

SOUND OF WORSHIP

SOUND ADVICE
FOR TODAY'S
HOUSE OF WORSHIP

SOUND OF WORSHIP

SUMMER 2010

Attention Secretary,
PLEASE ROUTE TO:

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- Music Minister
- Other _____
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Sound Operator Manual

A newsletter for
anyone who
wants to learn
about sound!

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there are some questions to
answer...

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For More Information



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Hosting a Concert? Technical Tips to Make Your Concert Successful

The success or failure of any concert or event depends on communication and planning.

Before we dig into the details, you should ask yourself some simple questions:

1. What are you trying to accomplish? Are you trying to raise money for a choir trip to the Holy Land, or are you simply trying to provide a blessing for the church and the surrounding communities?

2. Who is the target audience? Is this concert a part of an outreach program to junior or high school-aged kids or adults?

3. How are you going to cover the costs of this event? Do you plan to sell tickets or have a "free-will offering"? What if the costs exceed your initial estimates? What if the actual attendance is very low compared to your projections?

4. Is your facility appropriate for the size and type of event you're planning? Does the local fire marshall need to be informed of your plans, and are there any specific permits required? Do you have sufficient restrooms

for the size crowd you're anticipating? Have you considered any potential parking or traffic problems?

These are just a few of the many questions you will need to think about. But there is one common thread that ties all of this together:

What will it take for everyone involved to feel like this event is successful?

This last question has more to do with attitude than anything else. In other words, what are the expectations of everyone involved in this concert?



Continued from page 1

It comes back to communication and planning. Let's take a look at some ideas that may help you avoid unforeseen obstacles.

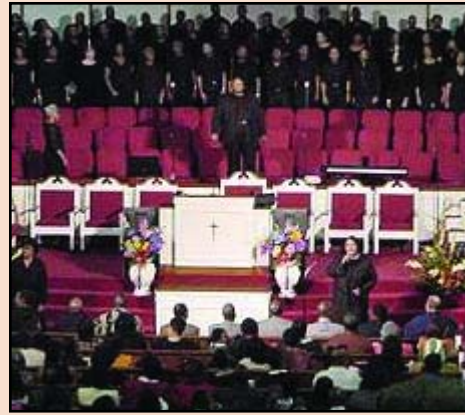
Reality Check

Before any important decisions are made regarding the technical aspects of any concert event, you must determine:

- What is expected of the sound system?
- Are the performers using CD tracks or live instruments?
- How loud do they normally operate a sound system during performances?
- How loud will be too loud for the audience you're expecting?
- Who is responsible for monitoring the system loudness?
- Will you also need a lighting system?
- Who will be operating these systems?
- How much rehearsal time will be required?

A Good Start

The first step is to find out what the performers are expecting. The best way to do this is to ask them to provide you with a technical rider.



Find a Local Expert

When you receive the rider, you may not understand all the "industry lingo" or terminology used to describe the technical requirements. You could certainly contact the performer(s) for clarification, but the best approach to solving this dilemma is to contact a professional who is in the business of supplying rental gear for occasions such as this.

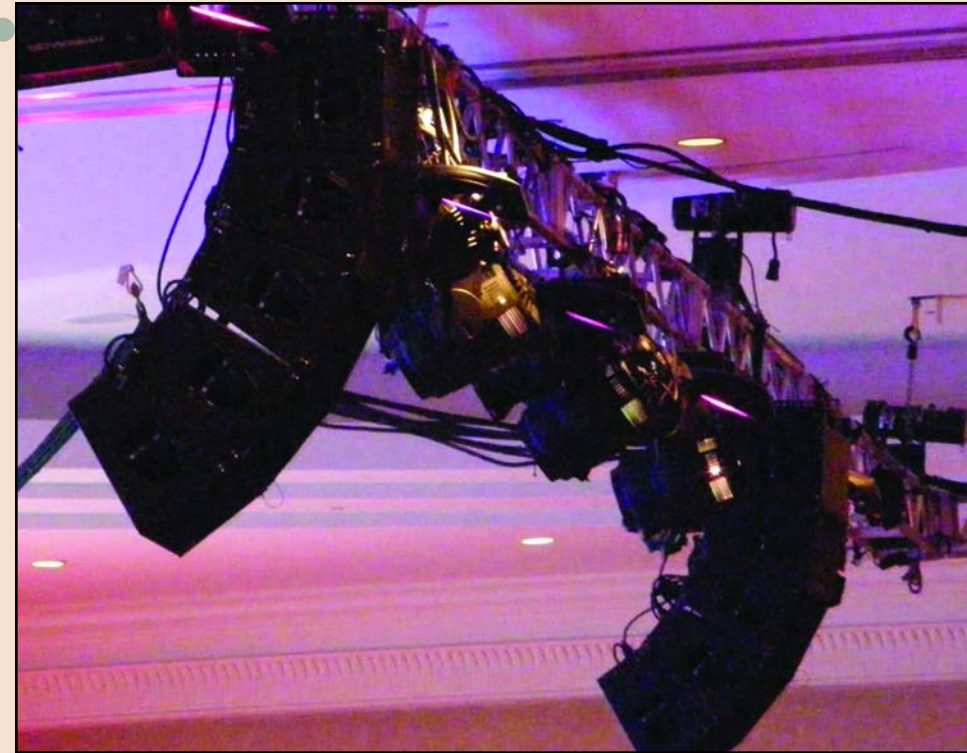
If you don't know who to call, call us first. If we don't know of anyone in particular, we will help you get going in the right direction. You could also call local municipal, high school or college performing arts centers. They would certainly know of someone they could strongly recommend for this project.

What are the Sound System Expectations?

Make certain the performer(s) provide a detailed track sheet that describes every vocal, instrument, CD, direct box, etc. that they intend to "plug in" to the system. For example, how many keyboard instruments will they use?

As a part of the technical rider, there should be specifics about what type of stage monitor system the performer(s) are expecting. You need to determine how many of these unique "monitor mixes" are required by the performer(s). The term monitor "mix" refers to a unique mix or blend of vocals and instruments for one or more performers on stage. Typically, the vocalists will want more of their own voices, along with a keyboard for tonal cues as well as a small level of the snare drum for timing. This mix of sounds will be heard in only the stage monitor speakers for the vocalists. The drummer may want to hear a small bit of the lead vocal, plenty of bass guitar and possibly a "click track" from any sequenced keyboards in their monitor mix.

Many groups now carry their own personal monitor system with wireless in-ear monitors. This system needs to be interfaced with the sound system mixer.



Stage Gear

It is also very important for you to be clear about any additional equipment. For instance, they may specify a drum set or guitar amp to be provided.

Please note: It would be wise for you to respond to the performer(s) with an actual list of equipment and systems you intend to provide. This will avoid any confusion later.

Keep It Simple

The simplest, most reliable and least stressful solution is to contract all the equipment, delivery and setup from a professional.

When it comes to temporary rigging of overhead speakers or setup of AC electrical distribution, it is in your best interest to avoid any potential liability regarding the well-being of your performers, staff and audience members.

But We Have a Great Sound System In Our Church

Your system may be great for your worship director and band, but the Newsboys may really challenge it!

If you do intend to use your church's sound system, you must do everything you can to protect the system. The most important piece of equipment you need to have is a limiter. This device will protect your sound system from being overdriven and from potential damage. It "limits" the amount of signal voltage that can get to your electronics, amplifiers and loudspeakers. Secondly, you should make certain the limiter is properly adjusted. We can help you on this one. Call us.



Even if you intend to use your system for the event, consider renting a second mixer. This accomplishes several things:

1. Unless you have a digital mixer with scene recall, you don't need to worry about resetting all of your mixer controls back to their original settings.
2. If your own sound operator is not mixing for the event, whoever does mix may not know your mixer very well. By renting a separate mixer, the guest operator can specify what mixer they prefer.
3. Feeding the outputs of the rented mixer into your system mixer allows your own sound operator to monitor and adjust the overall system loudness or tonal response. This will take some communication and coordination, but it is well worth the effort.

A.C. Electrical Power Considerations

First of all, make certain that your facility has enough circuits for all of the sound system, stage gear electronics and lighting. These circuits should also have enough current capacity, e.g. 20 Amp, 30 Amp, 50 Amp, etc.

Another very important detail that is often overlooked: all electrical circuits for sound and stage gear should have the same electrical ground reference.

If your event requires a lot of power for sound and lighting, consider having a licensed electrician available at the event. Don't take any chances.

Most professional rental companies can supply AC power distribution and will provide the proper cables and connection hardware to connect to your building electrical system. But make certain the electrician makes those connections! If all the details are covered, you can be assured of a great concert!

Travis Ludwig

