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Back to the Future

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The musical version of
Back to the Future
is an exercise in
filmmaking for the stage

By: David Barbour



Above: Doc's garage is littered with technical clutter, giant speakers, and, on the wall, images of Benjamin Franklin and Albert Einstein. Opposite: The show's climax, staged on the town hall clock tower, is a remarkable melding of scenery, projection, and lighting. Combined with the upstage video screen, the use of front projection, Ross says, "is a way of creating a complete video box, to seal things into."

The first clear hit of the new Broadway season arrived in August with the opening, at the Winter Garden Theatre, of the musical *Back to the Future*. Based on Robert Zemeckis' 1985 film, it is still enjoying a long London run, having opened there just before the pandemic. With the participation of Bob Gale, co-writer of the original screenplay, and co-composer and lyricist (with Glen Ballard) Alan Silvestri, who scored the film, fans can expect an authoritative theatrical rendering. Some reviewers complained that the musical is perhaps too faithful to its source material, right down to the inclusion of the Huey Lewis hit "The Power of Love," but, based on the weekly box office receipts, this would appear to be one instance where it is really hip to be square.

Gale's book closely follows his screenplay, which eliminates a few plot devices, including some Libyan terrorists, that might not play so well in 2023. Teenager Marty McFly is a frustrated, would-be rock star growing up in small-

town Hill Valley, California in 1985. He is particularly irked by his disappointing family, especially his father George, a sad-faced loser, and his mother, Lorraine, a dedicated day drinker. Meanwhile, Marty's best friend, Doc, the local mad scientist, has converted a DeLorean car into a time-traveling machine. When Doc's life is threatened by exposure to plutonium, Marty, trying to save him, accidentally drives the DeLorean back to 1955. There, he must enlist the younger version of Doc to help him return to his own era. But there's a bigger problem: Marty accidentally thwarts the moment when George and Lorraine first struck romantic sparks; if he can't get them together, he will have permanently altered history, and he and his siblings will cease to exist. Further complicating matters, the young Lorraine thinks Marty is boyfriend material.

Everyone interviewed for this story notes that it quickly became imperative not to fool around with an original piece of material that is held sacrosanct by its many fans.

But a larger challenge remained: How to make the story exciting in theatrical terms? Indeed, compared to any number of musicals based on popular films, *Back to the Future* generates much more excitement onstage. Part of this is due to John Rando's fast-moving direction and the strong chemistry shared by Casey Likes and Roger Bart, who play Marty and Doc. But much of it can be attributed to the canny deployment of design elements, usually working in a unified fashion, to deliver an audience thrill ride.

And, like *Life of Pi*, another London transfer recently seen on Broadway, *Back to the Future* reflects the increasing sophistication with which all design elements, including projections, can come together, creating an almost cinematic experience on the stage. In that sense, the new musical really points toward the theatrical future.

Scenery/video

Designer Tim Hatley certainly had his work cut out for him, not least in finding the right scale to accommodate a show that combines intimate scenes with chases, special effects, and a classic action-film climax. In addition, there were two separate time frames to address. And the book unfolds across many locations—including Doc's cluttered garage laboratory, two versions of the town square, an Art Deco diner, the McFly family kitchen in 1985, Lorraine's bedroom in 1955, a backyard, a rock concert, and several high school settings, including a gymnasium amusingly decorated for a dance featuring the theme "Enchantment Under the Sea."

"The script that I got was even more cinematic," Hatley notes. "I simplified a lot of scenes and put it to Bob [Gale] and John [Rando], saying, 'Let's shuffle this around' and 'Can we not combine these two scenes?' A big part of it was getting some sort of cinematic feel—wide shot, close-up, wide shot." He adds, "A musical has to have very good transitions, moving from A to B very seamlessly. I love solving the puzzle of getting from A to B and beyond, making that happen with invention and originality."

Hatley adds that he got a lesson in the proprietary nature of *Back to the Future* fans early on. "A few months before I picked up my pencil, I was asked to go to a pre-launch photo shoot of [the actor playing] Marty McFly dressed up, with the skateboard and the guitar. I was there just to make sure everything was looking good. And within five minutes of that photo going online, there was this sort of outpouring: 'Oh, my God, they've got the trainers wrong! The color is wrong, and they haven't got the stitching right!' So that taught me, and there we are."

How to thread this needle? "We did not want to copy the film religiously, stitch by stitch. But there are certain things that you just know you've got to get right, and I just zoomed in on them." One of those details is brain analyzer, one of Doc's failed inventions, which appears in his lab. "The guy who built that prop is Ian Robinson, a super-

fan who worked in the shop where the set for *Life of Pi* [which Hatley designed] was being built. He introduced himself, saying, 'I've got some stuff to show you. He opened the trunk of his car and there was the Flux Capacitor [another of Doc's inventions]. He said, 'If I can be of any help...' I thought, you know what? He's our man."

It became clear early on that projection would be a key part of the design and, as we will see, the designer Finn Ross uses a combination of front-projected imagery and a large upstage LED wall to get his effects. What is really notable is how difficult it can be to tell where physical scenery ends, and imagery begins. This is especially true in the scene set in a barn where Marty crashes the DeLorean (see pages 42-43) and the climax, featuring Doc on the city hall clock tower in the middle of a storm (see page 36). Noting that he conceived *Life of Pi* and *Back to the Future* more or less simultaneously, Hatley says, "I have had video in other shows but not to this degree and not as integrated. I took it upon myself to storyboard everything; then I shared my ideas with Finn [Ross] and Tim [Lutkin, co-lighting designer] and we built on that. It was very much part of the original concept to get all those elements working together.

"To me," he adds, "the storyboards are the blueprint for the show. It was a big job and I actually said no to quite a few other projects to focus on this, because I knew it would take a lot of brain space. [The storyboards] allowed us to work things out with a working model. It really paid



The McFly kitchen, circa 1985. One of Hatley's challenges involved addressing two time frames separated by 30 years.

off because, quite often with a new musical, quite a bit of scenery typically gets cut. But we thought about it very seriously and very sensibly, let a few weeks pass, and then came back to it. And it was all in model form, which cost a



The production number “Gotta Start Somewhere.” Vanstone says the show’s workhorse units are Martin MAC Ultra Performances (for spots) and MAC Aura PXL wash units. These, in addition to some GLP gear, make up the rig’s automated component.

fraction of the price.”

The sets are filled with amusing and/or telling details. Doc’s garage is littered with technical clutter, giant speakers, and, on the wall, images of Benjamin Franklin and Albert Einstein. The McFly kitchen is done in the anonymously homey style popular during the Reagan era. Lorraine’s bedroom has enough pink appurtenances to be included in the film *Barbie*. The young George is first spotted in a tree, comically trying to spy on Lorraine. The school dance is loaded with humorously hand-made decorations illustrating the undersea theme. The diner is a sleek mint-green-and-silver interior; the number “Gotta Start Somewhere” begins there and ends in the town square under a Deco portal with a light-up “Welcome” sign (See page 39.)

Framing the action onstage is an enormous proscenium surround that looks like a mass of circuit boards; filled with LED tape, it can change colors and perform chases. “I always enjoy having a surround,” Hatley says. “Having a bit of the set come out into the audience pulls people in, stopping the fourth wall from being a barrier. If you can pull in

those first three or four rows, it ripples through the auditorium and everybody feels more connected.” Also, he notes, LED units built into the surround execute blinder cues that distract the audience’s attention, facilitating some of the illusions designed by Chris Fisher.

Everything is built to move with all due speed, often using a turntable. Hatley says, “It’s a challenge to move it all around. It’s also a challenge to figure out where it’s going to go. This is the show’s third outing. We did it in Manchester and London and, in each version, the DeLorean has lived in another place in the theatre.” Interestingly, he adds, “The car doesn’t break apart off-stage; it stays a single thing. But where it goes depends on how much wing space you have.” About the vehicle’s apotheosis, when it rises and crosses the proscenium, Hatley says he is prevented from discussing the details. But, he notes, “The challenge is not just flying the car, but moving it forward. It has moving elements, like wheels. We’ve got people in it. And it does a 360° spin, turns, and goes back the other way. We go forward, backward, left, and right.”

JCPenney



The DeLorean was built by The Twins FX, based in the UK. "We did not want to copy the film religiously, stitch by stitch," Hatley says. "But there are certain things that you just know you've got to get right, and I just zoomed in on them."

The production's scenery and scenic effects were built, painted, and electrified by Show Motion, with additional construction by Souvenir Scenic. Set electrics are by Ammonite Studios Limited. Additional scenery and set electrics were supplied by Empire Technical Fabrication, Tom Carroll Scenery, and Ogunquit Playhouse Scene Shop. Automation is by Netherlands-based Silicon Theatre Scenery BV. The DeLorean was built by The Twins FX, a UK-based company.

Finn Ross echoes Hatley in acknowledging the scale of the project. "Video is never not there," he notes. "Because the upstage LED wall is there for almost every moment of the show, one has to do something to blend in with the physical scenery, working with lighting to tie it all together into something coherent and believable to the audience. And there's a layer of front projection to deal with as well." The latter is present as one enters the theatre, with a clock projection on the show curtain, counting down the minutes until the show begins.

The front projection, Ross adds, "is a way of creating a complete video box, to seal things into. The video occu-

pies two worlds. One is time and place; this is where we are, and this is what's going on. The other is more fantastical: When Doc breaks out into song [for example in the number '21st Century,' photo, page 45] the world around him rattles into something fantastical and strange."

The imagery includes different versions of the town hall, a pair of house exteriors, the upstage wall of the barn, a torrent of abstract science-fiction looks for "21st Century," and several high school locations. Certain sequences, featuring panning effects and Marty's time-traveling car trips, are transformed into a kind of 3D cinema using the video wall and front projection. The combination of techniques was crucial to the latter's impact. The question, Ross says, was "How can we give the sensation of the car moving fast? It would be to seal it inside video, so we could make the world around it move completely. Bringing the [scrim] in front of it creates a layer of abstraction that maybe makes the effect a little easier to buy from the audience's perspective. It also hides some of the rougher edges."

Like Hatley, Ross felt responsible for remaining faithful to the film's look. "It has such an established fandom," he

says. “You have to be very careful, making sure that the world’s biggest fan, who knows everything about it, feels that their experience is authentic. If it doesn’t work for them, it’s probably not going to work for anyone. We’ve all seen the film; it’s just engraved in the popular imagination still. Bob Gale would never let us slip on a detail, ever. He helped us find a piece of drafting, from [the film’s] production designer [Lawrence G. Paull], showing the layout of Hill Valley. We started with that as our footprint and, taking a lot of film stills, rebuilt the whole thing in 3D, using [the real-time graphics tool] Notch. Then we could style it into our slightly more heightened theatrical world. For example, we change the town hall between 1955 and 1985—different architecture for the weathervane, broken windows, etc.”

The climax, with Doc on the clock tower, is a remarkable piece of trompe l’oeil, with Doc on a ledge, backed by an image of the clock, and, on a scrim in front of the scene, torrents of rain. The interplay of design elements is extraordinary. “It’s so agonizing,” Ross says, “because once you’ve seen it work, you know exactly how sharp and exciting it can be. It’s so much work for everyone onstage to make that happen. It’s a kind of delicate pas de deux between the stage manager and musical director, feeling things, timing things, stretching things, knowing when you can stretch the music. It’s such an uphill climb for them and the crew but they do such a fantastic job every night.”

The production makes use of three disguise gx 2c



The number “Put Your Mind to It” is staged in a backyard, in front of imagery depicting a modest home. Ross’ design relies on ROE Visual panels, disguise media servers, and Brompton Technology processing.

media servers; one director unit drives two actor units, with a fourth available as an understudy. Imagery is processed using two Brompton Technology Tesseract SX40

processors and four Tesseract XD distribution modules. The upstage LED screen consists of 144 ROE Visual Graphite GP3.9 tiles. “For Broadway, we stepped up our signal pipeline from eight-bit to 10-bit,” Ross says. “This meant quite a big change in how we produce content because we had to go from eight-bit to 16-bit in our content pipeline, which had its challenges; for programmer Zach Peletz and engineer Asher Robinson, it changes how disguise configures, how it sends the signal to the Brompton processing, and how that delivers it to the wall. But it means we got four times the color depth; it became lush and beautiful, and any banding or stepping was gone. Asher and Zach did a brilliant job of making this work. To me, Brompton is the only processing you can use in a theatrical setting because it delivers such exceptional color rendering at the lower end. You rarely use more than 15 or 20% of an LED wall in a theatre, and they do a wonderful job of making that work well for our market.”

Front projection is handled by three Panasonic RZ31K Laser 3DLP projectors on the balcony rail. The Winter Garden is significantly wider than its London counterpart, the Adelphi Theatre; Ross notes that this dictates a lower placement of the side projectors. But, he adds, “We get a more CinemaScope kind of feeling, which is really lovely.”

The video rig includes one Lightware MX2-24x24-HDMI20 matrix router, four Lightware OPTJ Series HDMI fiber transceiver kits, one Imagine Communications Platinum MX routing system, two Blackmagic Design Videohub 40x40 SDI routers, one Avitech Titan 9000 multi-viewer, two Datapath FX4-HDR video wall processors, and two Ross Video oGx frames. Gear was supplied by PRG.

Imagery was developed in-house at Fray Studio, Ross’ firm. “We did it gradually, not being in a rush,” he says. “We let it come alive, bit by bit, through various developmental processes and, in the end, brought it all together.” Any changes between London and New York, he adds, were small. “The biggest change for us was moving into a 10-bit pipeline.”

Lighting

Back to the Future represents an unusual collaboration between the lighting designers Tim Lutkin and Hugh Vanstone, a case of circumstances aligning in an unexpected way. Vanstone was originally attached to an earlier incarnation of the project with another director; it was put off and, when it heated up again, this time with John Rando, Vanstone came back on board. After a year’s worth of preparation, with the production headed toward its Manchester tryout, an urgent family situation caused Vanstone to step back. At that point, Lutkin, who had previously worked as an associate with Vanstone (and who would also collaborate with Hatley on *Life of Pi*), came onboard. “We think quite alike,” adds Vanstone, who eventually returned as co-lighting designer.

THEATRE

Analyzing the production's lighting challenges, Vanstone notes that, despite the rip-roaring action, big musical numbers, and elaborate visual effects, "It is a very small story, a buddy movie about Doc and Marty; that is what pulls you through the piece. Given that we had to do a load of tricks with the car, how do you keep the production small enough, shrinking it down to those little scenes in Doc's lab—and still be epic when you need it to be?"

To be clear, the lighting design announces itself early on, with the audience entering an auditorium bathed in colorful illuminations and Hatley's circuit board surround executing chases, pulses, and color changes thanks to the pixel tape embedded in it. The lighting also works brilliantly to conceal the mechanism that allows the DeLorean to make its rousing final appearance, flying into the auditorium. "It was a great help to have previous experience on shows which demanded subtle illusion lighting," Vanstone says, citing his work on the musicals *Spamalot* and *Ghost*. Blinder cues, acts of visual misdirection, and the stark absence of illumination are also deployed to support the musical's fantastical elements. The designer cites Hatley's storyboards as being especially helpful: "It's such a good way to work; really, that's how the whole thing came about."

In other respects, the show features classic musical theatre lighting, particularly when pacing and adding some extra zip to Chris Bailey's musical staging. The overall approach was, Vanstone notes, realized over time: "The show barely opened in Manchester before COVID shut it down. Tim did most of the work on it there. We'd been through the show together and, in lighting terms, storyboarding it and choosing colors for each number. Of course, some of that had to be thrown out when it turned out not to be right. We've done the same thing in London and New York. By New York, I think we've perfected our working together. There were things we weren't happy about, the opening number ['It's Only a Matter of Time'], for example, but we did a big restart on it, talking about it in granular detail before we even got near the theatre. Then it was just a matter of making our ideas into lighting reality once again."

Vanstone says the show's workhorses are Martin MAC Ultra Performances (for spots) and Mac Aura PXL wash units. These, in addition to some GLP gear, make up the rig's automated component. "People rarely say this, but Tim and I are both proud that we wanted to make it a commercially viable show," he says. "There was a terrible temptation to super-size the rig and have pipes and pipes of everything. But I'm old enough now to know that does not serve you well. The producer was very clear that he had targets for each department, and we absolutely fell within ours. It means less work down the line because if we're lucky and the show does roll out, it won't be too costly to do tours. We don't have to cut the lighting rig



down because it's already not too huge."

Running the numbers, the rig, supplied by Christie Lites, includes 58 ETC Source Four PARs, 18 Source Four PAR WFLs, 16 Source Four PAR WFLXs, 56 Source Four LED Series 3 Lustrs, three Source Four Mini LEDs, 20 Martin Rush Par 2s, 22 Christie Lites Blinder 4 Lite Square



The barn where Marty crashes the DeLorean is another remarkable blend of scenery, lighting, and video.

PAR 36s, 50 Mac Ultra Performances, 65 Mac Aura PXLs, 15 GLP impression X4 Bar 20s, 22 GLP impression FR1s, and three Robe BMFL FollowSpot LTs. Effects gear includes two MDG Atmosphere hazers, six Le Maitre

Radiance hazers, five Martin JEM ZR25 fog machines, three Look Solutions Power Tiny fog machines, two Look Solutions Cryo-Fog units, 17 MDG theFANs, and six CITC Bubble Defenders.



Marty performs "The Power of Love." Note the scenic surround, designed to look like circuit boards, and the use of molefays for a period concert look.

Interestingly, the show in London is run on an MA Lighting grandMA3, but in New York, it is controlled by an ETC Eos. "Everyone was happy to have an MA on Broadway," Vanstone says, but the choice of Eos would, he says, ultimately make the production more tour-friendly. Other control elements include ETC Sensor racks, two Doug Fleenor Design DMX Merger units, and, for wireless needs, two City Theatrical Multiverse transmitters, plus 14 Multiverse nodes, and four City Theatrical QolorFlex Multiverse dimmers. A zacktrack tracking system was initially included for the clock tower climax, "but," Vanstone adds, "we've added it to quite a few moments so it's now kind of everywhere."

For the finale, when Marty, back in 1985, leads the company in the Huey Lewis hit "The Power of Love," Vanstone says, the first electric lowers in to become part of the set. Hatley designed a giant heart-shaped logo advertising Marty's band. (The heart is lined in City Theatrical QolorFLEX NuNeon and the band's name is lined with QolorFLEX 5-in-1 HiQ High CRI LED tape.) "But," adds Vanstone, "there was an aching space on the sides. I

came up with the idea of having molefays to fill it up. They're on a frame; Tim hung them at an angle." The units are not just decorative, he notes: "Behind that is another car appearance [getting ready] so you can't be staring into the dark too much at that moment."

Sound

Back to the Future presents an unusual sound design challenge because, in addition to the typical issues of reinforcing a big musical production, it comes with a cascade of effects. "The scale of that actually caught me out," says sound designer Gareth Owen. "I mean, there are hundreds of them." They coalesce in a design he describes as "cinematic," by which he means "footsteps on the ground, squeaks on opening doors, and light switches turned on and off. It became a kind of cinematic, Foley-esque theatrical sound design. I love doing things like that, but I didn't realize how much it was going to be. I brought in a second associate, Steve Jonas, whose job was to sit in the rehearsal room and create sound effects that we could work on and refine in the theatre. He spent two-and-a-half



"The video occupies two worlds," Ross says. "One is time and place; this is where we are, and this is what's going on. The other is more fantastical: When Doc breaks out into song [for example in the number '21st Century,' above], the world around him rattles into something fantastical and strange."

weeks in rehearsal working out timings and rough content for things like thunder cracks and revs of the car," most of which was realized with split-second efficiency.

Interestingly, he adds, "The effects in the Broadway production are not exactly those of the West End version; the show continues to evolve. It is usually the third outing of a show where you really get things right. The classic example involves a moment near the end of the show—it's in the movie—when a member of the ensemble walks across the stage, dancing to music that she can hear on her Walkman. There's a particular Eric Clapton song that she's listening to. And I asked, 'Why can we not hear that slight tinny sound you get when people walk past?' We added the exact Eric Clapton music from the movie, sounding like her headphones. It's such a tiny moment that I'm not sure anyone even notices, but it makes me smile every time."

The Winter Garden, which hosted the ultra-long-running musicals *Cats* and *Mamma Mia!*, is an oddly shaped house with an unusual width even for Broadway. "I had the advantage of seeing both *School of Rock* and *Rocky* there," Owen says. "So, I sort of knew the theatre's foibles, that big, wide space with no headroom. If I had the space up high, I think I would have used [d&b audiotechnik's] Soundscape, similar to my system on [the musical] *MJ*, but there was no way to do it without massively encroaching on the top of the proscenium. I ended up going with a more traditional proscenium left-right system, which, in a house that wide, presents really quite interesting imaging issues."

Owen nevertheless went with an all-d&b-audiotechnik loudspeaker rig. "I believe this is the Broadway debut of the

KSL system," he says, referring to d&b's medium-to-large-format three-way line array. "If I could use KSL on every show, I would. It sounds amazing. It is so directional. It keeps all the power off the wall. Problem is, it's absolutely huge and it's not cheap, either. It's not practical to use on most shows. But if I could, I'd use it on every gig."

Also, because of Hatley's giant proscenium surround, placement of the proscenium rig had to be worked out through sometimes difficult negotiations. "The PA is a long way farther off than I'd like," Owen says, "But the environmental LED walls are really quite critical to how the show works. Tim Hatley and I had quite heated, but good-natured, discussions about speakers versus scenic. Neither of us was wrong; we were just fighting for our point of view."

However, he adds, "Our production sound, Phil Lojo, managed to get a lot of d&b KSL-Subs up over the proscenium. Below that, we have a load of d&b A-Series in three different clusters to drag the image in. Another difference with the West End is that it was done as a left-right surround system, similar to how we did [the currently running hit] *& Juliet*, but the Winter Garden won't support that. It's almost impossible to put speakers into positions where you can shoot at the left and right of the audience. So, I ended up basically doing a complete rear surround system; pretty much wherever you're seated, you've got speakers facing you from the front and speakers coming at you from behind. In London, you've got speakers facing you from the front and also facing you from the left and right, pretty much wherever you sit, but that wasn't practical here. It would cost so much money it would be

insane.” The system includes d&b Y7Ps, E8s, and E6s for outfill; E6s for front fill; Y7Ps, E8s, E6s, and E5s for delays; and, for surround, E6s, Y7Ps, Y10Ps, and E5s.

Onstage foldback, Owen says, “is pretty traditional, similar to how I normally do it. Some people like to use speakers built into the stage deck, but I generally get good results with boxes shooting from the sides. As a result, there’s never that much in my shows; here, I’ve got five d&b Y7P boxes per side, lined up and down, shooting into the stage. For effects, our associate designer Andy Green managed to build a speaker into the amplifier stack that blows up [a gag in Doc’s garage] and also get a couple of speakers built into the car [which speaks]. But I try to keep it simple where we can.”

In terms of mics, Owen says, “‘Amplification’ is so often a dirty word in the theatre. I feel that when people use that word, they don’t really mean ‘amplified;’ they mean ‘aggressive,’ which is what you get when you amplify things badly. When you do it well, amplification disappears. I’m at a point where I don’t want to apologize for showing speakers or mics. Whenever possible, I push for the use of DPA 4066 [headset mics]; the audio quality you can achieve is so much better because of the signal-to-noise ratio versus having the mic on the forehead.”

However, he adds, “A lot of directors don’t like boom mics,” claiming that they are distracting or otherwise look peculiar. “I always try to convince them that, if they want the best possible sound, they want to use the best possible microphones in the best possible positions. It depends on who you’re working with: Is it more important that you don’t see the mic or is it more important that the sound is as good as possible?” In this case, John Rando was willing to go with the DPAs, which helps explain how the actors’ voices stand up to Ethan Popp’s expansively elaborate orchestrations. Completing the mic setup are Shure Axient wireless systems, which Owen calls his “go-to” product, looked after by A2 Jordana Abrenica. Audio gear was supplied by Sound Associates.

The show is run using an Avid S6L, Owen’s favorite console, which head of sound Chris Luessman uses with a custom theatre control surface. Sound effects are delivered by QLab; he also uses his proprietary software rTracks to run click tracks, all of which is integrated using Direct Out Technologies Prodigy units. The sound department sends “hundreds” of MSC and MIDI cues to the lighting and video departments, as well.

Most of the 18-member orchestra is located in the pit in front of the stage, with drums and percussion in separate rooms for space reasons. The musicians avail themselves of Allen & Heath’s ME-1 personal monitor mixing system, which is controlled by the company’s dLive DM64 MixRack.

Like his colleagues, Owen talks about the challenge of dealing with audience expectations on this project. “Going

into the first preview, I think we were all honestly terrified,” he says. “We really didn’t know what to expect. There were loads of fans there, an insane number—and they loved it! It was the moment when we realized that we might be all right.” He adds, “Bob Gale knows what the audience wants. He knows the movie’s fans; he’s been to the trade shows. He is the key to making the show credible.”

Key personnel on the Broadway edition of *Back to the Future* includes Aurora Productions (production management), Julia Jones (production stage manager), Rick Steiger (stage manager), Brandon Allmon-Jackson and Rayne O’Bryant (assistant stage managers), Ross Edwards (associate set designer), Simon Harding (associate video designer), Henrique Ghersi (Notch motion graphics), Ammonite/Jonathan Lyle (UK video coordinator), Timothy Reed (associate lighting designer), Andy Green (associate sound designer), Paul Toben (lighting programmer), Zach Peletz (video programmer), Fran Rapp (production carpenter), Dan Coey (production electrician), Derek Jones (head electrician), Asher Robinson (production video), Phillip Lojo (production sound supervisor), Chris Luessman (head of sound), Chris Marcus and Jonathan Hall (UK prop supervisors), Dan Brown (production properties), Austin Rodriguez (head properties), Frank McCullough (assistant set designer), Victoria Bain (assistant lighting designer), Tracy Cowit (assistant sound designer), Jordana Abrenica (assistant sound), and Eric Stewart (assistant properties).

Back to the Future has settled in for a long run with tickets now being sold through June of next year. Additional productions are likely to be announced in the months to come. 📡



Key components of Owen’s sound system are d&b audiotechnik speakers, DPA mics, and an Avid S6L console.