Starsailor rely on Allen & Heath SQs



To mark the 25th Anniversary of their multi-platinum debut album, Love is Here, Starsailor recently embarked on a six date UK tour featuring a string ensemble conducted by Joe Duddell (Elbow, New Order and Richard Hawley). Starsailor With Strings : Love Is Here 25th Anniversary Tour saw the band play some of the most historic venues in the country including the London Palladium, Usher Hall in Edinburgh and Birmingham Town Hall.

On front-of-house duties throughout the run was Rik Elliss (pictured above), currently in his third year with the band and a longtime Allen & Heath user who opted for SQ series consoles at both FOH and monitors for the tour. “The SQ series was the ideal choice for the tour. Despite being compact and easy to travel with, they’re easily powerful enough to cope with anything I threw at them, especially with the RackUltra FX.” he explains. “We had around 40 inputs to handle for these shows - the band itself is a fairly standard electric and acoustic guitar, bass, drums, keys and vocals line-up; then we had violins, violas, cellos and harp - a total of nine additional players on stage with them.

“At FOH I was using the new SQ6+ with RackUltra FX and we had an SQ6 at mons, with two GX4816 expanders too. On the SQ6+ at FOH I’m using three stereo groups - one for kick and toms, one for guitars and a third for the strings. Kick and toms go

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through the Mighty VCA compressor and I also use the 16T compressor on all individual drums.

“As far as effects are concerned, I’m really enjoying the RackUltraFX - it’s such a powerful addition to the SQ6. The Plate reverbs have been absolutely perfect on vocals for this tour and I use the Spaces reverb and Saturator all the time as well. The Saturator is fantastic on guitars and bass and I use it on snare for one song to get a really fat, almost “vinyl recording” sound, which is wonderful. The DynEQ4 dynamic EQ is another tool I rely on a lot, it’s such a brilliant problem solver. And the regular SQ effects are still great - I use the standard reverbs, tap delay and de-esser as part of my usual workflow.”

While the new SQ6+ is star of the show at FOH, Elliss has plenty of praise for the SQ6 on monitor duties as well, which he describes as being “maxed out, but rock solid on this tour. We’re running individual stereo mixes and a wedge feed for the main vocal and then seven mono feeds for strings - those guys really appreciate having a full band mix and then individual control over their own instrument. It’s been a great tour to do with the string players and the SQ6s have been fantastic.”

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