

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Multi-Award-Winning Sound Designer Gareth Owen Adopts Austrian Audio OC818 for West End and Broadway Productions

Renowned theatre sound designer swaps lifelong go-to overhead mics for Austrian Audio's flagship large-diaphragm condenser, bringing uncompromised studio-grade acoustic fidelity to world-class live stages.

LONDON / VIENNA — World-renowned, multi-award-winning sound designer Gareth Owen has officially integrated the **Austrian Audio OC818** large-diaphragm multi-pattern condenser microphone into his workflow, marking a permanent shift for some of the world's most demanding live theatrical stages.

Known for crafting pristine acoustic experiences for blockbuster musical theatre across the West End and Broadway—including upcoming high-profile productions like *Thelma & Louise* at London's Young Vic, *Purple Rain*, *Paddington*, and *MJ*—Owen made the switch after encountering the microphone during a collaborative demo organized by DPA Microphones UK on *& Juliet* in Toronto.

The 15-Second Conversion: From Lifelong Habits to a New Benchmark

For a career veteran who relied on the exact same pair of drum overhead microphones for decades, breaking habit required an immediate and undeniable sonic discovery. The transition happened within moments of pushing up the faders.

"The exact moment I realised I was never going back was roughly fifteen seconds after I shoved the faders up on the overheads," **Owen shares**. "I was literally like 'oh, that's what the overheads are supposed to sound like...' Hands down, it's the best drum overhead I've ever used."

Owen highlights **clarity without distortion** and **exceptional transient response** as the core characteristics that set the OC818 apart. He notes that transient response is a critical metric that is notoriously difficult to quantify on paper, yet immediately obvious in practice. Furthermore, despite its advanced capabilities, the microphone integrated into his existing signal chains and console workflows seamlessly—"like it's always been there."

Conquering the "Broom Closet" Challenge of Live Theatre

In modern musical theatre, space is a constant adversary. Unlike expansive wooden studio rooms, live stage environments often force sound designers to cram drums into tight spaces.

"There is rarely room to let the drums breathe," **explains Owen**. "If we were in a studio, we'd put the drums in a huge wooden room. In a theatre, we regularly cram them into a broom closet. This makes the techniques for getting a good drum sound somewhat different and considerably more challenging."

Despite high stage volumes, instrument bleed, and harsh reflections, the OC818 handles these pressures with extraordinary composure. For Owen, achieving that pristine sound ultimately comes down to meticulous isolation from the PA system and starting with an inherently great-sounding source: *"You can't make a bad sound source sound good no matter what mics you have."*

Bridging the Gap Between Studio and Stage

Owen's adoption of the OC818 reflects a broader industry shift: studio-grade equipment is increasingly becoming essential for modern live sound design. As speaker pattern control, console signal paths, and stage foldback improve, the idiosyncratic behaviors of live systems are fading away, reducing the strict need for traditional "live-only" models.

At the heart of this philosophy is an unwavering dedication to the artists behind the music:

"My job is to reproduce the performance as accurately as possible across the entire audience," **says Owen**. "I cannot imagine anything more frustrating as a musician, or singer, composer, lyricist, or orchestrator, than to not feel like your work is being delivered to its maximum potential."

About the OC818

Handmade in Vienna, Austria, the flagship **OC818** is celebrated globally for its proprietary ceramic capsule design, multiple polar patterns, dual-output capabilities for immersive or post-recording flexibility, and unmatched transient reproduction.

For more information on the Austrian Audio OC818 and its applications in live performance and studio recording, visit austrian.audio.

Here is the updated and polished version of the interview, featuring your new addition seamlessly integrated under the **Industry & Future Outlook** section, along with professional formatting throughout.