

GET THE BASICS RIGHT SIMPLE STAGE SET UP

1. A suitable set of PA speakers to amplify the music coming from the stage. A basic set up includes two speakers facing the audience and at least one speaker facing the musician as a "fold back" so they can hear their performance.
2. A basic mixing unit with at least 4 input channels, which helps manage your sound. Performers need to be able to separate the volume levels of (for example) their instruments and their vocals, to make sure that each aspect of their performance is being amplified in an appropriate and balanced way.
3. A couple of microphones, a set of microphone stands, the appropriate leads and multiple power adapters.
4. A basic lighting set up to illuminate the performance space and use of LED lights to save on power bills.
5. A space, stage or riser that is big enough to comfortably fit a full band including room for a drum kit.
6. Digital desks simplify the mixing/installation process with iPads etc.

BACKLINE

If you are programming a lot of shows, consider purchasing/leasing 'backline' i.e. a standard drum kit, bass speaker /amplifier, guitar amp, keyboard stands, microphone stands, leads and microphones. This will attract artists to your venue.

PARKING, LOADING AND STORING

You'll also need to ensure there are suitable parking options, or temporary options for the band to load in their equipment to your

venue. Allow plenty of time for a sound check to be completed before patrons arrive. Suitable storage space for storing cases and additional equipment is also a practical necessity. Contact your local council if there is no loading zone.

PA SYSTEMS AND MIXING

Regardless of how good your PA system is, or how good the act is, a good show hinges on how well the sound is mixed. While a simple acoustic set up can be quick to sound check, a skilled engineer should always sound check a band. Always request a stage plot and inputs list from the artist. Consider employing a sound engineer to operate your equipment and ensure all performances at the venue sound the best. Usually the in-house operator mixes sound and lighting for artists for a small fee. Larger acts often bring their own mixer.

HOT TIP!

If you're truly lost on the technical side of things, speak with professionals that know how to set up a venue. Technicians from a production and audio supply, or staging company will be able to recommend the appropriate equipment.

ARTIST RIDER

It is a strong expectation in the entertainment industry that musicians are provided with refreshments. This can be either supplied over the bar upon request or ticket tokens can be issued. At the very least water and soft drink should be available free of charge. If the performance is scheduled for early to late in the evening then it is typical to provide a meal, particularly at a corporate gig.

INSURANCE

Check whether your business insurance policy covers you for operating live music performances before proceeding with booking shows. It's also best to check whether the musicians you book have

their own public liability insurance and you may ask for a copy of their Certificate of Currency. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of musicians to have their own musical equipment insured. If the gear belongs to your venue, then ensure it is covered by your business policy.

ALL AGES EVENTS WHERE MINORS ARE PRESENT

Legally, minors may be at a venue where alcohol is sold between 5am and midnight except if the venue has an Entertainment Venue License, so long as they are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Identification must be checked and alcohol service refused to anyone underage. Drink promotions should not appeal to minors and signage should indicate any out of bounds areas. Venue owners and bar staff can now seize fake IDs used by patrons.

CROWD SAFETY, SEXUAL HARASSMENT & INCIDENTS DURING EVENTS

- As the venue owner, you have the right to eject an individual who has violated either the law or your house rules.
- Consider using a Security Firm if you are going to stage live music with large numbers of patrons. Drink spillage, sexual assault or injuries can occur. On top of preparations you've made to ensure the stage set up is neat and secure, have a crowd controller watch things in the front, ensure that drink spillage is cleaned and that first aid is administered in a safe area.
- Complaints may occur and it's crucial to have a lodging system and take the time to record any incidents on a form when they occur. Repeat offenders should be asked for ID and blacklisted from your venue. Take complaints by female patrons seriously and train your staff in complaint handling. Consider installing CCTV at entries and queuing areas to assist in surveillance, deter antisocial behavior and to obtain evidence of complaints. If an incident is reported to a staff member, or they become aware of an incident or believe there is a likelihood of an incident occurring, all necessary steps must be taken to

eject the perpetrator (and if necessary, their friends) from the venue. The perpetrator's identity must be sought and recorded in the incident log.

- Clearly inform patrons through written policies and signs that your venue discourages sexual harassment and irresponsible drinking behaviour. Develop a patron code of conduct and display it at all entry points. Create posters for bathrooms that indicate zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

HOT TIP!

Go to the Music SA website resources page to find templates for a Stage Plot, Venue Accident/ Incident Report Form or Venue Property Damage Report Form musicsa.com.au/resources/

COPYRIGHT LICENSING

No matter if you're hosting live music or playing music through your house speakers/television, you must obtain a license for your business. Copyright collection agencies are responsible for collecting and paying royalties to songwriters. Musicians will love you for being licensed so they can claim upon their performance via an annual Live Performance Return. Set lists must be kept and submitted to the agencies.

There are two copyrights relevant to live music:

1. the copyright in the performance of the song (lyrics, composition etc.) – licences from APRA AMCOS;
2. the copyright in the recording and/or music video of the song – 'blanket' licences from the PPCA

AND DON'T FORGET ...

- Have all of your administration in order; know the stage set up, playing order, set times, rider and any requests communicated from the band.
- If the show is ticketed, have door staff and a float prepared in advance.
- If the band wish to sell merchandise, have a table prepared.
- Use your communication channels to share what time the show will start and when each band will perform, as well as any additional promotions.