d always wanted to use them and finally the opportunity presented itself to me for Just for One Day in London.”

When it comes to selecting a lav mic for theatrical performances, there are a few criteria that Owen feels are critical to success. “Audio quality comes first and foremost when selecting a microphone. It also needs to be small enough to hide in plain sight on a performer. Finally, it needs to be robust - it doesn’t matter how small it is or how good it sounds if it breaks halfway through the opening number.”

Point Source Audio's microphones, specifically the SERIES9 GO-9WL lavaliers, proved instrumental in meeting these demands. With a maximum SPL of 142 dB and a sensitivity of -39 dB, these microphones deliver exceptional audio quality in challenging performance environments. Featuring patented ENDURE connectors and an IP57 waterproof rating, they are built to withstand the rigors of stage production.

Reflecting on the success of the musical’s debut run, Owen is very pleased with the result. " Just For One Day is one of the most challenging shows I have done for a while. Through the sheer perseverance and bloody mindedness of myself and my Associate Sound Designer Andy Green, as well as the brilliant work of head of sound Joe Green and the rest of the team, we beat the sound in to a shape that I wasn’t just happy with, I was truly ecstatic with. It was a hell of a journey, but I couldn’t be prouder of the end result."

www.point-sourceaudio.com

Phoca PDF