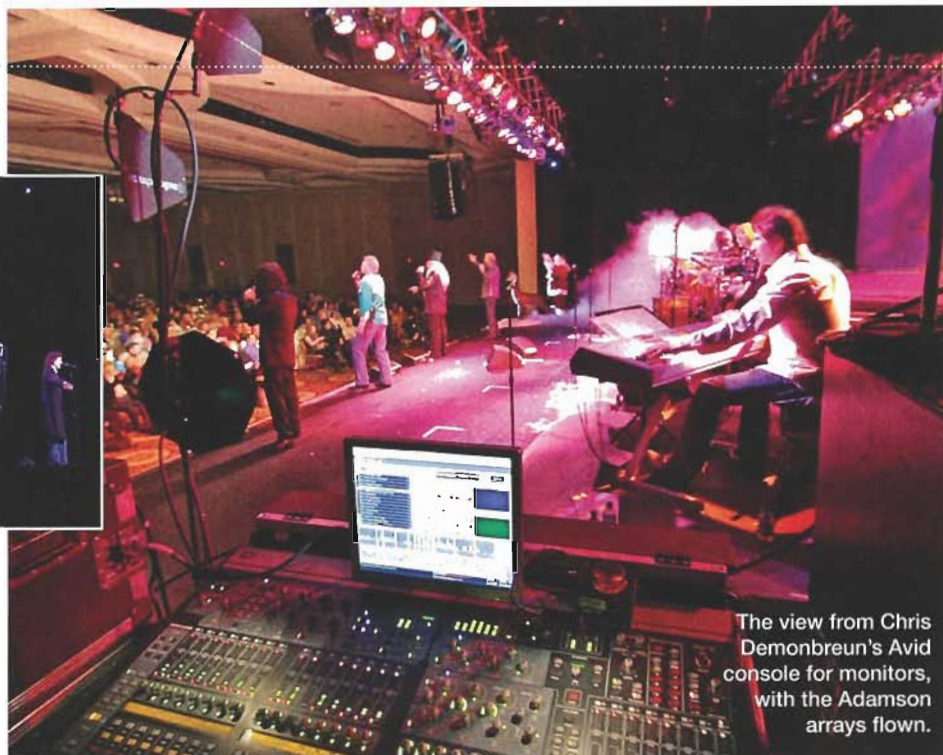


On Tour



The BOYS ARE BACK



The view from Chris Demonbreun's Avid console for monitors, with the Adamson arrays flown.

Getting it covered, flown or stacked.

by Live Sound Staff

The Oak Ridge Boys are currently taking their unique country and gospel style on the road with the appropriately named The

Boys Are Back 150-date North American tour in support of their latest recording release of the same name.

The original group dates all the way back to 1945, founded as the Oak Ridge Quartet, and has seen a lot of changes over its six-plus decades. But the focus has always been richly textured vocals, with the current lineup consisting of lead singer Duane Allen, tenor Joe Bonsall, bass Richard Sterban and iconic baritone William Lee Golden.

Brantley Sound Associates (BSA) of Nashville is providing the concert systems and support for the tour, which is appearing in theaters and smaller arenas with capacities ranging up to 4,000. A flexible sound design, particularly for the house, has been implemented by the team of Chris Demonbreun, Marko Hunt and Eric Vogel, who have formulated effective ways to adapt the system to meet the unique needs of the different venues the tour is visiting.

The flexible house system design starts with Adamson Systems Y10 compact line arrays that are either flown or stacked, depending upon the specific coverage requirements and physical configuration of each venue. The compact 3-way Y10, measuring just 10-in (h) by 42-in (w) by 24-in (d) per

enclosure, is outfitted with a slide-hinge rigging system providing six 1-degree increments that makes optimum positioning simple whether up in the air or on the deck.

"The rigging design allows us to do whatever is required and get the angles we need," notes Demonbreun, who serves as system tech as well as monitor engineer.

Through The Ranges

When ground-stacked, coverage is usually achieved with arrays of just six Y10 modules per side, each joined by a single Adamson T21 (dual 21-in Kevlar drivers). Flown, each array is joined by eight Adamson Spektrix ultra-compact 3-way line array modules and a single Spektrix W cabinet, with a 15-degree trapezoidal cabinet, to provide down fill.

Hunt, who is the long-time front-of-house engineer for the Oak Ridge Boys, determines the PA configuration for each venue, working out array structure as well as optimum angles. He deploys the Adamson Shooter array modeling and configuration program for additional information when the arrays are flown.

"Almost all of our setups (on this tour) are ground support, so I've become adept at 'guesstimating and eyeballing' the angles so we can hit balconies and mezzanines while still covering the floor with only six Y10 cabinets per side," Hunt explains. "If the balcony is 'way up there,' we can tie into the theater system if it allows us to just cover upstairs without



A groundstacked Adamson Y10 array, the most frequent method of deployment on the tour.

hitting the floor and causing phasing problems. Delaying the downstairs doesn't usually work because there's no one point of reference. Every seat will hear it differently.

"When setting angles we decouple the bottom cabinets at least a degree," he continues, "and then angle as necessary, trying to have the last two cabs at zero - or close as we can get - to attain the coupling to project to the far reaches. Sometimes we shade the downstairs a bit at the processors and amplifiers.

"All of this sits on the mighty T21 subs, which I find to have the most dynamic range of any sub out there and enough power to blow your hat off. The bass singer is a guy (Golden) who actually can hit fundamental 50 Hz notes, which requires good subs for him as well as for kick and bass. Then we go on up through the ranges with the other singers. I like to have a lot of low mid cone area to give a full sound, and one thing I really love about Adamson systems is the Kevlar cones on the lows and mids. They are so linear sounding, with no harsh overtones."

Up In The Mix

About 30 minutes are devoted to tuning the system at each stop, accomplished with an assist from an Earthworks mea-



The sound team – Marko Hunt, Eric Vogel, and Chris Demonbreun – with some of the gear for the tour at the Brantley Sound shop.

surement microphone and SpectraFoo software. All loudspeakers are driven by Camco Vortex 6 power amplifiers, with system processing supply by XTA DP200 Series digital signal processors in the racks with the amps. Hunt utilizes an Avid VENUE Profile digital console for his mix, utilizing all of the plug-ins that come standard with the board plus the McDSP Classic Pack.

"Since the 'Oaks' are a vocal group, I strive to keep their voices on top of the mix," he notes. "But they have always liked it to rock, so the band is up in the mix and there are also a lot of instrumental solos, so I occasionally get a complaint that the band is too loud. There are a lot of older folks at our shows that, I'm sure, would be happy if the whole show was a cappella."

On stage, the Oak Ridge Boys are outfitted with Sennheiser G2 wireless in-ear monitoring systems, with a pair of EAW MicroWedges also supplied for one of the vocalists. Microphones are predominantly Audio-Technica, joined by select models from Shure

and Sennheiser. Demonbreun, who has served as the group's monitor engineer since 2009, provides mixes with an Avid VENUE D-Show with companion Mix Rack.

"An awesome thing about the Avid console is that I'm using an iPad as a remote control for the desk," he explains. "It's really great because I can be on stage during rehearsals and sound check, and it also allows me to stand where everyone on stage can see me if 'monitor world' has to be in a crazy location. The band and singers love it because I can be there next to them instead of trying to yell across the stage to tell me what they want."

The Boys Are Back tour will continue to crisscross the continent, with published dates running all the way through November. The system will remain consistent throughout, with Hunt concluding, "We had been totally at the mercy of 'system du jour' for years when Brantley Sound acquired a set of Y10s and we took them out. They've been a staple for us ever since." ■