

# **GIG READY**

*A guide for musicians and performers  
to be empowered in a live event setting*

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With the support of Women in Music BC*



## **INTRODUCTION**

The goal of this presentation is to familiarize artists and musicians with the world of live performance and to make the best out of any show you play. Performers need to understand the language the technicians speak in order to communicate with them, and adopt a professional attitude from the beginning, ensuring a show well run that leaves all involved wanting to work together again: the performer, the crew, and the audience.

## **BEFORE THE GIG**

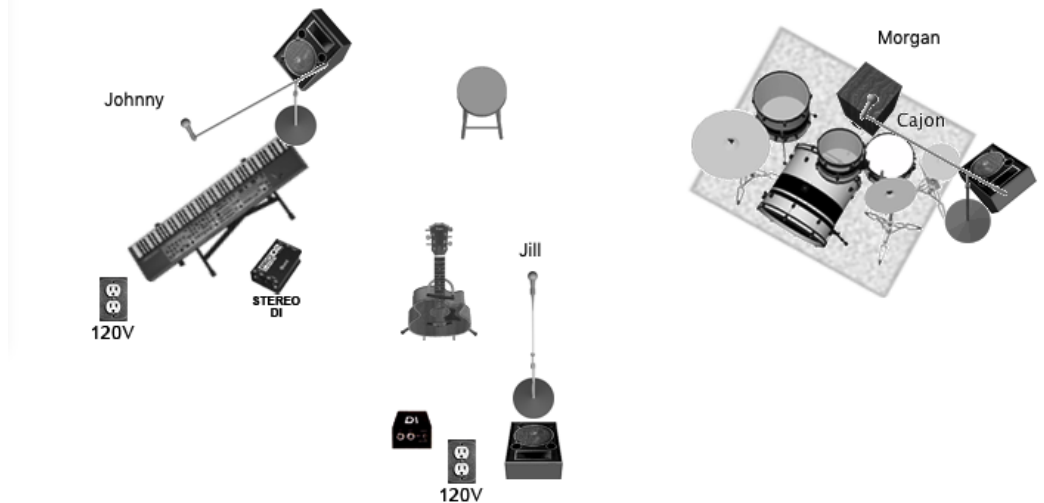
### **Being prepared ahead of the gig:**

Once you're looking to perform live, the first step to take is to perfect your knowledge of your gear and to know what your stage setup is. Spend time with every piece of equipment you will bring to the show so you can learn and know how each piece is related to the others. This will help you be confident to troubleshoot in case of technical difficulties once at the venue. Once you know your gear inside and out, try different ways to set up in your rehearsal space so you can find the most comfortable way to set up on a stage. This includes things such as where do you set up your guitar stand for easy access, do you prefer to stand or sit, where do you find the mic stand to be most comfortable for you.

Once you have figured out a setup that works great for you, you can make a **stage plot** showing where everything is located on stage. Making a stage plot is highly recommended so when you are advancing your show, you can send it along and it will hopefully be passed down to the tech crew. Don't forget to add the date and your name and contact info on your stage plot. There are many apps and softwares available to create stage plots, such as:

- <https://stage-plan.com/>
- <http://www.bosstweedbackline.com/stage-designer/>
- <http://www.stageplot.com/> (industry standard)

## JILL BARBER FALL 2019



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kick</li> <li>2. Snare</li> <li>3. HH</li> <li>4. Rack Tom</li> <li>5. Floor Tom</li> <li>6. OH</li> <li>7. Cajon Low</li> <li>8. Cajon High</li> <li>9. Keys L</li> <li>10. Keys R</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Acoustic DI</li> <li>12. Jill Voc Wireless</li> <li>13. Morgan Voc</li> <li>14. Johnny Voc</li> </ol>	<p>We are carrying our own vocal microphones.</p> <p>We require 3 monitor mixes.</p>	<p>For questions and inquiries, please contact : Swann Barrat (TM/FOH) 778- t@gmail.com</p>
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*Example: Stage plot made with StagePlot Pro (stageplot.com)*

### **Before you head out for your gig, here are a few things to check:**

-Does your acoustic guitar have a pick up? Do you have a volume control for it? If yes, leave it at about 75% and do not adjust once it is set.

-Does your acoustic guitar have a built-in EQ? It might be best to flatten it before the show, as it might sound the way you like in your jam space, but it can change drastically from room to room. It is best to leave the EQ'ing of your instrument to the sound technician.

-How many DI's do you need? Are they mono? Stereo?

*A DI box is a piece of equipment that transforms the signal from a source like a guitar, keyboard, bass, etc going into a ¼" cable into a signal that can travel further without added noise on an XLR cable (or mic cable).*

-Do you have your own microphone? check to know the polar pattern on it as it will help you position your monitor. The polar pattern of a microphone determines where the sound is picked up around the microphone. For example, a cardioid microphone like a Shure SM58 picks up sound in front of the microphone but also on the sides.

-Are all your cables in working condition? Test them before you go to the gig. Have a couple back up cables as well.

## **What to bring to the gig:**

- Your instrument(s) and a back up if you can (back up laptop or phone/iPod for tracks, back up guitar)
- Your amp(s)
- Your pedals
- All the cables you need and a couple extra (that includes patch cords, an XLR if you are using an FX pedal, power bar, extension cord, all power cables for your equipment)
- A guitar or keyboard stand
- A Stool or keyboard bench if you need
- Picks, tuner, extra strings
- Mic and DI if you own them
- Batteries

## **AT THE GIG: FROM LOAD IN TO LOAD OUT**

### **Load in:**

Be on time for load in (or call ahead to let the venue know you are late). In the advancing phase, you should have been told when load in is, and where to load in. Once inside the venue, introduce yourself to the technician (if they're not busy soundchecking someone else), and ask where you should put your stuff for prepping (in the case someone else is on stage when you arrive, you can prep your equipment off stage to make for a quicker set up). Prepping means getting your instruments out of their cases, tuning, setting up your pedal board so you just need to bring it on stage and plug it in. Ask where you should store your dead cases (empty cases).

### **Set up:**

Ask the technician if it's ok to set up your gear on stage and if they're ready for you. Bring all you need to the stage and set up as quickly as you can (that's where prepping helps a lot). You can ask the tech if there's a specific place they would like to set up your gear (in case the headliner is taking up most of the space with their backline). Keep the stage tidy, store your personal items in the green room, not on stage.

Tell the technician what you need (you can show them your stage plot if they don't have it):

- Mic stand (boom or straight)
- Microphones and DIs (if you don't have your own)
- Effects you would like on your vocals (reverb and delay for example)
- Notes on lights (if there is no light tech, otherwise talk to them directly)
- if you need a table or a chair/stool
- If you carry your own IEMs (In-Ear Monitors), give them to the tech at this time.

### **Line check vs soundcheck:**

A line check happens before soundcheck to make sure all the channels are working, this usually doesn't require the musician to be present on stage. Line checks also happen right before a set, either because the act didn't get to soundcheck and they need to get quick monitor mixes set up (this is almost always the case at festivals), or to check that all the channels are where they were at soundcheck.

### **Soundcheck protocol:**

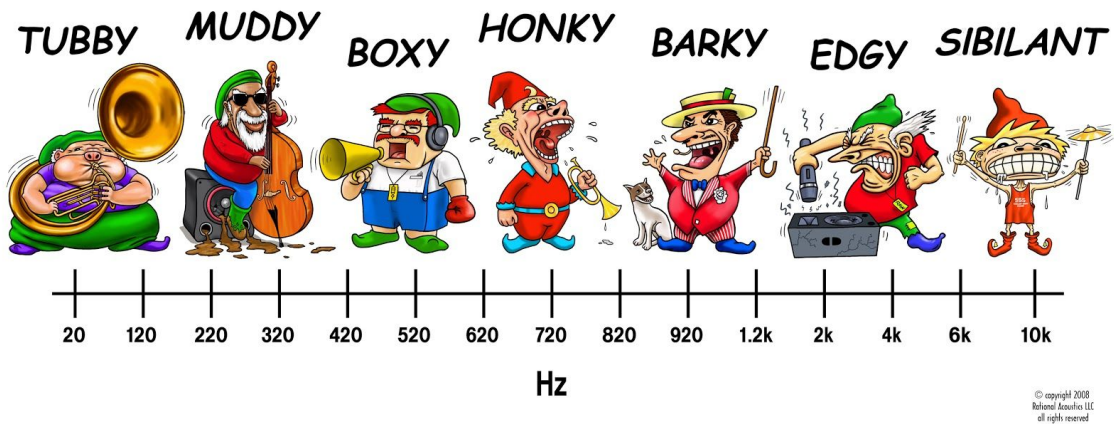
-Follow the sound technician instructions: do not noodle on your instrument until asked to. The sound tech will go channel by channel so be ready when the time comes. This means play your guitar or keyboard when asked, and sing when asked.

-Soundcheck happens to give musicians the monitor mix they need before they have to perform to ensure a good performance from the start. Do not rush through soundcheck if it is not necessary, but remember that soundcheck is not rehearsal, so don't play your full set during soundcheck.

-For each channel, ask for what you need in your monitor. We usually use hand signals during that time for bands. However, if you are a solo performer, your hands will probably be busy playing the instrument being checked, so when you have enough of a channel in your monitor, you can say so in your microphone, or stop playing that channel. Do not expect to hear your monitor as soon as the tech has asked you to play, it takes some time to adjust the levels on their end before they can send it to the monitors.

-Once you have all you need in the monitor and all your channels have been checked, play half a song to check that your monitor levels are correct. If adjustments are needed, communicate with the soundtech about it (ie: 'I need more guitar, less vocals') and play through another half a song (or a verse + chorus).

-If you notice something doesn't sound right (like your monitor sounds very thin, or your guitar sounds like a banjo), ask the technician to come on stage and listen to your wedge, as it might be an issue with their gear. It is good to be familiar with frequency language to help you communicate efficiently with the tech. Here is a cartoon picturing different frequency ranges and how bad they can sound:



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So you might tell the soundtech that your guitar sounds a bit 'honky' and they can EQ it accordingly. Likewise, your vocals might have too much sibilants coming through your wedge, and that also can be adjusted.

-Once you are happy with how it sounds on stage, thank the technician and double check your set time with them so you know when you need to be ready for changeover. Ask if you can leave your gear on stage or if you need to 'strike' it (meaning moving it off stage).

-Be aware of the size of the room and adjust your stage volume accordingly. A balanced and controlled stage volume is the first step to a good sounding show and can really make a massive difference for the audience.

### Show time:

Be ready before the act before you has finished their set. As soon as they're done and off stage, get set up and tuned, do a quick line check if needed, bring your setlist and water/drinks with you. Make sure you know how long your set is supposed to be, and if the night is running late, be prepared to cut a couple songs off your set list. Set up a watch or clock on stage if needed. During your set, **never EVER ask the audience how it sounds out there**. This is very insulting to the sound technician, and you don't want to make them angry, because they can ruin your entire show (most won't, but they might not care much about how you sound after that).

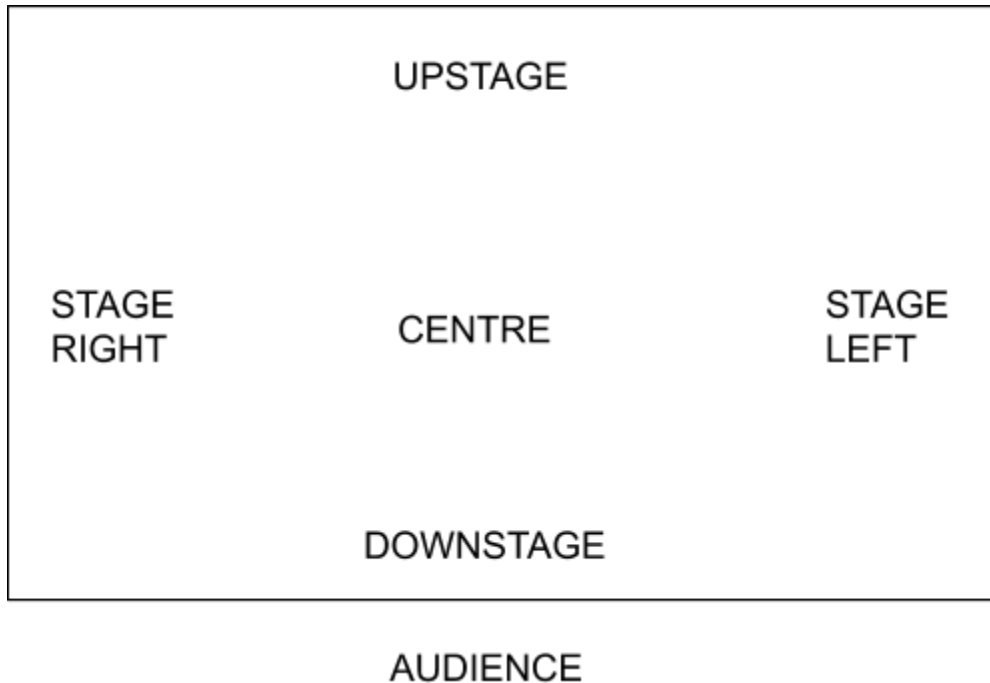
### Load out:

When you are finished your set, do not stand on stage to greet fans for a long time. Clear your gear off the stage quickly (don't wrap cables or put things in cases on stage, it should be done off stage). Don't leave empty glasses or cans or your setlist on stage. Keep it nice and tidy. When you finish your set on time and clean up the stage quickly, you will be remembered as an act who is professional, and that can open doors to good opening slots for bigger headliners. Say thanks before you leave! (it's the little things...)

### **A note on communicating with the tech crew:**

It is important to establish good communication with the tech crew from the get go. The sound technician should be there to help you sound good and have a good show. You need to trust them and respect their work. However, it can be tricky if you encounter one of the grumpy sound techs. A good way to establish trust and respect is to know their language and be professional. Here are a few terms that you want to familiarize yourself with:

- Stage locations:



This is very important to know, so when you are asking for a power drop and the tech tells you 'there's a quad box downstage right', then you know where to look (a quad box is an electrical box with 4 outlets). As a solo performer, you will most likely be setting up 'downstage centre'.

- Wedge: this means monitor (also called foldback in other parts of the world)
- Phantom power: +48V signal that is sent through an XLR cable (microphone cable) to power condenser microphones and active DIs. If you bring your own mic or DI, the tech might ask you 'do you need phantom?' Make sure you know if your equipment requires it.
- IEM: In Ear Monitor
- Green room: dressing room
- Backline: instruments and amps on stage
- Boom stand/straight stand: microphone stand with or without telescopic boom, either round base or tripod

Try to remember the technician's name, it will go a long way, especially when you need a bit more vocals during your set.